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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Drukpa Tshe-Zi greetings from CM

GANGTOK, 23 JUL [IPR]: Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang [Golay] has extended warm greetings to the people of Sikkim on the occasion of Drukpa Tshe-Zi.

Drukpa Tse-shi is a festival celebrated by the Buddhists on the 4th day of the 6th month of the Buddhist lunar calendar. The day commemorates the first sermon of Lord Buddha at Sarnath. On this day, he gave his first teaching on four noble truths to his first five disciples, thus, turning the wheel of dharma.

In his message, the Chief Minister considers it as an opportunity to enlighten our lives and reaffirm values which are in consonance with the teachings of Lord Buddha by following a middle path as a guiding light in shaping our destiny. He hopes that amidst the pandemic, we draw strength and courage inspired by these teachings, ennobling us and bringing equanimity in our lives.

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Sikkim detects 22 new cases even as 10 make full recoveries STATE'S COVID LOAD CLIMBS TO 460, WITH 338 ACTIVE CASES

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 23 JUL:

Ten more patients have made full recoveries and were discharged from hospital today taking the total number of cured and discharged COVID-19 patients in Sikkim to 122. Meanwhile, 22 new cases were reported in the last 24 hours taking the number of active cases to 338 and posting Sikkim's cumulative COVID load [cases detected so far] to 460.

Out of the 22 new cases, 19 were reported from East Sikkim and three from West Sikkim. In his daily health bulletin on Thursday, Health Department Secretary, Dr Pempa T Bhutia, explained that eight cases were detected through RT-PCR testing of 508 samples at the VRD Lab on Wednesday. 14 cases were caught through Rapid Antigen Testing of 294 samples at different places in the State.

Among the cases reported through RT-PCR testing, one is a 55-year-old female worker at the Sun Pharma Unit-1 at Setipool. The unit has since been declared a containment zone.

Dr Bhutia informs that the patient was residing at Setipool and was a contact of a COVID-positive patient from Rangpo.

Likewise, a 50-year-old man and a 25-year-old male, both returnees currently lodged at ATTC,

Bardang, also tested positive, while a 36-year-old and a 23-year-old, also returnees, staying at a paid quarantine facility in East Sikkim also tested positive.

Of the remaining three new cases detected by RT-PCR, Dr Bhutia mentioned that two contacts from Timburbong and one SSB personnel from Gyalshing tested positive for COVID-19. However, he mentioned that all three were had already tested positive earlier during rapid antigen testing in West District.

While giving the break-up of Rapid Antigen Testing, he informed that out of four tests in Rhenock all tested negative and all 150 tests in Rongli also returned negative.

Rapid Antigen Testing of 109 persons at Rangpo - 61 returnees and 47 contacts - returned 13 positive cases from contacts. No returnee tested positive at Rangpo today.

He added that out of 25 rapid antigen testings conducted at Singtam district hospital, one employee of Zydus Pharma tested positive.

In what must come as a relief to Gangtokians, all contacts of the Agriculture Department employee who had tested positive recently, from Deorali Working Women's Hostel have tested negative.

The doctor highlighted that the situation in Rongli and Rhenock which had Sikkim worried a few days back appears to be contained now and that even Rangpo was settling down.

Sikkim improves on 2019, records 75% pass percentage in CBSE class X results

DEPTT OPENS ONLINE ADMISSION FOR CLASS XI

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 23 JUL:

This year, a total of 10,449 students had appeared in Class X examinations of the CBSE out of whom 7,833 [3,410 boys and 4,423 girls] have passed, posting a pass percentage of 75%.

This record is better than last year when Sikkim registered a 68% pass percentage.

Of the rest, 2,225 students fall in the category of compartment [21 %] while 164 [1.5%] were absent and 222 [2%] failed, details an Education Department press release.

The Education Department has now taken a call to admit students in Class XI through online mode so that classes through different platforms already in process, could also be extended to Class XI.

Students have been advised to visit the online portal of the Department and fill the application forms and submit



them online. The address of the website is <http://edndeptsikkim.in>

The portal was launched today by the Additional Chief Secretary, GP Upadhyaya, in the presence of State Project Director, Samagra Shiksha and Director Elementary Education, Bhim Thatal.

The launch of the online

portal for admission in Class XI is being done as it has been felt that though there is lockdown and the schools are not likely to open till the end of August, continuity of learning must happen, the release details.

Students who have passed class X from a senior secondary schools can apply in their respective schools only, unless

their present school does not offer their preferred stream. They can apply to another nearby Senior Secondary School.

Admission in Science and Commerce streams will be as per criteria laid down by the respective schools with preference given to feeder schools and schools in the surrounding depending upon the availability of seats.

Compartment candidates can apply for provisional admission in their own schools and those from secondary schools can do so at a nearby school.

During the programme, the ACS also launched the website of Sir Tashi Namgyal Senior Secondary School: <https://sirtnsss.in>.

These websites have been designed by PGT [Physics] at Sir TNSSS, PD Chhetri with the support of Bolds Innovation Pvt Ltd.

STNM running short on manpower, DoP seeks more hands from other deptts

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 23 JUL

With STNM Hospital overwhelmed with 108 new cases getting admitted yesterday alone, and attending to 326 COVID-19 patients admitted there, its staff has been stretched thin. With mandatory quarantine required for health workers after duty at the COVID wing, the hospital is running short of manpower and has communicated a requirement for

additional Medical Attendants and Safai Karamcharis.

The Department of Personnel has accordingly written to heads of departments requesting that all departments nominate one office attendant and one Safai Karamchhari for deployment at STNM Hospital for non-COVID duty.

The names have to be provided latest by 24 July, the letter from Secretary, DoP, conveys.

India breaks COVID infection record again to cross 12-lakh mark

NEW DELHI, JULY 23 (PTI): With the highest-

ever single-day spike of 45,720 cases, India's COVID-19 tally crossed the 12-lakh mark on Thursday, while the death-toll mounted to 29,861 with a record 1,129 fatalities in a day, according to the Union Health Ministry data.

The country crossed the 12-lakh mark just three days after it crossed the 11-lakh milestone

The coronavirus caseload in the country surged to 12,38,635, while 7,82,606 people have recovered so far in the country, the data updated at 8 am showed.

There are 4,26,167 active cases of coronavirus infection presently in the country

Thus 63.18 per cent

people have recovered so far

The total number of confirmed cases includes foreigners

Of the 1,129 deaths reported in the last 24 hours, 518 are from Tamil Nadu, 280 from Maharashtra, 65 from Andhra Pradesh, 55 from Karnataka, 39 from West Bengal, 34 from Uttar Pradesh, 29 from Delhi, 28 from Gujarat, 14 from Madhya Pradesh and 10 from Jammu and Kashmir

Telangana and Jharkhand have reported nine fatalities each followed by Haryana with eight deaths, Assam, Punjab and Rajasthan six each, Odisha five, Goa and Uttarakhand two each while Kerala, Puducherry, Tripura and Chandigarh have registered a fatality each.

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Govt issues order for permanent commission of women officers in Army

NEW DELHI, JUL 23 (PTI): The Ministry of Defence has issued an order for grant of Permanent Commission to women officers in the Army

In a landmark judgement, the apex court in February had directed that all serving women officers recruited under the Short Service Commission (SSC) scheme will have to be considered for Permanent Commission

Army Spokesperson Col Aman Anand said the government order paved the way for empowering of women officers to shoulder "larger roles" in the Army.

"The order specifies grant of permanent commission to Short Service Commissioned (SSC) women officers in all 10 streams of the Indian Army," he said.

Col Anand said the 10 streams where permanent commission of women

officers are being made available include army air defence, signals, engineers, army aviation, electronics and mechanical engineers, army service corps and intelligence corps

At present, the Army offers permanent commission to women officers in two branches -- judge advocate general (JAG) and education

"Their selection board will be scheduled as soon as all affected SSC women officers exercise their option and complete requisite documentation," the Army spokesperson said.

Under SSC, women officers are initially taken for a period of five years, which is extendable up to 14 years. Permanent commissioning will allow them to serve till the age of retirement

The Army recruits women officers under

contd. on page 2

More than a Slip of the Tongue

JIWAN RAI

Gone are the days when almost the entire adult population of our part of the globe tuned into Radio Nepal, eagerly awaiting the great numbers of Narayan Gopal, Prakash Shreshtha, Aruna Lama, Tara Devi, Phatteman Rajbhandari, etc. to be played. Fast-forward to the present time. The transistor radio has long been snuffed out. Smart phones have even knocked out the mighty television that once conquered the world. The utility of smartphones has grown exponentially under the coronavirus imposed lockdown. It has now become our school, college, university, seminar hall and even place of worship.

The most heard voices over our smartphones are those of politicians. Fortunately, unfortunately or otherwise - politicians have become the loudest megaphone of the emergent culture. We listen to them as though they are going to tell us something without which we would not be even half as wise. We listen to them as though they are the bearers of life-changing tidings. We have unconditionally granted them the authority to rule over the auditory and visual faculties of our lives. We see them and listen to them at all times. The previous generation that listened to the Narayan Gopals, hummed along, thus re-echoing the melodies that soothed their lives. But the present generation that is listening to these politicians, ricochet the hatred and annoyance that rabble-rouse them. This

is exactly where I lose hope for this generation.

Now let me get down to the main mudda.

Neeraj Zimba's on-camera comment on the Sikkimese people became as viral in Sikkim as coronavirus has become in the world and has produced the same results - namely panic. He was adequately trolled, rebuked, scolded and shamed by those whose sentiments he unnecessarily hurt. Some picked up on his nasty comment to lacerate further the already wounded Sikkimese. "We the Sikkimese people are up for sale on corrugated sheets and we must mull over it" said some - adding insult to injury. Many did it to score a political point against the SDF administration. Some said it to genuinely prod those who do wear a price tag on them.

Zimba's hare-brained comment reflects the political, intellectual and moral bankruptcy of his own in particular and of many others in general. That this educated man can actually think so cheaply of the people - and even worse, articulate his ill-conceived opinion is mind-boggling and deeply disturbing. Imagine such a mindset becoming viral across his followers! How long will it take for this opinion to become a political, social and cultural narrative? When his political agenda is founded on a hateful idea such as this, what outcome is he going to achieve for his people? And just imagine a Sikkimese version of Neeraj Zimba, coming up with an

equivalent opinion about the people of Darjeeling. Extrapolate that with more people joining the 'juwari'.

He self-drown himself by bringing the Sikkim CM, PS Goley into the picture. His apology lost any semblance of repentance when he said that he was actually quoting him from his election campaign speeches. His desperation to hide his supposed 'slip of the tongue' could not have gone more awry. Zimba must quarantine himself and reflect - if not for his own good, at least for the political legacy of the Subash Ghising that he wants to perpetuate

Another speech error in the local political arena was Jacob Khaling asking a journalist to leave the press conference if he didn't have the patience to listen to him. SKM supporters are falling into the trap by committing twin fault of supporting their leader and demonizing the journalist who interjected a request to 'come to the main agenda'. Everyone knows that the journalist didn't egregiously violate any basic journalistic ethic. Nor was it sneaky comment.

Defending Khaling can harm the party for a number of reasons because of the way they are going about it. One, questioning the journalistic integrity of Pankaj Dhungel is so wrong. If he cannot be commended for his work, condemnation is the last thing he deserves. In the past, some foolhardy SDF partyworkers unnecessarily tagged the Sikkim Express as being the mouthpiece

of the opposition parties. Giving a 'certificate about journalistic integrity' is not the government's business.

Two, Jacob Khaling, by virtue of holding the office of Political Secretary of the incumbent CM must generously accommodate diverse media views. Any person can glorify democracy much better from a position of power than from outside of it.

Thirdly, what he said may not be outrageously wrong but the attitude it represents is wrong. He is only in his 40s and if he is allowed to behave like this without a gentle rap on the knuckle, his tendency to become impolite will become that much more intense in his 50s and 60s. Given his popularity and rise in Sikkim politics, Sikkim will gain much with a humble and polite Jacob Khaling. Some seniors must help him fix his ways. A true friend stabs in the front and that's the kind of friend he needs.

Finally, Khaling is one of the most powerful voices of the SKM party. The party, therefore, would be well-advised to strengthen that voice by way of rectification - not by supporting it when it is misspoken. When the future of Sikkim hangs in the balance, the promising young minds of the SKM party must focus on a more important debate than this. Some of the young admirable party workers are unnecessarily gravitating to the heat of the argument. The sooner they put the brakes on it, the better.

PM lays foundation stone for Water Supply project in Manipur

DELHI, 23 JUL (PIB): Prime Minister laid the foundation stone for the water supply project in Manipur today through a video conference.

Speaking on the occasion, Prime Minister said that even as the country is fighting relentlessly against COVID-19, Eastern and North Eastern India had also to face dual challenges of heavy rains and floods which cost many lives and rendered many homeless.

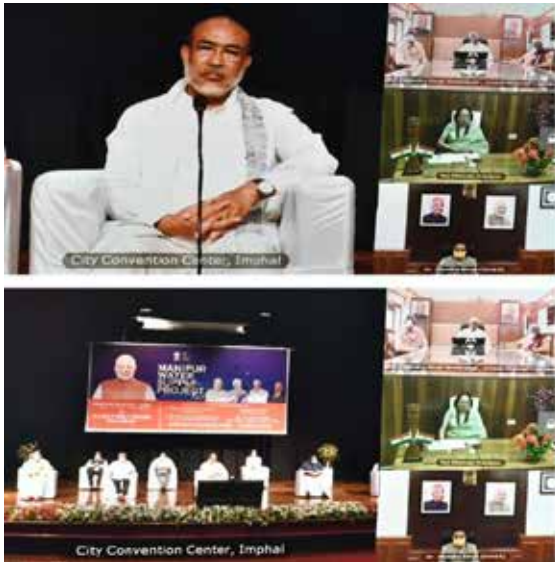
Prime Minister said the Manipur Government made all the necessary arrangements during the lockdown and special arrangements for the return of migrants.

He said about 25 lakh poor in Manipur have received free food grains under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana. Similarly, more than 1.5 lakh women in Manipur have been given the facility of free gas cylinders under the Ujjwala scheme.

Referring to the Water Supply Project, which is being implemented at a cost of Rs 3000 Crore he said it would reduce the water problems of the state and would be especially providing a huge relief to the women of the State. Shri Modi said that apart from Greater Imphal, the project would benefit 25 small towns and 1700 villages in the state. The project has been designed keeping in mind the needs of the next two decades.

He said that with this project, millions of people will have access to clean drinking water at their home and thousands of people will also get employment.

Prime Minister recalled that last year Jal Jeevan Mission was launched in the country



with a target of providing piped water to more than 15 crore houses and today about one lakh water connections are being installed every day in the country, with the participation of the people.

Prime Minister said Ease of Living is a necessary prerequisite for a better life and is the right of all including the poor.

He said steps have been taken in the last 6 years, at every level, in every field, to improve the ease of living, especially for the poor. He expressed happiness that today the whole of India including Manipur is free from open defecation. He said that LPG gas has reached the poorest of the poor, every village is connected by good roads and pucca houses are being provided to the homeless.

Prime Minister said that work is on a mission mode to provide safe drinking water to every household.

Shri Modi said Better Life is also directly linked to connectivity. He said the connectivity of North East is essential for a secure and sure Atmanirbhar Bharat. He said this would give a fillip to India's Act East Policy and that it would also provide a gate way

to country's travel and tourism sector.

He said modern infrastructure is being developed in the North East along with Roadways, Highways, Airways, Waterways and i-ways as well as gas pipelines. In the last 6 years, thousands of crores of rupees have been invested in the development of infrastructure, in the entire North East.

Prime Minister said efforts have been made to connect the four capitals of the capitals of the North East states, two lane roads to the district headquarters and all weather roads to the villages. To achieve this, he said about 3000 kilometers of roads have been laid and projects are being implemented to lay another 60000 Kilometres of roads.

He said there is a huge improvement in the area of rail connectivity in the North East with projects to build new railway stations and convert the existing rail network into broad gauge. Similarly, the work of connecting the capitals of every state of the North East with a rail network is going on at a fast pace for the last 2 years.

Apart from roads and railways, the air connectivity of North

East is equally important. Today there are about 13 operational airports in the North East. More than 3 thousand crores rupees are being spent to modernise the existing airports in the North East including Imphal Airport, he said.

Prime Minister referred to the more than 20 national waterways including the ones in the North East, which would provide a seamless connectivity.

Prime Minister said North East is a representative of India's Cultural diversity and Cultural Strength. He said this has a great tourism potential which still remains unexplored. Prime Minister said that North East should become the growth engine of country.

Prime Minister said that today the youth and people of North East are opting for development and progress and shunning violence. He said blockades in Manipur are now a part of history.

Shri Modi said that people in Assam, Tripura and Mizoram have now abandoned the path of violence. He said the Bru- Reang refugees are moving towards a better life.

Referring to the great potential of Bamboo

industry of the North East and its capacity to develop organic products, Prime Minister said that clusters are being developed for value addition and marketing of local products under the AatmaNirbhar Bharat campaign.

He said Agro Start-ups and other industries will benefit from these clusters. He said that the North East has the potential to replace India's Bamboo Import with Local Production. There is such a huge demand for incense sticks in the country, but still we import billions of rupees worth incense sticks. PM said that hundreds of crores of rupees are being invested under the National Bamboo Mission for Bamboo farmers, artists associated with handicrafts and other facilities. This will benefit the youth of the North East, the start ups here.

The Prime Minister said that many institutes are now being built in the North East for health, education, skill development, start-ups and other training. With the launch of the Sports University and a world class stadium, Manipur will become a major hub for the country's sports talent.

5 more containment zones declared in East Sikkim

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 23 JUL:**

In fresh orders issued today, the DC-East declared five more areas in East district as containment zones.

Four - the IBM Area in Rangpo, Majhigaon in Rangpo, the Postal Department residential colony above TNA School in Gangtok and DPH ward under

Nandok-Saramsa GPU - were placed under containment in the first order in the morning.

Later in the day, the Sun Pharma Unit-1 at Setipool was also marked out as a containment zone.

The move has been taken because there worry that these areas could develop into COVID hotspots unless "strict

measures" are taken.

Strict perimeter control has been directed for the containment zones and all movement of vehicles and people, except for emergency services and medical emergencies, are not allowed in these zones.

Roads to these zones are to be "guarded 24x7" by Sikkim Police.

West Bengal sees highest single-day spike of 2,291 fresh COVID-19 cases, total cases at 49,321

KOLKATA, 23 JUL [PTI]:

The COVID-19 death toll in West Bengal mounted to 1,221 on Wednesday after the highest single-day spike of 39 fatalities were reported from different parts of the state, the health department said.

The state also witnessed a record 2,291 fresh infections, pushing the tally to 49,321, it said in a bulletin.

The number of active cases in the state stands at 18,450.

The bulletin added that 1,615 patients have recovered from the disease in the last 24 hours.

Bank unions on Wednesday sought clarification from the West Bengal government whether banking services are exempted from the fresh lockdown to be imposed twice a week.

The administration has decided to impose total lockdown in the entire state on two days every week till August to stem the rise in COVID-19 cases.

The shutdown would be clamped on Thursday and Saturday this week. The measure will be enforced on Wednesday next week and the second day will be announced later.

Deputy speaker inspects road block at Hingdam

**PRITAM LAMA
GYALSHING, 23 JULY:**

Roads have been blocked at Hingdam near Legship and various stretches on the Tashiding and Legship axis for the past few days and today Deputy Speaker, Sangay Lepcha, inspected the damaged stretches and repairs underway there. The Deputy Speaker is the area MLA of the affected area.

He was accompanied by Yuksam-SDM Tshering T. Bhutia and officials from both South and West districts since the blocked areas sits on



the border of the two districts.

The Hingdam road is the main route for people of West Sikkim, especially those from Yuksam-Tashiding traveling to Ravangla, Singtam and

Gangtok.

The road was damaged on 21 July and the disruption is also affecting transportation of essential commodities to Tashiding and surrounding areas.

SKM functionaries confer with officials on COVID situation at Barfung

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 23 JUL:**

Party functionaries of the Sikkim Krantikari Morcha today called on SDM Rabong, Sonam Toggay Tashi and SHO Rabong, Sonam Bhutia and discussed the various apprehensions in the minds of the general public with regard to the growing number of Covid-19 cases.

The officials assured that all standard operating procedures were being followed and also appealed to the general public to



cooperate with the authorities and spread wider awareness among community.

The authorities further appealed that the people avoid falling for rumours and follow the health bulletin issued by health officials to keep

themselves updated.

The SKM team comprised of party CLC advisor-I Kesangla D Lhasungpa, CLC president Bishnu Sharma, party functionary Karma Sherap Bhutia and Bhawani Shanker Gurung.



Dhakal Gaon opts for barricades

Gangtok, 23 Jul: After the DPH ward of Nandok-Saramsa GPU in East Sikkim was declared a containment zone on Thursday morning, people of neighbouring Dhakalgaon barricaded the area against DPH Ward. [from NITESH PRADHAN]

SKM condemns SRP prez for exposing journos to undue risk

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 23 JUL:**

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha to accused Sikkim Republican Party of exposing eight journalists to possible nCoV infection by calling a press conference despite being told to stay in home quarantine.

On the same, the party has demanded that the administration

immediately file an FIR against SRP president, KB Rai, and charge him under Disaster Management Act.

In a video release, SKM social media coordinator [headquarter], Nabin Dahal, further alleged that after being exposed, the SRP president was trying to mislead people by twisting facts in a supposed clarification.

While extending his best wishes to the journalists under home quarantine as a result of Mr Rai's actions, Mr Dahal assured that the government will extend all required support and help to the journalists if the need arises.

"We want to ask Mr Rai whether politics is more important than the life of the people," he questioned.



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fresh lot of rapid information



KASS pictures lockdown

SINGTAM, 23 JUL: The lockdown has paused activities across the world and Sikkim too is going through a renewed phase at present. The creatively gifted, however, are rarely bored or without work. Singtam-based Krypton Arts Society of Sikkim is one such group. [from YOGEN THATAL]



COVID will disrupt Sikkim Milk supplies in Gangtok this weekend

**ARPAN PRADHAN
GANGTOK, 23 JUL:**

There will be no Sikkim Milk supply in the market here and other areas serviced by the Gangtok plant for the next two days [Friday and Saturday]. This was informed by the Sikkim

Milk Union managing director, Dr AB Karki, today.

The pause in supply has been necessitated by the milk union management's decision to sanitize the Gangtok plant and hold COVID testing for the staff

engaged there on Friday.

In view of the sanitization and testing, the Gangtok plant will not be procuring milk milk on Thursday and Friday.

Speaking to SummitTIMES, Dr Karki confirmed that supplies

will resume on Saturday.

That said, there will be some shortage on the weekend since the Gangtok plant will be bringing in supplies from the Jorethang Plant [which will be in operation as usual] for Saturday.

Upper Nandok also barricades itself



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 23 JUL:**

The impulse to barricade areas against "outsiders" is spreading just as contagiously and as unchecked as the virus itself.

On Thursday, hours after the district administration declared a ward nearby a containment zone, the youth from Upper Nandok blocked the entry point to Nandok at the Switch Yard.

Only emergency services and vehicles ferrying essential commodities will be allowed through the youth insist and have requested all to "kindly cooperate and bear with us

during this pandemic situation," a report from Sanjay Subba Lucksom conveyed.

DPH ward under Nandok-Saramsa was declared a containment zone by the district authorities today.

FIDE Online Chess Olympiad to start on July 25

CHENNAI, JUL 23 (PTI): The FIDE Online Chess Olympiad, which will feature top players like world no.3 Ding Liren and Indian ace Viswanathan Anand among others, will be held from July 25 to August 30.

Teams from 163 countries will take part in the first-ever online Olympiad.

Russia is the top-ranked team, followed by China, USA, Armenia and Ukraine.

The India team, captained by Vidit Santosh Gujarati, is the seventh-seed in the prestigious competition.

India is placed in the top division along with the likes of Russia, China,

US, Ukraine and others. Eight teams from the top division will qualify for stage 2 and battle it out with countries from other divisions.

World no.1 Magnus Carlsen is a notable absentee from the event.

China had won both Open and women's sections in the 2018 Chess Olympiad and also won the Online Nations Cup in May.

The event is FIDE's response to the postponement of the 'traditional' Chess Olympiad, which was planned to take place in Russia in August this year and was rescheduled to 2021, the world chess governing body said on

its website on Thursday while announcing the schedule.

Apart from Anand, leading players who will take part include GMs Ding Liren, Ian Nepomniachtchi, Alexander Grischuk, Levon Aronian, Anish Giri, and Wesley So.

Among women, world no.1 Hou Yifan, India's Koneru Humpy, D Harika, and Kateryna Lagno among others will be seen in action.

Each team will consist of six players, in a mixed format with a minimum of three female players and two junior players.

Chess.com will be the playing platform.

The event will consist

of two stages -- the Divisions stage, and the Play-offs stage, from Round of 16 to the final.

The time control will be rapid, with 15 minutes + 5 seconds increment per move.

The Indian team: (Average rating 2571) - Men: Vishwanathan Anand, Vidit Santosh Gujarati (captain), P Harikrishna and Arvind Chithambaram (reserves);

Women: Koneru Humpy, Dronavalli Harika, Bhakti Kulkarni and R Vaishali (reserves);

Junior boys: Nihal Sarin, R Praggnanandhaa (reserve);

Junior girls: Divya Deshmukh, Vantika Agrawal (reserve).

4 more test COVID-19 positive in Ladakh

LEH/JAMMU, JUL 23 (PTI): Four more people tested positive for COVID-19 in Ladakh on Thursday taking the number of active cases in the union territory to 183, officials said.

According to the media bulletin released by the directorate of health services of Ladakh, four patients in home isolation at Kargil and three from a COVID-19 hospital in Kargil were discharged on Thursday after their negative sample reports were received by the chief medical officer of Kargil.

With this, the number of active COVID-19 cases

in Ladakh has dropped to 1,83,159 in Leh district and 24 in Kargil district while the condition of all 183 active cases is stable, the bulletin said.

The CMO Leh received one positive sample report and 132 negative sample reports and CMO Kargil received one positive sample report and 49 negative sample reports from PGIMER Chandigarh, it said.

Similarly, CMO Leh also received two positive sample reports from the COVID lab in Chuchot Yokma and 122 samples were sent to PGIMER Chandigarh for testing by CMO Leh, it said.



As many as 131 passengers and 262 drivers and helpers of 172 trucks, tankers and light vehicles were screened at Khatshi Check Post and the vehicles were also sanitised,

officials said.

A total of 109 passengers and drivers and helpers of 63 tankers, 21 trucks and 8 light vehicles were screened at Upshi Check post, they added.

Delhi records 50 per cent excess rainfall in July

NEW DELHI, JUL 23 (PTI): With spells of heavy downpour lashing the national capital this week, the city has already recorded 50 per cent more rainfall than normal in July, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Thursday.

Rainfall recorded in the city in July till Saturday was just 47.9 mm, 56 per cent less than the normal for the period.

According to the IMD data, the Safdarjung Observatory, which provides representative figures for the city, has recorded 225 mm rainfall in July so far, which is 50 per cent more than the normal of 149.8 mm.

The Lodhi Road weather station has gauged 246 mm rainfall which is 64 per cent more than the normal of 149.8 mm.

The Palam weather station has recorded 37 per cent surplus precipitation -- 224 mm against the normal of 164.1 mm.

However, since Jun 1, when the monsoon season begins, the city has recorded 29 per cent less rainfall than normal.

Delhi received this season's first spell of heavy rains on Sunday which submerged low-lying areas in waist-deep water. Safdarjung, Ridge and Lodhi Road weather stations recorded 74.8 mm, 86 mm and 81.2 mm rainfall, respectively.

At least four people have died in rain-related incidents.

Heavy rains drenched the city again on Wednesday, inundating many areas and affecting traffic movement.

The monsoon reached Delhi on June 25, two days earlier than the usual date of arrival. Despite that, rains remained subdued in the city in the absence of a strong supportive weather system such as moisture-laden easterly winds from the Bay of Bengal.

Earlier, the IMD had predicted normal rainfall in the national capital during the season.

Governor extends Drukpa 'Tshe-Zi' greetings

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 23 JUL:**

On the occasion of Drukpa Tshe-Zi, Governor Ganga Prasad has extended warm greetings to the people of Sikkim.

In his message, the Governor says, "Drukpa Tshe-Zi marks the day on which Lord Buddha gave his first teaching on 'Four Noble Truths' to his disciples at Sarnath turning the wheel of Dharma. Lord Buddha's approach of rational self enquiry, discipline and harmony shall continue to guide us in our life. Let us pray for enlightening our life with the teachings and sermon of Lord Buddha."

The Governor has urged the people of Sikkim to pray together for the well being of all sentient beings and also the good health



Shri Ganga Prasad
Hon'ble Governor of Sikkim

and early recovery of COVID-19 patients. The Governor concludes his message by saying, "God will, as he has done before, heal his people and our land."

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What is Novel Coronavirus - nCoV?

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

Symptoms of nCoV

- Fever
- Difficulty in breathing
- Dry Cough
- Severe acute respiratory syndrome
- Pneumonia - like symptoms

Precautions to Prevent nCoV

- Wash your hands often with soap.
- Use an alcohol based hand sanitizer
- Observe good personal hygiene.
- Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
- Avoid contact with people with possible symptoms.
- Avoid contact with animals and consumption of undercooked meats.
- Avoid travel to nCoV affected places.
- Wear a mask if you have respiratory syndrome. and cover your mouth while coughing or sneezing.

Treatment

- Treatment is symptomatic and supportive, based on the patient's clinical condition.
- No vaccinations available as of now.
- Visit Doctor in case symptoms detected.

If you seek help, you may call :
-Toll free no. 104
District surveillance Officer
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WEST : 9583287809
NORTH : 9641957468
SOUTH : 7407691463
New STNM
AMS : 9434711402

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

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To Protect and to Promote *To secure the future, think beyond protection and quotas*

Local protection is an important issue. It could also be argued that it is of more emotional significance than constructive intervention, but because people and their leaders feel so strongly about the issue, it becomes very important. Even the West, with its enviable unemployment rate despite the economic downturn, is passionately debating the pros and cons of outsourcing which, in its mind is taking jobs away to cheaper human resource destinations even though benefits of such cost cuts benefit cash-strapped consumers at home the most.

So yes, local protection evokes a passionate and emotional response from the people, and governments have to continuously appear to be prioritising it. There are, however, practical and logistical implications that should never be lost sight of and quality never allowed to be compromised. Opportunities that progressive and positive attitudes create should not be allowed to get drowned by the din of rhetoric. In a world growing increasingly 'flat' [to borrow the now dated term from Thomas L. Friedman], digging trenches only manages to keep opportunities out, shrinks the horizon and constricts development. The present times demand competitive edge, and prioritizing protectionism dulls this pre-requisite of making it in the world.

Protect, yes, but also trust the inherent skills and potential of the young. The young have proven that they have what it takes to succeed and survive. Take for example the many young entrepreneurs that Sikkim can boast of now. They happened when the easier option of landing employment with the government became scarce and also less appealing. They applied themselves to enterprises, something that the 'local' talent pool was not considered very adept at till even a decade back. But look around now, the youth, who while in school, were being groomed for cushy bureaucracy or technical professions, have grown up quite well as hoteliers, restaurateurs, travel operators, small scale industrialists, respected professionals with national media, sportspersons... achievers.

Such successes probably happened because they grew up before obsessive protectionism invaded the public domain and made the young lazy. This of course does not go to say that job opportunities should not be protected for the people of the land, they should; but the policy makers have to strike the right balance where it is done in a way that does not lull future generations into a false sense of security and stops them from developing skills which make them world beaters. It is not easy, but a good beginning can be made by devising ways which reward healthy business practices. Investors who set up shop in Sikkim should conduct themselves better, encourage and invite more local employment on their own instead of being made to do so by way of legislations. They enjoy tax breaks and many other sops when they opt for Sikkim, not because Sikkim needs more factories, but because it rewards job creation. They have to understand and appreciate this fact.

The young on the other hand should be groomed as competitors, not as beneficiaries-in-waiting. In times to come, it should be their skills that attract and retain investments and not lavish industrial policies alone. Various arms of the government will have to collaborate to make this possible. It is possible and the generation controlling the present owes it to the future.

Why some anti-corruption campaigns make people more likely to pay a bribe

NIC CHEESEMAN & CARYN PEIFFER
THECONVERSATION.COM

Donors and civil society groups spend tens of millions of dollars every year trying to combat corruption. They do it because corruption has been shown to increase poverty and inequality while undermining trust in the government. Reducing corruption is essential to improve public services and strengthen the social contract between citizens and the state.

But what if anti-corruption efforts actually make the situation worse?

Our research in Lagos, Nigeria, found that anti-corruption messages often have an unintended effect. Instead of building public resolve to reject corrupt acts, the messages we tested either had no effect or actually made people more likely to offer a bribe.

The reason may be that the messages reinforce popular perceptions that corruption is pervasive and insurmountable. In doing so, they encourage apathy and acceptance rather than inspire activism.

FIGHTING CORRUPTION

Efforts to combat corruption in “developing countries” initially focused on law enforcement by political leaders and bureaucrats. But these strategies met with limited success and so efforts switched to raising public awareness of the dangers of corruption.

This change of approach made sense. One reason that leaders don't deliver on reforms is that they benefit from the way things are. Encouraging citizens to reject corrupt leaders would give those in power an incentive to act.

The last 20 years therefore saw a vast array of campaigns, from newspaper and radio advertisements to Twitter messages. Short films, theatre productions and signs that proclaim that government institutions are “corruption free zones” were also included.

These messages are seen by large numbers of people, but until recently there had been remarkably little systematic research on whether they actually work.

RESEARCHING CORRUPTION

To test the impact of anti-corruption messages we developed five short narratives like those promoted by civil society organisations and international donors. One message focused on explaining



that corruption is widespread and damaging. Others emphasised the local impact of graft and the way it wasted citizens' taxes.

To test the effect of more positive messages, one narrative talked about recent successes that political leaders had in curbing corruption. Another detailed the role that religious leaders played in promoting clean government.

We read the messages to 2,400 randomly selected people in Lagos. While corruption has often been identified as a major challenge in Nigeria, the Lagos State government has made some progress towards reducing government waste, ensuring all citizens pay taxes and delivering better services. It was therefore plausible that both positive and negative messages about corruption would resonate with Lagosians. The state is also ethnically diverse, with considerable poverty and inequality, and so reflects the kind of context in which anti-corruption messaging is often deployed.

Each person we interviewed was given one of the narratives. A control group was not given any anti-corruption information. This was to enable us to compare the impact of different messages. We then asked everyone a number of questions about their attitudes towards corruption.

In an advance on previous studies, we also invited 1,200 people to play a game in which

they had an opportunity to win real money. In the game, players could take away more money if they were willing to pay a small bribe to the “banker” who determined the pay-outs. The game tested players' commitment to rejecting corruption in a more demanding way than simply asking them if they believed corruption was wrong.

We were then able to evaluate whether anti-corruption messages were effective by looking at whether those who received them were more likely to demand clean government and less willing to pay a bribe.

MORE HARM THAN GOOD

In line with prior research, our findings suggest that anti-corruption campaigns may be doing more harm than good. None of the narratives we used had a positive effect overall. Many of them actually made Lagosians more likely to pay a bribe.

Put another way, the good news is that public relations campaigns can change citizens' minds. But the bad news is that they often do so in unintended and counterproductive ways.

The reason for this seems to be that anti-corruption messages encourage citizens to think more about corruption, emphasising the extent of the problem. This contributes to “corruption fatigue”: the belief that the problem is simply too big for any one person to make a difference generates despondency. It makes individuals

more likely to go with the flow than to stand against it.

This interpretation is supported by another finding that the negative effect of anti-corruption messaging was far more powerful among individuals who believed that corruption was pervasive. This reveals that the problematic consequences of anti-corruption messages are not universal. Among less pessimistic people, messages did not have a negative effect. And one message had the desired effect of reducing the probability of paying a bribe. This was the narrative that emphasised the relationship between corruption and citizens' tax payments.

Our study therefore suggests that if we can target anti-corruption messages more effectively at specific audiences, we may be able to enhance their positive effects while minimising the risks.

WHAT NEXT?

Other studies have come to similar conclusions in Indonesia, Costa Rica and to some extent Papua New Guinea.

We therefore need to take the lessons of these studies seriously. Anti-corruption campaigns that send untargeted messages should be halted until we work out how to target them more effectively. The most logical response is to embrace new ways of working.

This might mean identifying messages that persuade citizens that corruption is falling and so “nudge” them to believe it is a problem that can be overcome.

Where that's not possible, it is also worth considering a more radical break with the past. As others working within the Anti-Corruption Evidence Consortium have argued, the most promising approach may be to abandon traditional anti-corruption messaging in favour of working more indirectly. This would involve building public demand for greater political accountability and transparency without always talking directly about corruption.

Such an approach would be less high profile, but is far more likely to be effective.

[Nic Cheeseman is Professor of Democracy, University of Birmingham; Caryn Peiffer is Lecturer in International Public Policy and Governance, University of Bristol]

How parts of the media in Ghana aid – rather than fight – corruption

JOSEPH YAW ASOMAH
THECONVERSATION.COM

Corruption is a significant obstacle to development, democratic consolidation and environmental security, particularly in the developing world. It involves a misuse of power in serving private ends at the public expense. Corruption occurs in both the public and private sectors.

There are different forms of corruption. Political corruption is a classic example. It is often committed by politicians and top government officials acting alone or collaborating with other actors to advance private agendas.

In democratic societies, free and independent private media can investigate and expose political corruption. They can also pressurise relevant authorities to address the problem.

But this isn't always the case. In my paper I look at whether media liberalisation and freedoms make the private media a powerful anti-corruption force in developing countries such as Ghana. I focused on for-profit electronic (television, radio and internet) and print media organisations.

I argue that, contrary to the popular view that media freedom, pluralism and competition can help tackle corruption, democratic freedoms aren't adequate safeguards for private media to fight political corruption. Despite Ghana's prevailing democratic freedoms, my study indicates that Ghanaian private media actively contribute to political corruption. This happens through biased reporting, propaganda peddling, indulgence in corruption, weak investigative journalism, and limited follow-up reporting.

These activities all contribute to

weakening anti-corruption struggles in Ghana.

MEDIA CORRUPTION

My research included 25 in-depth semi-structured interviews in Ghana. These included media personnel, politicians, anti-corruption activists, academics, and students of journalism and political science. Interview questions focused on whether the private media play a constructive role in combating political corruption.

Media corruption usually occurs when the press solicits – or accepts – cash or kind from those who want them to do their bidding. My research shows that the Ghanaian private media have become a “rented press” or “cash for coverage”.

Participants talked about the practice of “brown envelope journalism”. This mostly involved money being handed over as a bribe to influence a story.

One common practice is soli (solidarity). This refers to money given by individuals or organisations whose events reporters travel to cover.

Media personnel are divided on whether soli constitutes corruption. One editor commented:

Soli is something you take to influence. I don't take soli.

But not everyone agreed. For some journalists, soli is not a bribe because they consider it their “legitimate” per diem, which provides a crucial means of survival.

Studies done elsewhere indicate that brown envelopes and “soli” practices compromise critical anti-corruption reporting and embolden those involved in political corruption. For example, in Ethiopia, Lodamo and Skjerdal showed that freebies and brown envelopes undermine anti-corruption efforts.

PARTISAN REPORTING

Media houses and journalists that maintain strong ties to political candidates



and parties tend to engage in partisan reporting. One participant said:

Journalists defend the political party they are affiliated with corruptive practices or attack opposition or people who raised issues about corruption.

My research showed that those who provided biased coverage – sometimes openly, sometimes subtly – for political candidates and parties did so for different reasons. During my research I was told that this could include being offered money, cars and political appointments.

Reporting that comes from these corrupt relationships is partisan and tends to mask or distort the truth about political corruption cases.

One example is the coverage of financial sector reforms by media outlets. The pro-National Democratic Congress Herald framed the reforms as a witch-hunt and cover-up for political corruption committed by the New Patriotic Party affiliates.

But media outlets that are considered to be pro the New Patriotic Party, such as the Oman FM and Net2 TV, portrayed the exercise as crucial to addressing the banking crisis. They linked the crisis

to political corruption that marked the immediate past National Democratic Congress administration.

Both sides of the reporting framed the anti-corruption fight as a partisan issue rather than as a national problem.

My findings show that sections of the Ghanaian media have become propaganda tools in the hands of unscrupulous politicians and political parties to advance their political agendas. As one participant commented:

Politicians understand how to capture the media and use propaganda to destroy [otherwise credible] stories.

Previous studies have shown that propaganda peddling weakens anti-corruption efforts.

WEAK JOURNALISM

Undercover journalism is the media's major weapon in the fight against corruption. In Ghana's Fourth Republic, only a few people have been visible in the anti-corruption journalism field.

Most private media houses don't have investigative desks. As a result, media reports tend to rely on allegations and counter-allegations. One participant said media houses should “go underground

and find out the information”. This is important “because sometimes, people allegedly involved in the corruption feed you with what they want you to know”.

There are challenges in pursuing investigative journalism in Ghana. The first is that journalists can be harassed, or worse. In 2019 a prominent investigative journalist, Ahmed Hussein-Suale Divela, was murdered just before he was due to give evidence in a major football scam involving influential Ghanaians. His murder has not yet been solved.

Journalists also mentioned political interference and nonavailability of funding as barriers to investigative journalism in the country.

Another weakness is that media outlets don't consistently follow up on cases where political corruption has been exposed. As one participant commented:

There have been many instances in which we bring critical issues to bear and discuss them for a week or two and leave them.

Sustained monitoring helps keep the pressure on politicians and law enforcement agencies to ensure a logical conclusion.

NEXT STEPS

Journalists are expected not to allow money and political affiliation to influence their work. They should see their work as a calling. To uphold their journalistic independence, they should decline offers, including payments and cars, from influential people they investigate.

Civil society and state institutions should support media houses and journalists that demonstrably play a critical, active watchdog role in society.

Security agencies also ought to protect media houses and journalists threatened by thugs because of their anti-corruption work.

[The writer is Assistant Professor, St. Thomas University (Canada)]

Arunachal Pradesh reports record single-day surge of 91 COVID cases, tally now 949

ITANAGAR, JULY 23 [PTI]:

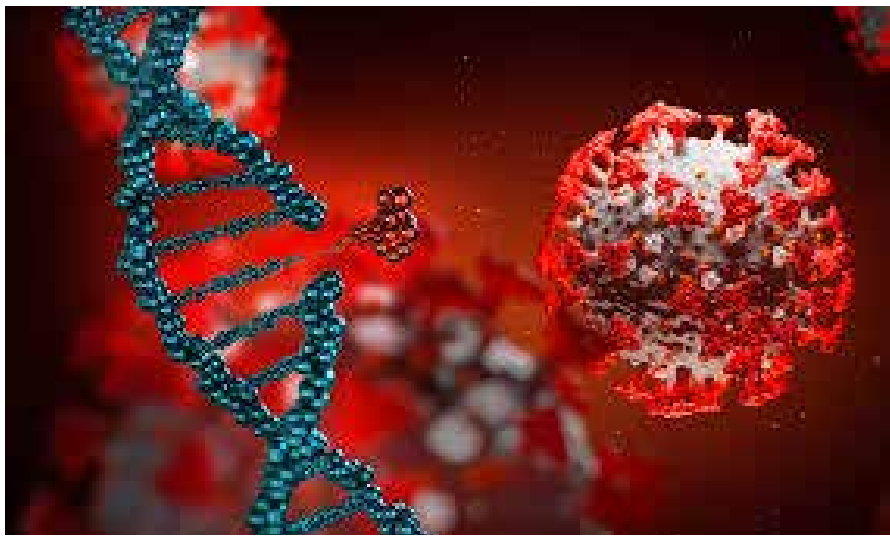
Arunachal Pradesh reported its highest single-day spike of 91 COVID-19 cases, taking the northeastern state's tally to 949 on Thursday, a senior Health Department official said.

Thirty-one of the fresh cases were reported in the Capital Complex region which is locked down, while 15 were detected in East Siang, 13 in Tirap, 10 in West Siang and seven in Namsai.

Papum Pare, Longding and Lower Dibang Valley reported three cases each, West Kameng and Upper Siang besides two each, and Kamle and Lower Siang one each, State Surveillance Officer Dr L Jampa said.

The state had registered its previous highest single-day surge on July 20 when 90 people tested positive for coronavirus.

Kamle district has reported its first



COVID-19 case.

Of the 31 fresh cases reported in the Capital Complex comprising Itanagar, Naharlagun, Nirjuli and Banderdewa, 28 were detected through RTD-antigen tests while three were through RT-PCR test, Dr Jampa said.

Twelve new patients in East Siang district have returned from other states and are in quarantine centres, while two are drivers deployed in essential services and one is a health care

worker, he said.

In Longding district, the three fresh cases include two people who have returned from Assam.

Of the three cases reported from Lower Dibang Valley district, two are returnees from Assam and one a health care worker. All the cases were detected from quarantine centres, Dr Jampa said.

Five of the newly infected persons in Namsai district were detected in quarantine

centres, while two are primary contacts of a positive case detected earlier, he said.

Of the two cases in West Kameng district, one is an army personnel and another a health care worker.

On Wednesday, 11 patients were discharged after they recovered from the disease.

They were advised strict home quarantine and self-monitoring for two weeks, Dr Jampa added.

The Capital Complex

administration and the Papum Pare district authorities have declared several areas and buildings as containment zones in the wake of the sudden surge in COVID-19 cases. The Capital Complex region has recorded the highest 378 COVID-19 cases in the state.

Arunachal Pradesh at present has 632 active coronavirus cases. While 314 people have recovered from the disease, three have died.

A total of 44,986 samples have been tested in the state so far, he said.

The state witnessed a surge in COVID-19 cases since July 1 with 758 cases reported in the last 23 days, Dr Jampa said, adding that the COVID-19 recovery rate in the state stands at 35 per cent.

The northeastern state remained virus-free till May 23. It witnessed a spurt in COVID-19 cases after residents of the state started returning from other parts of the country.

Jharkhand reports 439 new COVID-19 cases, 3 more die

RANCHI, JUL 22 (PTI): Jharkhand on Wednesday reported 439 new cases of COVID-19, while three more people died due to the disease, as per the bulletin issued by the state government.

One of the deceased was from Koderma, while the others were from Ranchi, it said. The state's death toll stands at 64.

There are 3,570 active cases in the state, with the infection tally rising to 6,682, it said.

A total of 3,048 people have so far recovered and discharged from hospitals, the bulletin said.

Centre announces Rs 346 Cr to tackle flood situation in Assam



Guwahati, July 22 [PTI]:

The Centre will soon release Rs 346 crore as an initial amount for handling the flood situation in Assam, which has affected 56 lakh people in the northeastern state, an official statement said on Wednesday.

Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat held a detailed discussion with Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal over the flood situation in the state through a video-conference, during which he

conveyed the decision, it said.

"The central government will release the first installment of Rs 346 crore soon under the Flood Management Programme," a statement from the Chief Minister's Office said.

For addressing the flood, it added.

During monsoon, the release of excess water from the dams in Bhutan leads to flooding in the downstream areas in all the Lower Assam districts, especially Barpeta, Nalbari and Kokrajhar.

According to the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA), 115 people have lost their lives in floods and landslides so far this year — 89 were killed in flood-related incidents and 26 died due to landslides.

The flood situation in Assam deteriorated with two more persons losing their lives, even as over 26 lakh people remain affected in 26 districts. Cumulatively, nearly 56 lakh people have been affected by the deluge across the state this year, the ASDMA said.

No state-wide total lockdown in Nagaland

KOHIMA, JULY 22 [NAGALAND PAGE]: Despite the surge in COVID-19 cases in Nagaland, the State government once again decided not to impose statewide total lockdown, but has empowered the respective District Task Force on COVID-19 to make its own decisions.

The decision to this effect was taken during an emergency meeting of the High Power Committee (HPC) on COVID-19 chaired by Chief Minister, Neiphiu Rio and co-chaired by Deputy CM, Y Patton today in Kohima.

Nagaland Government Spokesperson on COVID-19, Minister Neiba Kronu said that taking into the COVID-19 situation in other

districts, the HPC was of the view that statewide total lockdown was not needed at the present moment.

However, Kronu said the HPC meeting while considering the various recommendations and also heightened demand of total lockdown from civil society organizations in Dimapur and Kohima, has decided to empower the respective DTF of the two districts to discuss and take decisions as per the need at district level.

He also said the HPC has advised the DTFs to consider the ensuing Assembly session and grant proper exemptions for smooth conduct of the session.

The HPC on COVID-19 was scheduled to be held

on Thursday but due to the emergent situation it was held today, he said.

Meanwhile, sources said that following the government's advisory, the Kohima DTF will be holding a meeting on Thursday to take final decision on total lockdown.

Mention may be made here that the expressing alarm over the rising sporadic COVID-19 cases in various colonies of Kohima, the Kohima Village Council had urged the Government to impose 'total lockdown' in the State capital for two weeks to prevent the virus from spreading and break the chain of infection.

The Association of Kohima Municipal Wards Panchayat (AKMWP) on

Tuesday while setting 5 days deadline for Kohima DTF to impose total lockdown in Kohima municipality lest they would be compelled to resort to self-imposition of total lockdown from July 27.

Asked about today's meeting with the Kohima DTF, AKMWP president Neibulie Kiewhuo said that initially the meeting decided to wait for the outcome of the HPC meeting.

"Since the HPC has now empowered the Kohima DTF to make its own decision on the need for total lockdown, we are hopeful that a notification will be issued by DTF by Thursday at least for a week-long total lockdown in the state capital," Kiewhuo said.

Jolted by series of earthquakes, many Mizos spending nights in tents

AIZAWL, JUL 23 (PTI): Many people in Mizoram's Champhai district bordering Myanmar are spending nights outside their homes in makeshift tents after a series of earthquakes hit the northeastern state in a month, an official said.

So far, at least 22 earthquakes have rocked four districts - Champhai, Saitual, Siaha and Serchhip since June 18. The tremors ranged from 4.2 to 5.5 in magnitude. Champhai was the hardest-hit district.

Champhai district Deputy Commissioner Maria C T Zuali told PTI that makeshift tents were set up at several villages by people and the district administration provided tarpaulins, water barrels, solar lamps and first-aid kits to them.

She said that biscuits and sorazo (food supplements) were also provided to old people.

According to the deputy commissioner, at least 20 earthquakes have hit Champhai district in a month.

She said that more than 16 villages have been affected by the



earthquakes and over 170 houses, including churches and community halls were damaged.

At Dungtlang, one of the worst-hit villages in Champhai district, at least five makeshift camps have been set up, Dungtlang Young Mizo Association (YMA) Assistant Secretary John Zothanmawia Fanai said.

On Monday, the government sent three teams of doctors that consisted of psychiatrists, clinical psychologists and medical specialists to the quake-hit areas to assist the people,

who developed mental trauma following the quakes.

The teams are currently touring affected villages in Champhai district.

Dr C Lalhreikima, a psychiatrist in a government hospital, leading one of the teams, told PTI that many people have anxiety due to frequent earthquakes.

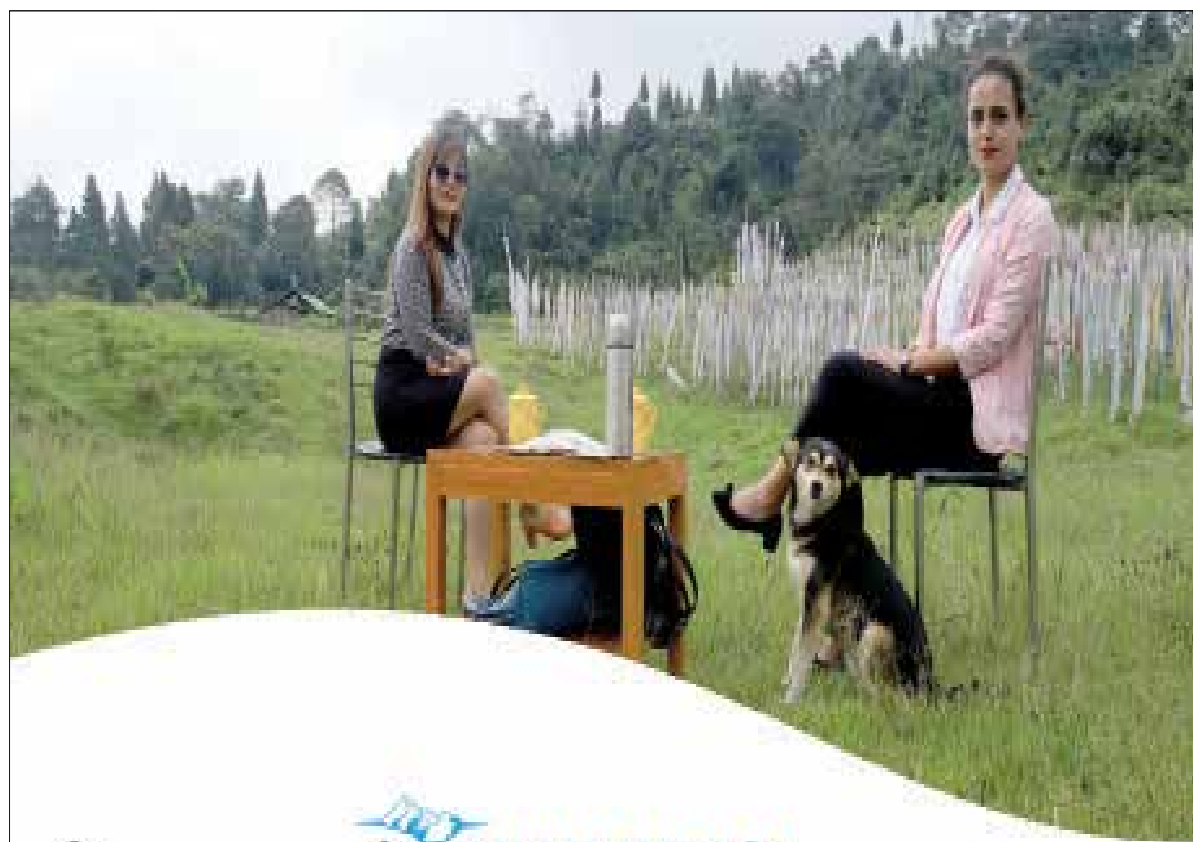
"We are giving counselling to the panic-stricken people apart from giving medical care," he said.

The state government on Tuesday sent Geology

and Mineral Resource department joint secretary H Lalbiakkima, who is also a geologist, to Champhai district to study and assess the cause of earthquakes.

According to Zuali, some geologists from Mizoram University (MZU) will also visit quake-hit villages in Champhai district.

Earlier in June, Chief Minister Zoramthanga had asked the Centre to send expert seismologists or geophysicists to assess the ground situation and the exact cause of the earthquakes.



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3 teams to chase
2 Champions
League spots on
EPL's final day

LIVERPOOL, JUL 23 (AP): Chelsea was too charitable as Anfield title party guests.

Before collecting the the Premier League trophy, Liverpool won 5-3 to prevent Chelsea from sealing a Champions League spot.

It leaves two of the four spots in Europe's elite competition still up for grabs in Sunday's final round of games.

Chelsea just needs a point against Europa League-chasing Wolverhampton to seal a top-four finish. And there will be a Champions League qualification showdown between Manchester United and Leicester.

For the first time since September, United is back in the top four and Leicester has dropped out after Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's side drew 1-1 with West Ham on Wednesday.

Liverpool as champions and second-place Manchester City have already qualified for the Champions League.

ANFIELD THRILLER
The title sealed last month, all that was at stake for Liverpool against Chelsea was preserving its unbeaten record in the league at home this season. It's now 18 wins out of 19. The only dropped points were from a draw against Burnley in the previous home game.

Naby Keita's thunderbolt of a shot, Trent Alexander-Arnold's stunning dipping free kick and Gini Wijnaldum's close-range strike sent Liverpool into a 3-0 led.

Olivier Giroud was able to pull one back before halftime after goalkeeper Alisson parried Willian's shot into the striker's path.

But Roberto Firmino waited until the final home game of the season to end his wait for a league goal at Anfield this campaign, heading in from Alexander-Arnold's cross ten minutes into the second half.

Chelsea threatened a comeback when Christian Pulisic set up Tammy Abraham's goal and got on the scoresheet himself, swiveling before striking into the net.

But Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain completed the job for Liverpool with a fifth goal in front of the Kop where the players later collected the trophy. The presentation took place on a podium placed where fans sat before the pandemic shut them out of stadiums.

GREENWOOD TO RESCUE

One of the revelations for the season at Old Trafford has been 18-year-old forward Mason Greenwood who clinched the point against West Ham. A 17th goal of the campaign moved him level with George Best, Brian Kidd and Wayne Rooney as United's top-scoring teenager in a season.

The goal canceled out Michail Antonio's penalty that was awarded after Paul Pogba's handball. A point was still enough to secure Premier League survival for West Ham, which is led by former Manchester United manager David Moyes.

Liverpool fend off Chelsea fightback in
5-3 thriller before trophy celebrations

ANDY HUNTER

LIVERPOOL, 23 JULY [THEGUARDIAN]: How fitting that a knee injury did not prevent Jordan Henderson performing his now customary shuffle before lifting the Premier League trophy at an empty yet joyful Anfield.

In a season like no other, nothing has stood in the way of Jürgen Klopp's remarkable force and the piece of silverware Liverpool have craved for over 30 years. The wait finally ended last month. The party really got going during, and especially after, another piece of history was made against Chelsea.

Before climbing the steps to a specially constructed podium on the Kop to receive the title from Sir Kenny Dalglish, Liverpool's players served up one more rousing and hugely entertaining display to end the league season unbeaten at Anfield. They have now gone three successive league campaigns without defeat on home soil.

No other team in Liverpool's illustrious history achieved that feat. A 59th unbeaten home game arrived courtesy of outstanding goals from Naby Keita, Trent Alexander-Arnold, Roberto Firmino and the substitute Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain – plus a more prosaic effort from Georginio Wijnaldum – and with a reminder to Chelsea of how far they have to go to be considered challengers at this level.

Frank Lampard's side could have secured Champions League qualification with a point



at Anfield but, despite a late recovery inspired by the substitute Christian Pulisic, defeat means their hopes of a top-four finish will be decided on the final day.

Chelsea were the more dangerous team until Keita opened the scoring with a stunning effort, but it was to Liverpool's immense credit that the post-match party never distracted from their duties on the pitch. And there was plenty to distract them. The fireworks started over an hour before kick off in nearby Stanley Park and intensified over Anfield throughout the game. A group of approximately 100 Liverpool fans ignored pleas to keep away and gathered on Anfield Road to greet the team bus. A security cordon kept them at a distance from the stadium but Merseyside police had to issue a dispersal order as crowd numbers increased during the night.

Lampard's team were in the ascendancy when the contest turned in the blink of Liverpool's relentless pressing and Keita's

unstoppable finish. The Guinea international, having dispossessed Willian with help from Wijnaldum, seized on the loose ball and had only one intention as he bore down on Kepa Arrizabalaga's goal. His thunderous shot beat the Chelsea goalkeeper convincingly from 25 yards, kissing the underside of the crossbar on its way as the Liverpool bench exploded with joy.

Alexander-Arnold doubled the champions' advantage with another memorable free-kick reminiscent of his recent goal against Crystal Palace. Mateo Kovacic was eventually, and correctly, adjudged to have fouled Sadio Mané by the referee Andre Marriner, prompting a furious exchange between Lampard and the Liverpool assistant manager, Pepijn Lijnders. Chelsea's manager was unhappy at Lijnders leaping from the bench after the foul. He sat back down, only to spring back up again as Alexander-Arnold swept the set piece past a rooted Arrizabalaga from almost 30 yards. The

keeper's movement, and lack of homework on the Liverpool full-back, were poor.

Number three arrived when Andy Robertson's corner caused havoc inside the Chelsea penalty area. Olivier Giroud's headed clearance struck Jorginho's arm and, while Mohamed Salah appealed for a penalty, Wijnaldum volleyed the loose ball into the roof of the Chelsea net. It was the 11th goal that Lampard's team had conceded in their last four away matches.

Liverpool were a class apart from the moment Keita struck but Giroud gave Chelsea a glimmer of hope when he prodded home in first-half stoppage time, converting after Alisson had saved superbly from Willian. The glimmer was quickly extinguished.

A strange quirk of Liverpool's campaign was Firmino's failure to score a single league goal at Anfield despite being fundamental to their success. That minor blemish was erased in fine style when Alexander-Arnold

produced a perfect cross and the Brazilian, powering in ahead of Kurt Zouma and César Azpilicueta, headed past Arrizabalaga.

Chelsea could have been routed before a triple substitution by Lampard sparked improvement. Salah missed two excellent chances to become the first Liverpool player since Roger Hunt in 1965-66 to score 20 goals in three successive seasons.

The visitors reduced the arrears again when Pulisic weaved his way past three Liverpool defenders and centred for his fellow substitute Tammy Abraham to tap home. Abraham returned the favour with a cross that Pulisic took on his chest before beating Alisson, but Oxlade-Chamberlain sealed the win in style when Liverpool broke superbly from a Chelsea free-kick.

All that was left was the long-awaited coronation. Dalglish, a late substitute when Liverpool last received the championship on 1 May 1990, performed the honours while families of the players watched from the main stand. They had been allowed in after a U-turn by the local safety advisory group, on condition they watched the game on televisions in the stand. Klopp broke from the throng to salute his wife and two sons in the small crowd while ticker-tape fell all around and fireworks continued to explode into the night sky. Henderson, injured yet still shuffling, lifted the trophy and 30 years of frustration along with it.

Anand loses to Carlsen in
Legends of Chess tourney



CHENNAI, JUL 23 (PTI): India's Viswanathan Anand suffered his second consecutive loss, going down to world No.1 Magnus Carlsen in the second round of the USD 150,000 chess24 Legends of Chess online tournament.

The former world champion had kept the Norwegian ace in check in three games of the best-of-four contest before slipping 1.5-2.5 by in the final game late on Wednesday.

The Indian ace is making his maiden appearance on the Magnus Carlsen Chess Tour.

He had gone down by a similar margin to Russia's Peter Svidler in the opening round. He takes on another former world champion Vladimir Kramnik in the third round.

Anand is back in action after having last participated in the Online Nations Cup in May.

Carlsen is in joint lead with veteran Israeli Boris Gelfand and Svidler. All of them have six points after two victories each.

Anish Giri got off the mark with a win over Vladimir Kramnik, while world No.3 Ding Liren's struggles continued as the Chinese lost to Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia.

All the round-robin games are best-of-four game contests.

Legends of Chess is a unique event where Carlsen, Liren, Nepomniachtchi and Giri, semifinalists at the Chessable Masters (part of the Magnus Carlsen Tour), received an automatic invite.

They are up against six legends aged 40-52, who have been at the top of world chess at various points in their career.

The tournament is part of the Magnus Carlsen Chess Tour. The winner of this event will qualify for the USD 300,000 Grand Final scheduled from August 9 to 20.

Results:

Round 2: Ian Nepomniachtchi beat Ding Liren 2.5-1.5; Magnus Carlsen beat Viswanathan Anand 2.5-1.5; Peter Svidler beat Peter Leko 2.5-1.5; Boris Gelfand beat Vasyl Ivanchuk 2.5-1.5; Anish Giri beat Vladimir Kramnik 2.5-1.5.

'What a season, what a league': Slaven
Bilic savours West Brom's promotion

BEN FISHER

LONDON, 23 JUL [THEGUARDIAN]: Slaven Bilic said his burning desire to manage in the Championship was vindicated after steering West Bromwich Albion into the Premier League on an extraordinary final day of drama.

Bilic's side drew 2-2 at home to QPR but Brentford's failure to beat Barnsley ensured a return to the top flight after two years away. Meanwhile, Luton avoided relegation and Swansea squeezed into the play-offs at the expense of Nottingham Forest.

"What a season, what a league," said Bilic, who was appointed last summer. "I was very vocal when I said I would always like to manage in the Championship because it's especially difficult. I never imagined it would be this difficult, this demanding. It's exhausting. I didn't enjoy every minute of it, of course, but with a finish like this, the results at the bottom, the Forest situation, it's unbelievable. I'm proud of the whole club."

Bilic and his players paused their celebrations at full-time before confirmation of Brentford's defeat at Griffin Park. Goals by Grady Diangana and Callum Robinson earned a point against QPR, who opened the scoring through Ryan Manning before Eberechi Eze equalised on what could prove his final appearance for the club.

"I was told it is 1-1

in the 85th minute and I said: 'I don't believe, I can't rely on that, we have to try and score,'" Bilic said. "If we concede we concede but I had a feeling we wouldn't concede. When they told me it was 2-1, then I told them to go back. I didn't believe they would score two. It happened and we are very happy."

The Brentford manager, Thomas Frank, admitted his side must now lift themselves for the play-offs.

"Football is 80% suffering and 10% joy," he said. "When you have that opportunity to go direct to the Premier League, that is the emotional part of it – but Barnsley did a good job. We can't sit down and cry too long because that will never help anything. We need to go again and pick ourselves up. We will have a sleep and then be ready to fight again."

Elsewhere, Swansea sensationally snatched the final play-off position after a 4-1 victory over Reading allowed Steve Cooper's side to overturn a goal-difference deficit of five at kick-off to Nottingham Forest, who were beaten 4-1 at home by Stoke.

Hull were also relegated after losing 3-0 to Cardiff, while Wigan drew 1-1 with play-off-bound Fulham and must now await the results of their appeal against a 12-point deduction imposed automatically for falling into insolvency to see if they will join them in League One next season.

David Law takes first-round lead at British Masters

NEWCASTLE UPON

TYNE (ENGLAND), JUL 23 (AP): David Law of Scotland shot a 7-under 64 to take a one-stroke lead over Oliver Fisher, Garrick Porteous and Renato Paratore in the opening round of the British Masters at Close House Golf Course near Newcastle.

Aaron Cockerill, Rasmus Hojgard, Lee Slattery and Pedro Figueiredo were another shot back in a share of fifth, holding off a gaggle of nine players on 4 under.

Law began his first round with five straight pars but then birdied the next five holes in a row, produced a brilliant up and down from thick rough to save par on the 11th and birdied the 12th and 13th as well.

The Scotsman had missed five cuts in seven events in 2020, including four in a row before the sport shut down due to the coronavirus pandemic.

I did not really know what to expect and it's probably (about having) a mindset of acceptance, Law said.

You need to know it might not go your way this week. It's only one round but it's a very positive start." The tournament marks the start of the European Tour's U.K. Swing, a series of six events played in England and Wales over the next six weeks devised primarily for ease of travel for players amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The venues for the six events are all within

a three-hour drive of one another, scrapping the need for air travel to which players have become accustomed on the increasingly global tour. Players and caddies have been tested on arrival, will have to check for symptoms and take a temperature test daily, and then had an antigen test before stepping on the first tee. No positive results have been reported.

England's Lee Westwood, the only player in the field ranked in the world's top-50 at No. 34 and host of the event in northern England, finished six shots back after shooting a 1-under 70.

I didn't really have control of my swing and I mis-clubbed a few times which is probably not acceptable

being a member here," Westwood said.

But I putted really well and ground it out and I think 1-under par is probably a really good score for the way that I played.

Most of Europe's elite are in the United States ahead of a World Golf Championship in Tennessee, where the prize fund of 10.5 million is around 7 times that of the British Masters, and then the PGA Championship in San Francisco starting on Aug. 6.

Miguel ngel Jim nez, making his 706th appearance on the European Tour to tie the record of Sam Torrance, finished four back after a 3-under 68 in an 11-way tie for 18th that also includes former US Open

Inter is third, one point behind Atalanta, and remains in the running for second place.

Second place has no meaning for me, said Inter coach Antonio Conte, who managed Juventus to the first three titles of its streak.

It just means you're atop the losers' list.

Romelu Lukaku and Alexis Sanchez each hit the woodwork for Inter, which also had a potential goal from Antonio Candreva waved off for offside.

We played a solid match but you've got to score



goals, Conte said. "We're lacking the killer instinct.

P E N A L T I E S , PENALTIES, PENALTIES

Parma beat Napoli 2-1 in a match with three penalties. Gianluca Caprari and Dejan Kuselevski

converted for Parma while Lorenzo Insigne converted for Napoli.

It was the second time this season that Parma beat Napoli, which dropped behind Roma and AC Milan in the race for fifth place.

China launches first Mars mission

BEIJING, JUL 23 (PTI): China successfully launched its first Mars probe on Thursday from the Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site in the southern island province of Hainan, official media here reported.

About 36 minutes after the Mars probe was launched, the spacecraft, including an orbiter and a rover, was sent into the Earth-Mars transfer orbit, according to the China National Space Administration (CNSA).

The Chinese Mars probe named Tianwen 1, or Quest for Heavenly Truth 1, will fulfil three scientific objectives: orbiting the red planet for comprehensive observation, landing on Martian soil and sending a rover to roam the landing site.

It will conduct scientific investigations into the planet's soil, geological structure, environment, atmosphere and water, media reports said.

The Long March 5 rocket, the nation's biggest and most



powerful, will transport the robotic probe to the Earth-Mars transfer trajectory before the spacecraft begins its self-propelled flight toward Mars' gravity field.

According to China Aerospace Science and Technology Corp, a State-owned space conglomerate, the probe will travel for about seven months before it reaches Mars, which at the farthest point of its orbit is about 400 million kilometres from Earth and 55 million kilometres at the

nearest point.

It said the probe consists of three parts - the orbiter, the lander and the rover - and they will separate in Mars orbit. The orbiter will remain in the orbit for scientific operations and to relay signals while the lander-rover combination makes an autonomous descent and landing.

The rover has six wheels and four solar panels and carries six scientific instruments. It weighs over 200 kilogrammes and will work for about three

months on the planet, designers said.

China aims to catch up with India, the US, Russia and the EU to reach the red planet.

China in recent years has emerged as a major space power with manned space missions and landing a rover in the dark side of the moon. It is currently building a space station of its own.

China's previous attempt to send an exploratory probe to Mars called Yinghuo-1, in a Russian spacecraft in 2011 failed as shortly

after the launch it was declared lost and later burnt during re-entry.

The US, Russia, India and the EU have succeeded in sending missions to Mars regarded as the most complex space mission. India became the first Asian country to have successfully launched its Mars orbiter mission Mangalyaan which entered the orbit of the red planet in 2014.

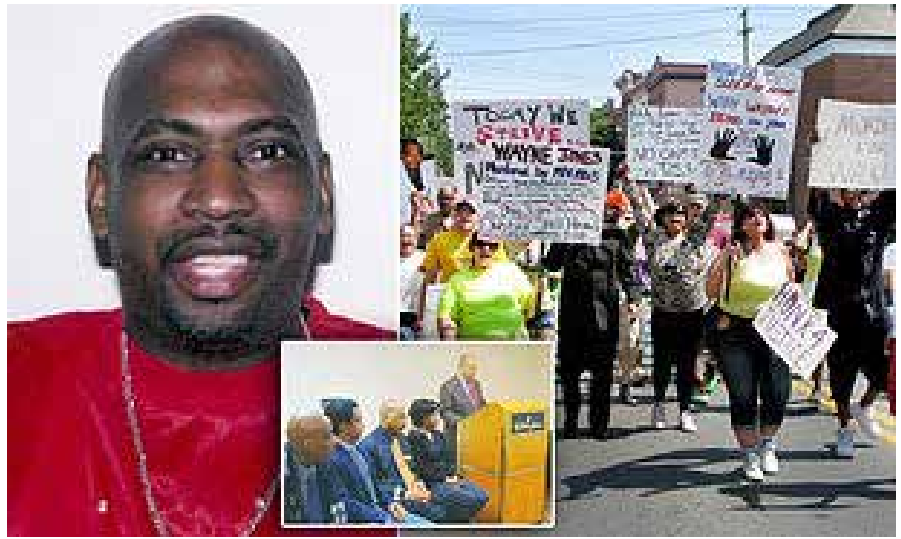
India also became the first country to have entered the Martian orbit in its first attempt.

China's Mars probe is the second such mission launched this month.

A United Arab Emirates spacecraft to go to Mars was launched from Japan on July 20, in what is the Arab world's first interplanetary mission.

The launch of the spacecraft named Amal, or the 'Hope Probe', marks the start of the seven-month journey to the red planet. NASA Perseverance rover is due to lift off on July 30.

Family of Black man shot 22 times by police settles lawsuit



MARTINSBURG (US), JUL 23 (AP) A West Virginia city has agreed to settle an excessive force lawsuit filed by the family of a homeless Black man who was shot 22 times by police, an attorney said.

Christopher E. Brown, the attorney for the family of Wayne Arnold Jones, told The Washington Post that the lawsuit was settled for USD 3.5 million.

I promised my mother before she died that we would continue to fight for justice, Jones' brother, Bruce Jones, told the newspaper. The settlement makes me feel a little bit better, but until I can have a chance to have these cops prosecuted, I am still going to be pushing for justice.

The Martinsburg Police Department said in a statement that the settlement was not an admission of guilt.

Police had stopped Wayne Jones as he was walking on a Martinsburg street. Jones was shot after police said the 50-year-old Stephens City, Virginia, resident shrugged off two jolts

from a stun gun, fought with officers and stabbed one of them. The officers are white.

U.S. District Judge Gina Groh had dismissed the lawsuit. But a three-member federal appeals court panel reversed the granting of summary judgment to the officers on qualified immunity grounds last month, saying that a reasonable jury could find that Jones was both secured and incapacitated in the final moments before his death.

The court also referenced the Memorial Day death of George Floyd, a Black man who died in Minneapolis after white police officer Derek Chauvin pressed his knee to Floyd's neck for several minutes.

That death prompted protests by millions of people around the world. The appeals panel noted that although we recognise that our police officers are often asked to make split-second decisions, we expect them to do so with respect for the dignity and worth of black lives. This has to stop.

The police

department's statement said the city's insurance carrier agreed to the settlement to avoid the ongoing costs of litigation along with the stress that a trial would bring to the officers and the families of the officers and Jones.

The city of Martinsburg said in the statement that "with this settlement, the City and the MPD hope everyone involved will be able to put this incident behind them and allow the community to heal.

A Berkeley County grand jury declined to indict the officers in the shooting. The US Justice Department later said there was insufficient evidence to pursue criminal civil rights charges against police. Civil rights leaders had pressed for the investigation.

The Jones family has filed a separate appeal in state court seeking a grand jury investigation, Brown said.

The fact that I could tell my client that we still have a shot at criminal prosecution made the (settlement) figure very acceptable, Brown said.

For 1st time in 75 years, world leaders won't travel to NY for UNGA as session goes virtual

UNITED NATIONS, JUL 23 (PTI): World leaders will submit pre-recorded video statements for the United Nations General Assembly session in September, the 193-member organisation has decided, as heads of state and government will not be physically attending the annual gathering due to the coronavirus pandemic and the high-level session goes virtual for the first time in the UN's 75-year history.

The landmark 75th session of the UN General Assembly will begin on September 15. The General Debate is held at the beginning of each session of the General Assembly and usually runs for over a week when leaders and ministers from the 193 UN member states address the world from the iconic lectern in the General Assembly hall.

The General Assembly adopted a decision on Wednesday that "each Member State, observer State and the European Union can submit a pre-recorded statement of its Head of State, Vice-President, Crown Prince or Princess, Head of Government, Minister or Vice-Minister, which will be played in the General Assembly Hall during the general debate of the Assembly at its seventy-fifth session, the high-level meeting

to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations and the high-level meetings... after introduction by their representative who is physically present in the Assembly Hall."

While taking the decision, the General Assembly noted "with concern" the situation regarding the coronavirus pandemic and the "limitations recommended on meetings within the United Nations premises as precautionary measures aimed at containing the spread of COVID-19".

The new format will mean that it will be for the first time in the world organisation's 75-year history that global leaders will not gather here for the high-level week that annually brings thousands of diplomats, government officials, civil society members and media persons from around the world to New York City.

Telecommuting arrangements have been in place at the UN headquarters here since mid-March as coronavirus spread rapidly across New York, making the state the epicentre of the pandemic in the US.

The UN headquarters began its first phase of re-opening on July 20, under which no more than 400 people will be

allowed to be present at the premises on any given day, in order to minimise the risk of exposure to the virus and to allow for physical distancing. Those present in the premises will have to follow strict social distancing guidelines.

The UN has said that given the evolving nature of the situation and the many remaining uncertainties regarding COVID-19, the transition from one phase to another may not be linear and at any time could revert to a previous phase.

In phase 2, the UNHQ occupancy will gradually increase from 10 to 40 per cent, while phase 3 or the "new normal" is being designed and will draw on lessons learned from the earlier phases.

The General Assembly meeting to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the United Nations will take place on September 21 and the Declaration will be formally adopted at the meeting. The General Debate of the 75th session of the Assembly will commence from September 22.

Along with the General Debate and 75th anniversary commemoration, key sessions will also be held virtually at the UN, the Assembly decided.

The summit on biodiversity will be held on

September 30, meeting of the General Assembly on the 25th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women on October 1 and the meeting to commemorate and promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons on October 2.

Member states will submit their pre-recorded video statements for these meetings as well. Each country would be encouraged to observe the time limit of 15 minutes in the General Debate that would include remarks in the Assembly Hall to introduce the pre-recorded video and the video itself.

General Assembly President Tijjani Muhammad-Bande

told member states that with a view to limit the footprint and the number of people into the UN building, physical access and presence will be limited to one or, if the situation allows, two delegates in the General Assembly hall.

Further, he said member states "are encouraged to move all side events to virtual platforms to limit the footprint and number of people in the UN building".

Addressing a virtual press conference in June,

Muhammad-Bande had said that world leaders cannot come to New York for the annual UN General Assembly session in September because of the COVID-19 pandemic. "World leaders cannot come to New York because they cannot come as single individuals. A president doesn't travel alone. We don't expect therefore to have presidents here," Muhammad-Bande had said.

The General Assembly session had particular significance this year as it would have commemorated 75 years of the existence of the United Nations and would have seen tremendous participation from leaders of the 193 member states to mark the anniversary.

You're reminded of being an outsider all the time: Vidyut Jammwal

MUMBAI, JUL 23 (PTI): Actor Vidyut Jammwal says there is a hierarchy in the film industry, which comes in the way of recognising and lauding genuine talent.

Jammwal, who has been in the industry for nearly a decade having starred in films like "Force" and the "Commando" series said rather than "nepotism" it's the lack of appreciation from within the fraternity that concerns an artiste.

"You are reminded of it (being an outsider) all the time. There's this

whole hierarchy, nobody can deny it. But what do we do about it? The only thing I'd like to change is that people should not ignore others. They should applaud everything that they see.

"It has got nothing to do with nepotism, just be a good human being, recognise what the person has done," Vidyut told PTI.

The actor was recently mentioned in a global list that said the martial art-trailed actor was among the 'ten people you don't want to mess with'".

Jammwal said there was outpouring love from people, but not from the industry.

"They will not acknowledge it, nobody will tweet about it. It's not a sad thing. I'm trained for it. So when one door shuts, 100 others open. That's what I've concluded from my journey here. Nobody can stop you," he added.

Last month, the Jammu-born actor voiced his displeasure after Disney+Hotstar snubbed him for the announcement of their

upcoming film slate, which included his film "Khuda Hafiz".

The 39-year-old actor said the behaviour didn't "hurt" him but his reaction came from a space of not being even acknowledged.

"When I read that in the morning, my subconscious mind asked a question- 'How come you haven't been mentioned?' I just put that question on my social media platform and I think I got the answer in the form that people love me.

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SummitTIMES



PEACE! The model, Paris Jackson smiles as she arrives at a studio in LA wearing a vintage Pink Floyd T-shirt, tie-dye sweatpants, and Golden Goose sneakers.

Demi Lovato, Max Ehrich announce engagement

LOS ANGELES, JUL 23 (PTI): Singer Demi Lovato and actor Max Ehrich are engaged.

The development came less than four months after they were reported to be dating.

The couple took to Instagram to share the news.

Lovato said Ehrich, known for shows like “The Young and the Restless” and “Under the Dome”, proposed to her on Wednesday and she said yes to the man who makes her want to “to be the best version” of herself.

“When I was a little girl, my birth dad always called me his ‘little partner’ - something that might’ve sounded strange without his southern cowboy like accent. To me it made perfect sense. And today that word makes perfect sense again but today I’m officially going to be someone else’s partner,” the “I Love Me” hitmaker wrote.

Lovato, 27, said she is “ecstatic” to start a family and life with the actor.



@maxehrich - I knew I loved you the moment I met you. It was something I can’t describe to anyone who hasn’t experienced it firsthand but luckily you did too.. I’ve never felt so unconditionally loved by someone in my life (other than my parents) flaws and all,” she wrote alongside their photos flaunting her ring.

Ehrich said Lovato is everything he dreamed of in his potential partner.

“Words cannot express how infinitely in love with you I am forever and always and then some. I cannot spend another second of my time here on Earth without the miracle of having you as my wife.

“Here’s to forever baby. I’m so excited. You are the most beautiful inside and out in the entire world & I couldn’t be more grateful God brought us together,” the 29-year-old actor wrote.

ABBA to release five new songs, to go on tour in 2021

LOS ANGELES, JUL 23 (PTI): Iconic pop band ABBA will release five brand new tracks next year followed by a holographic tour.

The group, formed in Sweden in 1972, have sold over 400 million albums in their career with includes all-time hits such as “Mamma Mia”, “Dancing Queen”, “Chiquitita” and “Super Trooper” among others.

In 2018, the Swedish quartet, comprising Bjorn Ulvaeus, Agnetha Faltskog, Benny Andersson, and Anni-Frid Lyngstad, announced they will put out new material after 35 years.

Initially, it was supposed to be only two songs but thanks to the gap between the original announcement, it will be worth the wait for ABBA fans.

The songs include the already announced “I Still Have Faith In You” and “Don’t Shut Me Down”, reported Deadline.

The decision to go ahead with the ABBA avatar tour, in which all the members will appear as their younger selves, had an unexpected consequence.

“We all four felt that, after some 35 years, it could be fun to join forces again and go into the recording studio,” said the band in a statement.

“They photographed us from all possible angles, they made us grimace in front of cameras, they painted dots on our faces, they measured our heads. Apparently a cranium doesn’t change with age the way the rest of your body falls apart,” added Ulvaeus.

ABBA split in 1982 and reunited in 2016 at a private event marking the 50th anniversary of the first meeting between songwriters Ulvaeus and Andersson.



Kim Kardashian West requests compassion for husband Kanye West’s bipolar disorder

LOS ANGELES, JUL 23 (PTI): Reality TV star Kim Kardashian West has asked for compassion and understanding for husband Kanye West’s bipolar disorder, days after the rapper claimed he has been trying to divorce her in a series of erratic tweets that he deleted later.

In a statement posted on her Instagram Story, Kardashian said she has never spoken publicly about how the rapper’s bipolar disorder has affected their family as she is very protective of their children and her husband’s “right to privacy when it comes to his health.”

“As many of you know, Kanye has bi-polar disorder. Anyone who has this or has a loved one in their life who does, knows how incredibly complicated and painful it is to understand,” she wrote.

Kardashian, 39, said she felt the need to address the topic “because of the stigma and misconception about mental health.”



“Those that understand mental illness or even compulsive behavior know that the family is powerless unless the member is a minor. People who are unaware or far removed from this experience can be judgmental and not understand

that the individual themselves have to engage in the process of getting help no matter how hard family and friends try.”

She said she understood West is subject to criticism because he is a public figure whose actions at times can cause strong opinions and emotions.

“He is a brilliant but complicated person who on top of the pressures of being an artist and a black man, who experienced the painful loss of his mother, and has to deal with the pressure and isolation that is heightened by his bipolar disorder, she wrote.

Kanye, 43, had announced on July 4 that he was running for the president.

Kardashian said people close to the rapper understand his heart and the fact that “his words sometimes do not align with his intentions.”

She added that living with bipolar disorder does not diminish or invalidate his dreams and his creative ideas, “no matter how big or unobtainable they may

feel to some.”

“That is part of his genius and as we have all witnessed, many of his big dreams have come true. We as a society talk about giving grace to the issue of mental health as a whole, however we should also give it to the individuals who are living with it in time when they need it the most.”

Kardashian asked that the media and the public give them “the compassion and empathy that is needed” to get through this.

In a series of tweets on Tuesday, Kanye said that he has been trying to end his marriage with the reality TV star since she consulted with rapper Meek Mill over prison reform.

“Meek is my man and was respectful. That’s my d** Kim was out of line.” Kardashian and Mill had headlined a summit in 2018.

Bipolar disorder is a mental health condition that can lead to extreme mood swings.

ARIES:

Spending time indoors has given you perspective on so many things, your interpersonal relationships included. There are always two sides to every story: yours, and that of the other person. When we’re up in our heads, which tends to happen a whole lot, we convince ourselves that our truth is the ultimate truth. Today, without bringing hurt, pain, and judgement into the equation, have a conversation with your loved one(s) about how you felt disrespected.

TAURUS:

Everything works inside out—a truth you have made peace with over the past few months. Today, the cards are urging you to engage in a vibe check. Make two lists at the start of your day: one consisting of all the things you are worried about, and the other consisting of things you are grateful for. Shifting your gaze to all that is working for you will strip your troubles of their power. Engaging in body work is also an excellent way to alleviate your troubles.

GEMINI:

What do you do when you realise the cross is too heavy to bear? Unhealed trauma from your childhood could be resurfacing at this moment. Confront your demons instead of choosing the path of denial, Gemini. Work with a healer, a shaman or psychotherapist if you need somebody to hold space for you as you go through your catharsis. Remember, it’s not your fault. It never was. Forgive yourself before you get to the other person.

CANCER:

The past few months have been healing and cathartic on so many levels. But that doesn’t mean they haven’t been painful or that you haven’t been tempted to give up halfway Thursday finds you simultaneously mourning your past self, and expressing gratitude for this journey. You understand that things had to turn out a certain way in order to teach you important life lessons. But that doesn’t mean it’s all doom and gloom, Cancer.

LEO:

At any point of time you have two options: to continue to live a mundane existence, or to strive for greatness. If the mysterious smile on your face is anything to go by, you are not in the mood to settle. The cards are urging you to look beyond the illusion of your current reality and believe in the impossible. Yes, there will be people who try to convince you that now is not a time to take chances, or that you are being unrealistic.

VIRGO:

There are conversations that make you want to sing and dance in public, and then there are exchanges that make you wish you never got out of bed. Notice the people who constantly make you feel drained. The people who do not consider your joy as their own. Who taint your relationship with the lower vibrational energies of envy and competitiveness.

LIBRA:

What comes to your mind when we say the word ‘tribe’? Your blood ties are important, Libra, as you are bound

together by shared history. But, in some ways, the bonds you forge outside of the home are even more sacred, as you invest in them out of free will rather than necessity. Today, you’re being asked to notice the people who are showing up for you despite their own trials and tribulations and celebrating your victories like their own.

SCORPIO:

Consent is a tricky territory. You may say ‘yes’ to one thing, but you may not be prepared for everything that comes with it. Statutory warning: your partner could be in a rather kinky mood today. But if their kinks don’t match yours, feel free to draw boundaries. Your body, your rules, Scorpio. Some of you may even come to the realisation that you have been putting up with an abusive relationship (one that may or may not be romantic).

SAGITTARIUS:

Ayurvedic texts reveal Chyawanprash as the fountain of youth, while Chinese medicine promotes herbs like Zhi Shi and Shan Zha as the key to longevity and good health. But your soul knows that elixirs and potions are merely supplements. The secret to a robust life is inner peace and happiness—qualities that are present to you in abundance. But here’s the catch: every time you notice that mysterious glow, you could recede into a space of guilt and shame.

CAPRICORN:

The things that are not working out are giving you a clue

as to what you need to let go of in order to align yourself with the truth. Instead of resisting the process, which will only cause chaos, become receptive to where you are being redirected towards. Going with the flow is so much easier than trying to swim upstream, right? Some of you may feel inspired to get another degree or go back to your books. As a Capricorn, the lack of financial security can be disconcerting.

AQUARIUS:

Expansion is big on your agenda right now, especially if you have your own business. This is an opportune time for you to reach out to a new audience and widen the scope of your work. Be both a dreamer and a doer, Aquarius. Some of you may be in a long distance relationship at this point. The past few months may have been challenging, but that doesn’t mean you weren’t blessed with moments of bliss. If you believe in the strength of this bond, do what it takes to make things work.

PISCES:

The road to here hasn’t been easy, but you displayed courage in the face of adversities, which has brought you where you are today. The Universe is applauding you for your strength, Pisces, and preparing you to receive the fruits of your labour. Both fame and recognition are right around the corner. This may also be a time of signing contracts and agreements.