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SummitTIMES

Vrindavan widows make designer masks

MATHURA (UP), JUN 23 (PTI): Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, widows living in ashrams here made designer face masks based on the temple city of Vrindavan and Lord Krishna to mark International Widows Day on Tuesday.

Over 20 widows joined the programme and working on 1,000 designer silk and cotton fabric face masks, NGO Sulabh International, which is supporting their initiative, said.

These women had started making face masks when the nationwide coronavirus lockdown was imposed in March this year.

They make 200 to 300 masks daily.

The Vrindavan-themed mask was launched during a webinar which was attended by various people from all over the world.

The Sulabh International extended support by providing training and fabric with special designs.

So far, they have prepared around 5,000 face masks of cotton and khadi, which have been distributed among police, government employees, sanitation workers, the NGO said.

The widows are now hoping to find partners, including online portals and Khadi outlets, to ensure the sale of their designer face masks, Sulabh International vice-president Vinita Verma said.

"Earlier, around 25 widows living in various ashrams took lessons from our trainers and prepared more than 5,000 masks for free distribution," she said.

The United Nations has been observing International Widows' Day on June 23 since 2011 to draw attention to their voices and experiences and to galvanise the unique support that they need.

There are an estimated 258 million widows around the world, and nearly one in 10 lives in extreme poverty. But, the actual number is likely to be much higher and to grow further as coronavirus and its related effects on health continue to rage around the world, the UN states.

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Girish joins metal legend Chris Adler to form new band

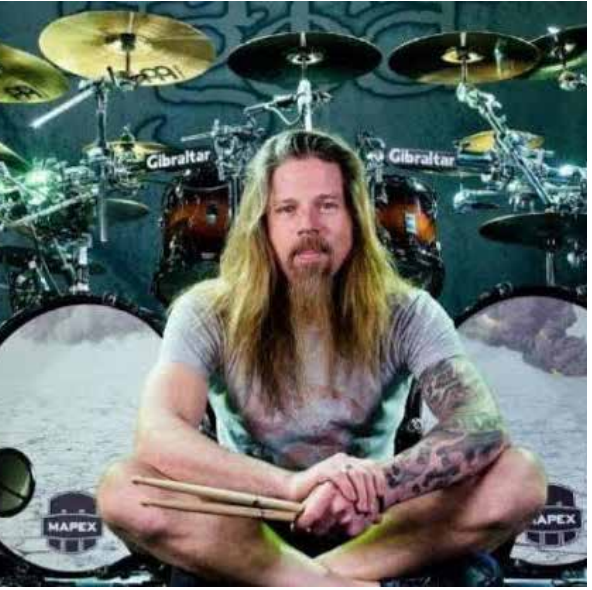


SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 23 JUN: Sikkim's Girish Pradhan has scored big becoming a member of the new international band Firstborne which has heavy metal legends Chris Adler and James LoMenzo, both former members of Megadeth as well as well-known guitarist, Myrone.

Chris Adler is a Grammy winning American metal drummer from Richmond, Virginia. Chris founded Lamb of God in 1994 and helped usher in what critics have dubbed the "New Wave of Amer-

ican Heavy Metal." Lamb of God's discography with Chris includes multiple Gold records and Platinum DVDs as well as 5 Grammy Nominations. Firstborne features Girish Pradhan on vocals and guitar, Myrone on guitar, James LoMenzo on bass, and Chris Adler on drums.

Chris Adler had met and shared the stage with Girish during a six-week clinic tour of India in the fall of 2019. After the first show of the clinic Tour, Adler immediately called Myrone, noting he'd "struck gold" in their



search for a singer for the yet unnamed project, a press release informs.

"Girish Pradhan is the glue that united FIRSTBORNE. Pradhan on vocals represents an almost unprecedented international collaboration," the release states.

Firstborne will make their live debut in 2021 appearing at several international festivals and tours being scheduled/rescheduled now.

The band has released its first EP named after the band which includes 5 songs and two lyric videos. The

EP marks the acclaimed drummer's first dedicated band release since his departure from Megadeth and Lamb of God. A second EP is well underway with a Fall 2020 release planned.

The debut EP from Firstborne is now available at Bandcamp and across all streaming services like spotify, itunes, etc.

The band has also sourced an exclusive arrangement with Rare Records CEO Doug Bear in Australia for a limited release of the EP on 12" colored vinyl, CD and cassette.

Sikkim to Salute Galwan Martyrs with special homage



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 23 JUN:

Sikkim is gearing up to pay rich tribute to 20 martyred soldiers who recently lost their lives in a skirmish with Chinese soldiers at Galwan Valley in Eastern Ladakh.

The State government has announced plans to organize, 'Veeron ko Naman' [Salute to the Brave], on 25 June here at MG Marg.

Speaking to media persons, Chief Secretary SC Gupta explained that the main purpose of the event was to give a strong message of patriotism to the nation and the world community that the Sikkimese people were standing with soldiers who sacrificed their lives for the country.

He mentioned that people from all walks of life will assemble at MG Marg on Thursday evening maintaining social distancing norms. He mentioned that some Union Ministers are also likely to address the people on the occa-

sion through a live video feed.

The CS mentioned that a candlelight vigil will also be held and that people invited to use flashlights of their mobile phones as a symbolic gesture.

He mentioned that the people who are not in Gangtok can join the event from their respective places.

Political Secretary to the CM, Jacob Khaling, added that although Sikkim was the smallest State of the country, it will always stand on the frontline for the protection of the country.

He informed that the proposed event was being held on the initiative of Chief Minister PS Tamang [Golay] and that the entire State machinery was working to ensure a grand success.

It is informed that on the occasion, Sikkim Police will present 'Shok Shashtra Shraddhanjali', a special drill as a mark of respect and tribute to the Martyrs, followed by a two-minute silence.

Another earthquake hits Mizoram



AIZAWL, JUNE 23 (PTI): A light intensity earthquake of 3.7 magnitude hit Mizoram on Tuesday, the third quake to rock the northeastern state in three consecutive days.

No casualties have been reported from anywhere in the state, officials said, adding that the tremor was also felt in the state capital.

"Earthquake of magnitude:3.7; Occurred on 23-06-2020, 19:17:37 IST; Lat: 23.22 and Long: 93.24," the National Centre for Seismology tweeted.

The depth of the quake was 25 km and the epicenter was 39 km southeast of Thenzawl in Mizorams Serchhip district, it said.

Two earthquakes struck Mizoram on Sunday and Monday, causing damage to houses and cracks on roads at several places and prompting the government to sound a rain and landslide alert.

tremor rocked Saitaul district at 4:16 pm on Sunday, followed by a 5.3-magnitude quake in Champhai district at 4:10 am on Monday. No casualties have been reported.

Several houses and buildings in Champhai, including two churches in Zokhawthar, have been damaged in the quake, an official said, adding that the tremors caused cracks on highways and roads at several places.

An official statement said on Monday that Mizoram could witness heavy to very heavy rain in the next five days and there was a possibility of landslides and mudslides.

"People, especially in landslide-prone areas, are asked to be alert and take precaution to avert casualties," it said.

Another quake of 4.6 magnitude had hit the state on June 18 in an area 98 kilometres southeast of Champhai town.

DIG Range on JB Darnal case and police deployment in border areas

SAGAR CHETTRI

GANGTOK, 23 JUN:

Sikkim Police DIG [Range], Pravin Gurung today said that Indian Reserve Battalion have been deployed in border areas of North and East Sikkim. He added that the present deployment of armed police forces at border areas is a routine exercise of the police whenever any tension arises along international borders of the country.

Addressing a press conference here this afternoon, the DIG mentioned that Sikkim is a sensitive border State of the country as it shares borders with China, Nepal and Bhutan. Although the Indian Army has the authority to guard the international borders, the State police also has the responsibility towards the people residing in border areas, said Mr Gurung.

He mentioned that on the direction of the State government, IRBn troops were recently deployed at Lachen, Lachung and



Thangu in North Sikkim and Kupup and Sherehang in East Sikkim.

The DIG stated that it is part of precautionary measures for the protection of life and properties of local population residing on border areas in case some emergency emerges. It is also a confidence building measure for the people in border areas, he added.

On the issue of assault of SDF spokesperson, JB Darnal, he mentioned that Sadar Thana immediately registered an FIR in the case under section 325, 341 and 392 of IPC. He added

that Mr Darnal was not able to recognise his assailants because it had happened suddenly.

Mr Darnal was taken for medical examination after the registration of the complaint and medical observation states that the nature of injuries is simple and a blunt object was used in the attack, said Mr Darnal.

He informed that there was one eye witness who was also not able to recognise anyone but just saw three persons running away. He further informed that the people of the area were questioned but no one had seen anyone and

even a video footage of a surveillance camera in a nearby building has not captured much, just an unclear footage of three persons running.

He informed that the police have also apprehended some suspects and interrogated them but could not link anyone with the incident. After medical examination, Mr Darnal went to the Central Referral Hospital, Tadong and was admitted from 12 to 18 June and requisition has been made to the hospital of his medical report.

DIG mentioned that a LAVA mobile phone was

turn to pg 02

Army man tests positive for COVID-19

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 23 JUN:

According to Health Secretary, Dr PT Bhutia, one new case was reported today of an army personnel who was posted in Ladakh but was undergoing treatment for frost bite in

Kolkata. He had tested positive for COVID-19 in Kolkata and had undergone treatment following which he was discharged after testing negative. However, they had not tested him again after 24 hours. On his return to Sikkim, since he had not

undergone the repeat testing, his sample was tested and found to be still COVID positive.

Meanwhile, 9 COVID patients of West Sikkim have tested negative in repeat testing and will be discharged on Wednesday, informed

Dr Bhutia. He also informed that a Mumbai returnee who had been tested before his return to Sikkim and whose test results had come while he was on his way to Sikkim, has also recovered and has been discharged.

Petrol and diesel prices hiked for 17th consecutive day

NEW DELHI, JUN 23 (PTI):

Petrol price on Tuesday was hiked by 20 paise per litre and diesel by 55 paise as the oil companies increased prices for the 17th day in a row that took the cumulative increase to a steep Rs 8.5 and Rs 10.01 per litre, respectively.

Petrol price in Delhi was hiked to Rs 79.76 per litre from Rs 79.56, while diesel rates were increased to Rs 79.40 a litre from Rs 78.55, according to a price notification of state oil marketing companies.

Rates have been increased across the country and vary from state to state depending on the incidence of local sales tax or value added tax.

The 17th daily increase in rates, since oil companies on June 7 restarted revising prices in line with costs after ending an 82-day hiatus in rate revision, has taken diesel prices to fresh highs. Petrol price too is at a two-year high.

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Haryana not to hold higher education exams next month

CHANDIGARH, JUN 23 (PTI): The Haryana government has decided not to hold higher and technical education examinations next month and students will be promoted to the next semester on the basis of internal assessment and previous performance, said state minister Kanwar Pal on Tuesday.

Earlier, the Haryana's Higher and Technical Education Department had said all terminal examinations of final semesters will be conducted from July 1 to 31.

The education minister in a statement here said if a university wishes, then it may conduct online examinations if it is fully prepared and equipped for the same. It will have to ensure that all students are able to take such exams.

The minister said students of intermediate and final semesters will be promoted to the next semester on the basis of the internal assessment/assignment and previous examinations.

Both components will be given 50 per cent weightage each.

However, students will have the option for improvement in grades later on the basis of a written examination once the coronavirus situation improves.

The same formula will also be applicable for distance education/private students, he said.

The minister said the students with academic arrears in previous examinations may also be exempted and promoted to the next semester on the average basis of the previous examinations.

The same formula will also be applicable for distance education/private students, Pal said.

The education minister said for the first-year students, only internal assessment may be calculated for promotion.

He said practical examinations where ever not conducted so far, the marks are to be awarded as an average of all previous practical examinations or the 80 per cent average of theory examinations marks of previous semesters whichever is higher.

He said admissions to university teaching departments shall be conducted at the their level, whereas for undergraduate and postgraduate levels in colleges, a centralised online admission process will be held by the Higher Education Department.

The minister said the examination of first-year students, promotion of intermediate year students to next the semester/year and awards of practical examinations in all polytechnics of the state will also be held in a similar manner.

He said that the government has taken this decision after consultation of all vice-chancellors with various stakeholders.

COVID Diaries: Dalep Boys 'The Unsung Social Warriors'

KESANGLA D LHASUNGPA (KDL) & BISHNU P SHARMA

We have heard about the Frontline Covid warriors during this pandemic time and their selfless service and dedication to the nation cannot be expressed in words. Due to their selfless and dedicated service the COVID outbreak has not reached the zenith and as per ICMR the recovery rate is Close to 50% in our country. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the frontline COVID warriors on behalf of the entire nation for their selfless and dedicated service.

In this edition we would like to introduce Dalep Boys the Unsung Social warriors. Dalep boys are a team comprising of young boys from a small village viz: Dalep and Ranek, in South Sikkim under Barfung constituency who have been rendering selfless social work for the upliftment of the society in general during the lockdown period.

Before the Covid outbreak, a young man from Dalep, Ritesh Tamang had approached us to attend a youth interactive session at Dalep during the first week of March 2020. We had the honour to attend the session and interact with the youth of Dalep. The

primary agenda of the meet was to deliver motivational talk on social and economic issues the



current generation was facing in their day-to-day lives. Although the meeting was political but we primarily focused on how the current generation youth can bring changes to the various social problems by their social act. The message was clear that the present day youth has to focus on youth empowerment, education, social values and social development. The youth were made aware of how the youth can bring social development by rendering selfless social service with the primary motto of "Aaf-no Gaon, Aafai Banao".

During the lockdown period the Dalep Boys, a team led by team leader Ritesh Tamang and members comprising of Indra Bdr Chettri, Saran Rai, Sajjan Rai, Deepak Rai, Manoj Rai, Subhasis Chettri, Jonah Rai, Sushan Rai,

Hari chettri, Swadesh Rai, Sukhdan Rai, Anup Rai, Amardeep Rai, Meghnath Chettri, Shahdew

Rai, Indra kr Rai, Ashis Rai and Pratush Rai started constructing and repairing dilapidated



houses of their fellow villagers. On 23 May they started repairing the house of one Ratna Bdr Rai and completed the house on 26 May. Then the house of Chabibul Rai was repaired from 27 May and completed on 29 May. The social work continued with the

repairing of Ashis Rai on 12 June and completed the repairing on 13 June. Further the youth of Dalep repaired the houses of Madhu Lal Rai and Phul Maya Rai from 14 June and completed on 17 June. In total the Dalep boys repaired five houses and further four houses belonging to Sulieman Rai, Suraj Rai, Jonah Rai and Saran Rai are in the pipeline for repair.

In order to initiate the process of repair the Dalep Boys created a corpus wherein the volunteers contributed in cash and kind along with some well wishers and purchased the materials like GCI

sheets, Cement, Sand, Tarpaulin, paints and others.

The Dalep boys look forward to make their village a model village in near future by undertaking various social developmental works for their fellow villagers.

Rangpo pays tribute to 20 Indian martyrs



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 23 JUN:

The residents of Rangpo organized a Candle Light Peace Prayer to pay tribute to 20 Indian Army Jawans who were martyred in the clash with Chinese troops in Galwan, Ladakh.

Members of Lions Club of Rangpo, Rangpo Taxi Driver Welfare Associations, International

Human Right Council, teachers, students and local residents offered the prayers.

COVID-19 screening centre's team of Rangpo (Goli ground), SNT Drivers who are quarantined at Janta Bhawan Gangtok, Marwari Yuva Manch Gangtok, Prerna Branch also took part in a Candle Light Peace Prayers held in Gangtok.

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3 SDF youth leaders resign



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 23 JUN:

Sikkim Democratic Front party's Farmers Cell secretary, MJ Rai, convener Youth West Sikkim, Kumar Subba and CLC

president, RP Gurung of Melli constituency have resigned from the party, a press release informs.

The trio has resigned from their post and primary membership today.

SIBLAC reiterates demand for ILP

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 23 JUN:

Sikkim Bhutia Lepcha Apex Committee (SIBLAC) has said reiterated its demand for imposition of Inner-line Permit/Pass in the State in view of the "recent Chinese incursion into Sikkim".

In a press release issued today, SIBLAC has said, "The recent Chinese incursion into Sikkim

borders highlights the need to regulate entry of non-locals for security reasons in to Sikkim."

The release demands imposition of Inner-line Permit/Pass and protection of old laws of Sikkim as enshrined in the Art-371F of the Constitution of India so that peace and security prevails in the border state of Sikkim.

Tailoring training program begins at Padamchen

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 23 JUN:

Three-month training program on cutting, tailoring and sewing was inaugurated at Padamchen under Rhenock Constituency in East Sikkim today, a press release informs. The program is funded by Lupin Human Welfare and Research Foundation [LHWRF].

MLA Rhenock cum

Chairman STCS, Bishnu Kumar Khatiwada was present as the chief guest in the inaugural program along with HR Head, Lupin Pharma, A Nandi, SLR, Shanti Khatiwada, Pawan Khatiwada, Panchayat Members from East Pandam Gram Panchayat Samiti, Ward Panchayat Member, Savitri Sharma. Residents of the Area, and candidates

who were interested to avail the benefit were also present in the program.

HR Head, A Nandi in his address appealed to all the local residents to avail the opportunity provided by the foundation. MLA Rhenock, Bishnu Kumar Khatiwada in his address thanked LHWRF for providing such a program to make the local residents Aatma Nirbhar.

Monsoon preparedness meeting held at DAC South

Namchi, 23 Jun (IPR): In view of the imminent monsoon, a daylong co-ordination meeting on Monsoon Preparedness organized by District Disaster Management Authority South (DDMA) was held at the Conference Hall of DAC Namchi today.

The meeting chaired by DC (South), Ragul. K and co-attended by SDM (HQ), Chiran Rizal, SP(S), Thakur Thapa, ASP (South), J Jayapandiyani alongside SDMs, BDOs and nodal officers was held with an objective to meet the challenges of the impending monsoon. It was attended by all line departments to ascertain the preparedness of each department and the disaster-related interventions expected of the departments in the event of monsoon triggered disasters.

During the meeting, issues related to monsoon induced calamities, action plans by various departments, coordination between all line departments and contractors/companies, prompt assistance and restoration activities to reinforce normalcy of lives post disaster were discussed.

DC (S), Ragul K directed all concerned officials and disaster management team to remain vigilant and ready to tackle disasters of any magnitude during the time of monsoon. In his address, the DC stressed the importance of conducting a thorough vulnerability assessment under South



district to avert any monsoon induced disaster. He also reviewed the status of the ongoing or any pending excavation work in the district and drew attention of the site engineers and concerned contractors to steer clear of blockades of motorable roads under South district. Thereby, he issued clear directives for provision of men and machinery to clear any blockades at all strategic locations as and when required. He also addressed the gravity of effective communication during times of disaster and urged the officials to remain available over their phones at all given times and submit timely status reports of road conditions promptly. Matters related to disbursement of ex-gratia were also taken up during the meeting. Fire and rescue personnel are required to be adequately equipped with rescue equipment for rescue and relief operations, the Collector said. A review of availability of pipes and necessary equipments needed in the wake of moonsoons, restoration of power supply and water

supply lines during heavy rains, cleanliness drives and unblocking of clogged drains, streamlining of back cutting work, nomination of District Task Force for catering to Disaster response were all discussed during the meeting.

Departments like PWD were briefed to keep a check on haphazard dumping in order to avoid any untoward incident. Installation of road signs along all the vulnerable sites is also to be taken up by the department. Similarly, the DC issued directives to the Urban bodies, PHE, RDD, UDHD, NHIDCL as well as the private stakeholders to ensure preventive actions regarding restoration of landslides along the highway to facilitate traffic movement. Likewise, the DC advised Forest Department to look into the problem of reckless dumping, felling of tilted trees and plantation wherever necessary.

Further, all officials present were directed to ascertain adequate stock of essentials to tide through any potential disaster, its relief and management.

SKM accuses SDF of resorting to morphed photos to defame ruling party

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 23 JUN:

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha has alleged that the opposition Sikkim Democratic Front was trying to defame the SKM by posting an edited picture on social media.

The party has accused SDF of resorting to fakes and conspiracy in its bid to defame SKM.

An SKM press release issued by its general secretary [press & media], BP Sharma, informs that Health Minister, Dr MK Sharma, who is also the area MLA of Singtam-Khamdong, handed

over cheques of Rs 2 lakh each to victims of the recent fire at Lal Bazaar in Singtam.

Photos of the handing over were posted on social media and widely circulated, the release informs, while adding that a fake Facebook account, which SKM believes to be handled by SDF, edited the picture and replaced the cheque with a placard reading 'Justice for MK Sharma'.

The release adds that most of the posts by the FB account in question are related to SDF.

DIG Range...

found from the spot and Mr Darnal also gave a statement that his Samsung phone was snatched away by assailants and phones are found switched off.

He informed that the police have been going thoroughly through call details of both phones. He stated that Mr Darnal was a politician so the police have taken the case very seriously and Inspector level officer is investigating the case assisted by a team of four sub-inspectors.

Responding to media queries, the DIG mentioned that there are no plans to open any new out-posts or check-posts but to strengthen the existing out-posts and police stations in the area. He added that police personnel are acclimatising and gradually being taken to higher altitude on rotation basis.

Responding to the query on allegations of the opposition party on discrimination by the police, he responded that Sikkim Police has always taken the complaints of the public seriously and without any discrimination and if anyone thinks that the police has not acted as per the law then they can approach the Court.

He added that if any complainant was not satisfied with the SHO of the thana then they can approach the Superintendent of Police of the respective district who can take the case in cognition. The police is always answerable towards the people, the government and the court so it has been working professionally without any discrimination, fear or favour.

"We are looking at all possible angles in JB Darnal's case as it could be conspiracy or personal enmity so we are investigating the matter on all angles," he said.

~ SummitTIMES ~ CLASSIFIEDS

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9641878315, 9593262407

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

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

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

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Blood donation to commemorate Olympic Day



GRACE KEREN GURUNG GANGTOK, 23 JUN:

Members of Sikkim Olympic Association commemorated International Olympic Day in collaboration with Sports and Youth Affairs Department with a blood donation camp here at old STNM Hospital complex on Tuesday.

A total of 40 units of blood were donated by members of different sports associations of the State, including by the Secretary, Sports & Youth Affairs Department, Kuber Bhandari.

Speaking to SummitTimes, Sikkim Olympic Association president, BK Roka, said, "Every

year, we organize a sport event to celebrate Olympic Day but this year because of the pandemic our options were limited. Acknowledging the fact that hospitals might be in need of blood at times like these, this year we decided to organize a blood donation camp. Sikkim has been applauded for being the first state to do so for a noble cause, by the President and Secretary General of Indian Olympic Association."

He informed that SOA has also sent volunteers to Central Referral Hospital, Tadong, after receiving a message that the hospital required

blood urgently.

"The main theme of the International Olympic Day is friendship, excellence and respect, so donating blood is one way to justify this cause. Since no sporting event could be organized in this pandemic, we took this opportunity to help the hospitals by donating blood. If the pandemic had not happened then sports would've been our first priority," said Secretary to Sports & Youth Affairs Department, Mr Bhandari.

While enquiring about the safety measures taken with regards to pandemic, the Chief Consultant & Head of De-

partment Central Blood Bank STNM Hospital, Dr CM Sharma informed that before donating blood, the travel history and other essential details of the volunteers were taken.

"We are only taking blood from people who haven't travelled outside for the past three - four months. Most of our donors haven't travelled outside. We have asked the organizers to inform the people who have recently travelled outside not to donate blood," he said.

On the occasion, SOA also presented Certificates of Appreciation and souvenirs to all blood donors.

Telangana govt to pay full salary to staff for June

HYDRABAD, JUN 23 (PTI): In a relief to government employees and pensioners, the Telangana government on Tuesday decided to pay full salary for June in the wake of improvement in the state's economy.

The government has been paying only a portion of the salaries and pension over the last three months due to the fall in revenue in the state since the lockdown was imposed to check the spread of the coronavirus.

"Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao has announced that the state economy is getting better to some extent. The salaries of state government employees and pensioners will be paid in full for this month," an official release said.

On March 30, the state government had announced a 75 per cent cut in the salaries of the Chief Minister, state cabinet members, MLAs, and others besides a 60 per cent cut in the salaries of IAS, IPS and other such Central service officers in view of the COVID-19 pandemic adversely impacting the state's economic situation.

The cut was 10 per cent for Class IV, outsourcing and contract employees and it was 50 per cent for all categories of pensioners.

The Telangana Employees Joint Action Committee (JAC) thanked the Chief Minister for deciding to pay full salaries for June and appealed to him to repay the salaries deducted during the last three months soon.

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Patanjali Yoga Samiti Sikkim felicitates CM

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 23 JUN:

The executive committee of Patanjali Yoga Samiti, Sikkim branch, led by its president, RP Poudyal, called on Chief Minister PS Tamang [Goly] at Samman Bhawan yesterday in the presence of MLA Rhenock Constituency, BK Khatiwada.

The woman president of the Samiti, Pushpa Devi Poudyal and other executive members from different zones were also present on the occasion.

The Committee informed that they are working towards health



oriented activities through Patanjali Yoga practices in Sikkim since 2007 and have reached to the nook and corners of the State.

The organization is working towards imparting Yoga Education to maximum number of people in the State to

promote a healthy and balanced society.

The organization felicitated the Chief Minister and he thanked the team and assured all possible support for the establishment, augmentation and propagation of Yoga in the State.

State Govt has several plans for development of sports: Minister

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 23 JUN:

Sikkim Government is focusing on creating a sports friendly environment in the State to promote sports across the State by upgrading infrastructures and other allied supports from the school level, said Sports and Youth Affairs Minister, Kunga Nima Lepcha

today. He was addressing an award function in his chamber today.

He said that once the pandemic situation is over, several initiatives towards the promotion of sports in the State will kick off.

In the function organised by Nehru Yuva Kendra, Sikkim, the best performing youth society award was presented to

Youth Development Society of Sikkim of Rongli, East Sikkim. The award comprised of Rs. 1 lakh cash prize along with certificates.

State Director of Nehru Yuva Kendra Sikkim, Debasis Banerjee informed that youth clubs act as a catalyst of development and positive social changes and

NYK Sangathan has introduced a scheme of awards to outstanding youth clubs at District, State and National level.

He said that the NYK has awarded best district level youth clubs with cash prize of Rs. 25,000, Rs. 1 lakh at State and at National level Rs. 5, Rs 3 and Rs 2 lakhs to top three clubs respectively.

Suffering production loss due to protests by locals: OIL

GUWAHATI, JUN 23 (PTI): Energy major Oil India Limited (OIL) on Tuesday said it is suffering production loss due to continued protests by locals that started after a gas well at Assam's Baghjan caught fire following a blowout while the blaze is still raging since May 27.

An OIL statement said that there was an output drop of 129 MT of crude oil and 0.16 MMSCM of natural gas on Monday due to disruptions in 16 oil wells and one gas well.

"Cumulative production loss since May 27 blowout due to bandhs and blockades - 8,291 MT crude oil and 10.56 MMSCM of natural gas," it said. The locals are protesting against the alleged slowness of administration towards their demands for compensation and rehabilitation at the earliest.

Protests outside Baghjan area in Tinsukia district is continuing in some areas, resulting in loss of output with drilling and work-over operations disrupted at six locations, the statement said.

About the ongoing process to douse the blaze, the PSU said various on-site works at the well site have been hampered due to inclement weather and soft ground condition.

"Many important equipment are on transit. Consignments are delayed on transit due to ban on day time movement of heavy vehicles. Fabrication of heat shields for bulldozer and excavator is in progress," it said.

Surveys for assessment of damage by a committee constituted by the district administration are in progress and the same has been completed for 369 families in Doomdooma and Tinsukia circles, the

statement said. Over 9,000 people are staying in 13 relief camps after the May 27 blowout. A fire broke out at the well on June 9 killing two firefighters of the OIL.

Two OIL staffers have been suspended for alleged negligence of duty in the gas well blowout, a company official had said.

The blaze at the well is so massive that it can be seen from a distance of more than 30 kilometres with thick black smoke going up several metres high, endangering local biodiversities in the Dibru-Saikhowa National Park.

The company said that various assessments and impact studies of the blowout as well as the blaze in villages and nearby forest areas are being conducted by multiple agencies such as ERM India, TERI, CSIR-NEIST and Assam Agricultural University.

Rahul Gandhi's poser to govt: Has China occupied Indian territory?

NEW DELHI, JUN 23 (PTI): Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday asked the government whether China has occupied Indian territory.

"We are standing united against Chinese aggression. Has China occupied Indian territory?" Gandhi tweeted along with a photograph of the Pangong Tso lake clicked by his father and former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi.

Rahul Gandhi has been attacking Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his statement at an all-party meeting last week that neither is anyone inside India's territory nor has anyone captured its posts while referring to the Ladakh face-off.

Earlier too, the Congress leader had asked the government whether China has occupied any Indian territory.



Sneha Kinetic Power Projects Pvt. Ltd. 2 X 48 MW Dikchu HEP

PUBLIC NOTICE

Date: 24/06/2020.

This is to inform the general public residing on the bank of River Dikchu between Lingdok/ Lower Phodong to Dikchu that, due to onset of monsoon the river level in the downstream of Dam at Lingdok/ Lower Phodong, Rokshay, Lower Rakdong, Lower Tanek, shall increase due to release of water from the Dam and due to various water falls in rainy season and this is regular operational requirement and also in case of emergency regulation of incoming flood. The river water level downstream of Power house at Dikchu shall also increase suddenly due to release of water from the Power house.

"Sirens/Hooters" will be blown at specified locations, every time to warn the public for increase in the water level, due to release of water from Dam and hence, it is requested that all the people should take note of the "Siren/Hooters" alarm every time when sounded and should take necessary safety measures for the safety of self and the people around.


As such it is advised and appealed at all the people that at this situation they should not enter the river and also not allow their livestock etc. to graze, approach near the reservoir periphery or in the downstream areas from Lingdok, Lower Phodong, Rokshay, Lower Rakdong, Lower Tanek to Dikchu. It is also not advisable to carry out activities like Picnic, Fishing, Boating, Swimming, Collection of river materials, Collection of fire wood, Washing etc. close to the river banks during this condition.

As, we have followed and complied all the **Safety Guidelines for Public Safety at Hydropower Projects vide Gazette notification no: 26/Home/2015, Dated : 22.06.2015**, in this regard it is requested that for any mishap due to ignorance of warnings and not following advices, our company shall not be responsible.

Further, if any clarification required, the contact details of our organization are as follows.
7407004662 (Dam Control Room) 9733314957/ 9593385439 (Power House Control Room).
E-mail dikchuph@greenkoenergyprojects.com.

The above information is issued in the interest of the general and public residing along the banks of River Dikchu from Lingdok/Lower Phodong to Dikchu.

For. M/s. Sneha Kinetic Power Projects Pvt. Ltd.



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

EAST : 7029372100




WEST : 9593297809

NORTH : 9641957468

SOUTH : 7407691463

New STNM

AMS : 9434711402

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

Avoid the Babel Syndrome

Resuscitate languages and the rest will follow

One of the more encouraging signs when it comes to the vibrancy of languages is to see the young make to-do lists in the mother tongues. It is a rarity, because even speakers of the lingua franca nowadays take notes in English and they are already conversing on the smartphones in emojis. The worry then is that the mother tongue, the language they would be expected to be the most fluent in when conveying emotions and ideas, has now become the formal language – something they can write exams in or maybe use to speak with elders, but cannot joke or share ideas in. So, when the mother tongue becomes the language of casual conversations and spontaneous note-taking, it becomes a special moment, underlining a community's success at keeping their culture alive because no culture can survive once its language is lost.

In fact, a major concern exists in communities all over the world over the preservation of native languages and cultures. While earlier, indigenous communities could rely on traditional educational systems to ensure their cultural survival, this support system does not exist anymore. Earlier, the language would get passed down around kitchen fires and along with it would slip through the essence of ethnic cultures and traditions. As Sikkim grows more cosmopolitan, outside influences have edged out this form of education. The formal education system which includes many indigenous/ local languages in its curriculum does not include the subtlety with which cultures were instinctively fostered earlier. At best, the schools can equip the students with the language, which they should then utilise to learn. Unlike the present trend where the learning curve ends with the schooling years, the learning should in fact begin once the basics of a language have been picked up and then should launch the process of mastering it. This becomes necessary because indigenous languages are finding fewer and fewer people using them anymore and the few who have mastered the tongue need to record whatever it is they can cull from the older generation so that some element of their identity survives the march of time. In fact, this is one aspect of the cultural revivalism afoot all over the Hills that need to be paid more attention to.

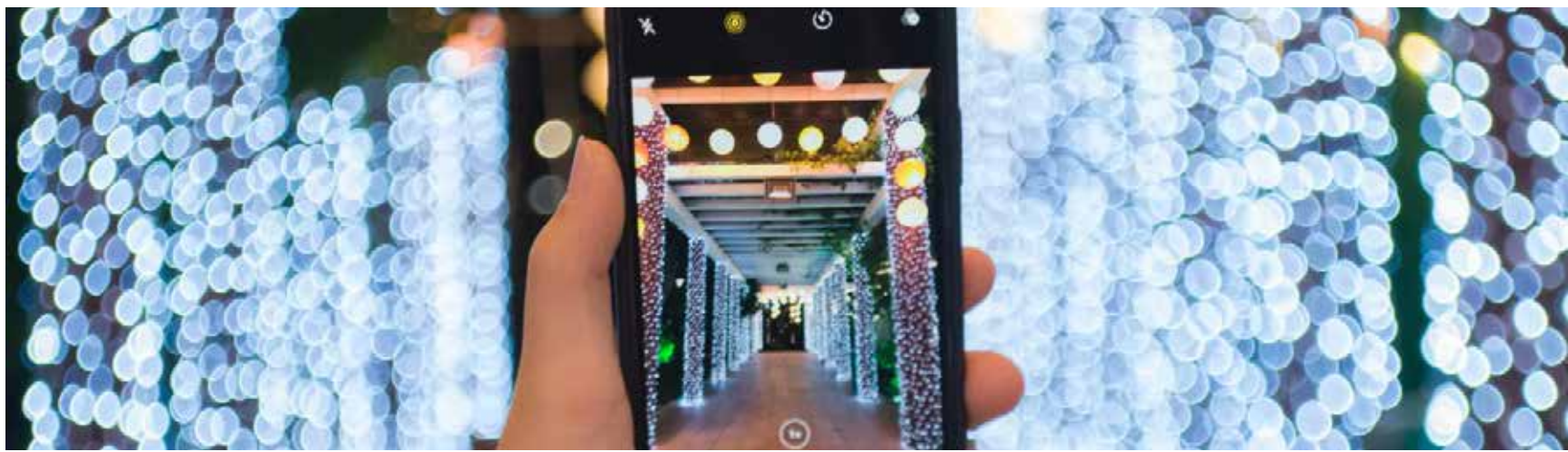
While it is all too easy to play the role of the victimised and collect sympathy, it is in proving real concern and engagement that the Hill communities are failing. This applies not just to the minority Lepchas and Bhutias of the Hills but also the Nepalese. It needs no reiteration that language is the link to identity. It is the language that keeps cultures alive. The nuances of each language highlight the influence of the past which shapes the present of individual communities. That said, let's look at the state of ethnic languages among the speakers themselves. When a language is being taught in school, it has to mean more than just a medium of communication. It has to become the tool of learning and discovery. One does not know whom to blame here, but few in Sikkim have proven that they can deploy their language skills for this purpose.

Blame it on the influence of television or now access to affordable broadband which has wiped out the reading habit or the confusion of being exposed to too many languages [Nepali, English, Hindi and the mother tongue, in Sikkim's case], but fact remains that we are grooming a generation of students who are not proficient in any language. We are talking here in terms of reading, understanding and writing. Anyone can communicate, but a student is expected to do better.

The previous generation has to shoulder most of the blame. They relied too much on tokenism. A language day here, a smattering of language skills there and they thought they had done enough. They were wrong. A language has to become relevant to survive. It can be made relevant if important and interesting books are written in that language, if popular music uses it. Just look around, how many interesting books can a lay person find in Bhutia or Lepcha which is not available in other languages. Even Nepali language essentially survives only as the lingua franca. To prove the point - can anyone recall the last work in fiction in Nepali which was a runaway hit that everyone wanted to read and possess? Fact remains, we are wiping out our cultures because we are not serious enough about our languages.

WRITE US:

Readers are invited to comment on, criticise, run down, even appreciate if they like something in this paper. Letters carrying abusive/ indecorous language and personal attacks, except when against people responsible in this newspaper (who are fair game), will have to be ignored. Letters which carry forward a conversation or initiate a dialogue will command immediate attention and receive prominence. Mail us at: news@summittimes.com



Your emotions are the new hot commodity — and there's an app for that

ANNA RUDKOVSKA & DANICA FACCA
theconversation.com

Emotions are the newest hot commodity, and we can't get enough.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, we've come to rely even more on our digital devices, including to help manage our emotions.

There are approximately 2.57 million apps available for Android users to download and approximately 1.84 million apps available for Apple users. Apps are those tools on our phones or tablets which help us monitor, record and regulate some of the most intimate aspects of our lives, from sleep and menstrual cycles, to food intake and finances.

Many of the most popular apps in the West include the goal of self-improvement, which seems to be a constant drive for many.

The investment of our time and money into apps that help us become better performers, managers and producers is one of the consequences of neoliberalism, the idea that humans can make progress in their lives through market competition and economic growth.

Neoliberalism emphasizes individualism, economic efficiency, low to no government interference and generally ignores systemic issues.

Under neoliberalism, a person is an enterprise whose personality traits and skills are considered valuable assets that need continuous management, improvement and investment.

Apps can help with the business of us: we can easily track and monitor our bodies with workout classes, diets and skill-building exercises. As we track our progress in apps, we can literally visualize our bodies and capabilities improve.

Emotions, however, are trickier. We haven't had the same kind of metric tools and assessment criteria to track our minds to the same degree we can track our bodies caloric intake or waist circumference.

Enter mood tracking apps.

The simultaneous production and consumption of emotion, or emotional prosumption manufactures emotion for consumer consumption.

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

Mood tracking apps are sophisticated tools

which promise the ability to track, measure and improve our emotions. Positive emotions, like happiness, are encouraged through visual features like "best day streaks."

Negative emotions like sadness or anger are dissected with aims to avoid or erase their existence.

In this new emotional frontier, happiness is the bar against which we measure all other emotions. The very existence of mood tracking apps is a testament to this.

The potential to improve our emotional traits and skills through apps appears limitless. While there is nothing wrong with pursuing a more fulfilling emotional life, there is a danger in being blinded by the quest for happiness. Since mood tracking apps are designed to direct us solely toward happiness, will we be prevented from understanding and engaging with the true complexity of our emotions?

DATA DANGERS

By reducing our experiences, bodies and emotions to numbers, or quantified data, we make them ripe for consumption by app developers and interested third parties.

As a critical health researcher and a digital health literacy researcher, we are both concerned with how unsuspecting users may be taken advantage of within this frontier of continual self-improvement, especially if their personal data falls into the wrong hands and manipulated against them.

When it comes to commerce, emotions are powerful. They have the ability to move us towards action, change our minds and foster new relationships. They are also fast and reactive. Making decisions becomes more challenging when choices are everywhere and need to be made at lightning speed.

Modern advertising, by design, targets this impulsivity by hooking us on products and content through emotion.

In his book, Psychopolitics, Neoliberalism and New Technologies of Power, cultural theorist Byung-Chul Han discusses how this shift signals a creation of emotional consumption. We no longer buy a phone because it's a good phone, but rather because the ad displays happy people surrounded by friends using that phone.

We are drawn to ads and marketing campaigns

because of the way they make us feel rather than the service they provide.

In a similar vein, social media platforms like Instagram, Tinder and Facebook hook us by "selling" us "likes," matches and affirmation through numbers. Since likes and swipes take less than a second to perform, they target and rely on the reactive nature of emotion.

THE CONSUMPTION OF EMOTIONS

Emotions then become a new commodity that we knowingly or unknowingly produce and are for sale to the highest bidder. This is known as emotional prosumption.

Emotional prosumption produces two consequences. First, due to the reactivity of emotions, our decision making can be swayed when the information we consume is emotionally charged.

As such, in 2016, the emotions of voters in the United States were taken advantage of and manipulated through specifically targeted ad campaigns. Specifically, emotionally charged ads pertaining to immigration, gun laws and other political issues were deliberate targeted at the U.S. electorate just days before the election.

Our emotional data can be sold to third parties without our permission. Likes, swipes and mood tracking logs can all be classified as emotional data and provide companies with information on how to promote products to us in ways that trigger the highest emotional response.

These abilities raise questions not only for data privacy, but also for advertising ethics.

The unregulated creation and consumption of emotional data is therefore problematic for two reasons: It places emphasis on "positive" emotions rather than a healthy spectrum, and it takes information about immaterial consumption without user knowledge.

The ethical implications of emotional prosumption may leave a lasting impact on how we advertise, how and what we consume, and what aspects of ourselves we are willing to alter in the never ending quest of personal optimization.

[Anna Rudkovska is PhD Candidate, School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, Western University; Danica Facca is PhD student, Health Information Science, Western University]

Remote work: Employers are taking over our living spaces and passing on costs

RICHARD SHEARMUR
theconversation.com

As many office workers adapt to remote work, cities may undergo fundamental change if offices remain under-utilized. Who will benefit if working from home becomes the post-pandemic norm?

Employers argue they make considerable savings on real estate when workers shift from office to home work. However, these savings result from passing costs on to workers.

Unless employees are fully compensated, this could become a variant of what urban theorist Andy Merrifield calls parasitic capitalism, whereby corporate profits increasingly rely on extracting value from the public — and now personal — realm, rather than on generating new value.

THE ALLURE OF REMOTE WORK TO EMPLOYERS

After three months of remote work, some companies are moving towards permanent home-based work: Shopify, for instance, has announced that its employees will continue to work from home after the pandemic.

Indeed, pre-coronavirus estimates suggest savings (for the employer) of about US\$10,000 per year for each employee who works from home.

Though employers are backed by a chorus of remote work proselytizers, others note the loneliness, reduced productivity and inefficiencies of prolonged remote work.

Whatever the personal and productivity impacts of remote work, the savings of US\$10,000 per year are the employer's. In effect, this represents an offloading of costs onto employees

— a new type of enclosure.

In 16th-century Britain, powerful landowners expropriated common land from communities, often for the purpose of running lucrative sheep farms. Today, businesses like Shopify appear to be expropriating their employee's private living space.

THE EMPLOYEE'S PERSPECTIVE

If working from home becomes permanent, employees will have to dedicate part of their private space to work. This requires purchasing desks, ergonomic chairs and office equipment.

It also means having private space dedicated to work: the space must be heated, cleaned, maintained and paid for. Permanent remote work cannot take place at the corner of a kitchen table peering into a laptop while perched on a stool.

How much will this cost employees?

That depends on many things, but for purposes of illustration, I have run some estimates for Montréal. The exercise is simple but important, since it brings these costs out of the realm of speculation into the realm of meaningful discussion.

RENTAL COSTS

Taking as a starting point 2019 rental values published by Canada's Mortgage and Housing Corp., I estimate what it would cost to rent an apartment with one extra room in the city of Montréal and in its upmarket suburb, Westmount. Here's the data:

The CMHC does not report rental values for three-bedroom apartments; it only reports the average rental value for apartments of three bedrooms and more.

Obviously, the average rent for

apartments with three bedrooms is less than the average rent for apartments with three bedrooms and more. I assume that if an employee moves from a two-bedroom to a three-bedroom apartment, the increase in rent is 66 per cent of the increase in rent between a two-bedroom and a three-bedroom-plus apartment.

The extra costs (and savings) an employee would incur working from home, and adding an extra room for work purposes, are presented below.

Transportation savings are modest — half the value of a monthly pass, because it's assumed employees will still need to move around the city for some work purposes even while working from home.

I made some assumptions here of a monthly cleaning service at \$100 a month, \$50 to \$65 a month in extra utilities, the aforementioned public transit savings of 50 per cent of a monthly pass, and \$1,000 a year in office and other equipment.

The total annual costs in the above figures come out of employees' after-tax income. In Québec, the marginal tax rate for earnings of \$50,000 and \$150,000 a year are 40.5 per cent and 54.8 per cent respectively.

Given the costs presented in the above graph, in order to fully compensate employees for setting up and maintaining office space at home, the employer would need to raise employees' pay by between \$5,871 and \$16,285. The lower number corresponds to a move from a one- to two-bedroom apartment in Montréal for an employee earning \$50,000 — in other words, a net of \$3,493 when taking into account the higher apartment rent.

The higher number corresponds to the same move in Westmount for an employee earning \$150,000, or a \$7,369 net. An alternative would be for the employer to cover the total costs directly as expenses, and the employee could require a lower increase in income if they obtain some tax rebates for expenses related to their jobs.

These rough calculations show that the savings made by employers when their staff works from home are of similar magnitude to the compensation workers should receive for setting up offices at home.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR OFFICES IN CITIES?

One of two things may happen:

- Employers offload these costs onto employees. This would be a form of expropriation, with employees absorbing production costs that have traditionally been paid by the employer. This represents a considerable transfer of value from employees to employers.
- Employees will be properly compensated. In this case, employer real estate savings will be modest.

If savings are modest, then the many advantages of working in offices — such as conviviality, rapidity of communication, team-building and acclimatization of new employees — will encourage employers to shelve the idea of remote work and, like Yahoo in 2013, encourage employees to work (most of the time) from corporate office space.

[The writer is Professor, McGill School of Urban Planning, McGill University]

TMC slams PM after 17th oil price hike in a row

KOLKATA, JUN 23 (PTI): The Trinamool Congress on Tuesday slammed Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the fuel price hikes for 17 days in a row, saying it is "disgraceful to unleash a planned disaster" on the common people at a time when the country is in the throes of a pandemic.

Petrol price was hiked by 20 paise per litre and diesel by 55 paise on Tuesday as oil companies increased rates that took the cumulative increase to a steep Rs 8.5 and Rs 10.01 per litre, respectively.

TMC leaders used #ModiBabuPetrolBeka-bu hashtag on their Twitter handles.

Abhishek Banerjee, senior TMC leader and nephew of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, said it is disgraceful to snatch the benefit of low crude oil prices by imposing record duty hikes.

"While people are facing severe economic dis-



stress during #COVID19, @narendramodiji decided to snatch the benefit of low crude oil prices by imposing record duty hikes. However, when it's rising again, he passes on the hardship to the common man. Disgraceful! #ModiBabuPetrolBeka-bu," he tweeted.

TMC secretary general and state minister Partha Chatterjee said du-

ties on petrol and diesel have seen a rise of nearly 247.89 per cent and 794.10 per cent, respectively since Modi took over reins of the country.

"And yet again, @narendramodiji unleashes a new planned disaster on his dear countrymen. Since 2014, the duties on petrol & diesel have seen a rise of nearly 247.89% & 794.10% respectively.

Yes, you read that right and no, @narendramodiji does not care," he said on Twitter. Chatterjee's cabinet colleague and senior party leader Chandrima Bhattacharya said, "PM Modi's way of caring is scaring the people of his country.

"When all of us are fighting a pandemic together, @narendramodiji decided to throw an-

other challenge at us by hiking the oil prices. Is this some game for the citizens of the country where you keep increasing the difficulty level with each passing day? #ModiBabuPetrolBeka-bu," she tweeted.

"COVID crisis- Failed Governance -Indo-China standoff -Surrender -Unprecedented petrol and diesel price -Radio silence Modiji, your way of 'caring' is scaring us," she added.

Hitting back at the ruling party, BJP national secretary Rahul Sinha said if TMC is so bothered about the oil price hike, it should withdraw the taxes levelled by the state government on oil prices.

The 17th daily increase in rates, since oil companies on June 7 restarted revising prices in line with costs after ending an 82-day hiatus in rate revision, has taken diesel prices to fresh highs. Petrol price too is at a two-year high.

Bihar's COVID toll rises to 52, tally climbs to 7,893

PATNA, JUN 22 (PTI): A 51-year-old home guard succumbed to COVID-19 in Bihar on Monday, taking the state's toll to 52, while 228 fresh cases pushed the tally to 7,893, the state health department said.

The deceased had comorbidities. He was recently admitted to a hospital here and had tested positive for COVID-19 in the course of examination, department sources said.

With this, the death toll in Patna district has risen to three.

Only Darbhanga (five), Begusarai and Siwan (four each) have reported a higher number of deaths. Khagaria, Nalanda and Vaishali districts have also reported three deaths each so far.



All 38 districts in the state have reported COVID-19 cases.

Patna has the maximum number of cases at 426, followed by 375 in Madhubani, 367 in Bhagalpur, 347 in Begusarai and 324 in Siwan.

Till date, 5,767 people have recovered from COVID-19 in the state, while 1.63 lakh samples have been tested.

Bihar began reporting COVID-19 cases in

last week of March. Its tally has grown by more than 6,000 since the beginning of May, largely due to the return of the state's migrant workers who were stranded away from their homes during the lockdown.

Since May 3, 5,010 people have tested positive upon returning to Bihar from other parts of the country, according to state Health Secretary Lokesh Kumar Singh.

Prannoy apologises for outburst against BAI



NEW DELHI, JUN 23 (PTI): India shuttler H S Prannoy has apologised to the Badminton Association of India (BAI) for his scathing attack on the national federation after it did not recommend him for the Arjuna Award, days after he was show-caused for the outburst.

Prannoy was eventually recommended for the award by national coach Pullela Gopichand in his capacity as a former Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna recipient.

The world number 28 apologised to BAI after the governing body show caused him for his outburst on social media and also highlighted some past disciplinary issues involving him.

BAI president Himanta Biswa Sarma has accepted his apology and general secretary Ajay Singhania hoped the incident won't be repeated.

"It was unfortunate to witness something like this but Prannoy had reached out to us and based on his submission, we hope going forward players will reach out to the federation if

they have any concern," Singhania said in a statement on Tuesday. On June 2, BAI had recommended Satwiksairaj Rankireddy, Chirag Shetty and Sameer Verma for Arjuna award, leaving out Prannoy which prompted the shuttler to express his displeasure on social media.

"Same old story. Guy who has medals in CWG and Asian Championships not even recommended by the association. And guy who was not there on any of these major events recommended. #waah #thiscountryisajoke, Prannoy had said in his now-deleted tweet.

The governing body was not happy with Prannoy and his teammate Kidambi Srikanth for not playing the semifinal of the Asian Team Championship at Manila in February and instead leaving for Barcelona to compete in another event.

India had lost the semifinal but finished third in the competition.

The BAI recommended Srikanth for the Khel Ratna award last week after the top Indian shuttler apologised for pulling out of the tournament midway.

Historic Jagannath Rath Yatra begins in Puri



PURI, JUN 23 (PTI): The historic Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath commenced on Tuesday in this pilgrim town without the usual sea of devotees and amid tight security in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, less than 24 hours after the Supreme Court modified its earlier order to clear the decks for the annual ritual.

In order to prevent any congregation, a curfew-like shutdown has been imposed across Puri district from 9 pm on Monday till 2 pm on Wednesday, DGP Abhay said.

Over 50 platoons of police force (one platoon has 30 personnel) have been deployed and CCTVs installed at various locations as part of the security arrangement for the nine-day festival, officials said, adding, all entry points to Puri were sealed.

Priests and police personnel, who were part of the chariot pulling ritual, underwent mandatory COVID-19 testing on Monday night and only those whose reports came out negative were allowed to participate in the festival, they said.

A number of customary rituals like 'Mangla Arati' and 'Mailam' were

held before the presiding deities -- Lord Jagannath, his elder brother Lord Balabhadra and their sister Devi Subhadra -- set out from the sanctum sanctorum of the temple.

Descending from the 'Ratna Sinhasana', the bejeweled throne, the three deities were taken out of the temple down the 22 steps known as 'Baisi Pahacha' through the Lion's Gate in an elaborate royal ritual called 'Pahandi'.

In a rhythmic style, the deities moved forward step by step amid blowing of conch shells and ringing of bells.

At first Sudarshana, the celestial wheel of Krishna-Vishnu, was taken out and placed in the chariot of Devi Subhadra followed by Lord Balabhadra, Subhadra and finally Lord Jagannath.

Ready to carry the deities for their annual nine-day sojourn to the Gundicha temple, nearly three km away, the three wooden chariots waited outside draped in layers of red, black, green and yellow.

The 45-feet high 'Nandighosh', the chariot of Lord Jagannath, stood with 16 huge wooden wheels, while that of Lord Balabhadra's 'Tadlathawaja' is 44-feet high with 14 wheels. Devi Subhadra's 'Dar-

padalan' is 43-feet high with 12 wheels.

Gajapati Maharaja Dibyasingha Deb performed the special 'Chhera Panhara' ritual with a golden broom ahead of the pulling of the chariots.

Disallowed to physically participate in the grand festival, lakhs of devotees got a chance to witness the Rath Yatra live on television.

President Ram Nath Kovind, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and Union Home Minister Amit Shah greeted people on the occasion of Rath Yatra.

The Supreme Court gave the go-ahead for the Rath Yatra after taking note of the Odisha government's assurance that it "can be held in a limited way without public attendance".

Modifying its June 18 order by which it had said that this year's Puri Rath Yatra cannot be permitted due to coronavirus pandemic, a bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde, on Monday directed the Odisha government to impose curfew in Puri city during the time when chariots are taken in procession.

Bailey bridge near India-China border in U'khand collapses

PITHORAGARH, JUN 23 (PTI): A bailey bridge in this district of Uttarakhand, nearly 50 km from the Sino-India border, collapsed when a truck carrying a JCB machine was crossing it, an official said on Tuesday.

The truck driver and the JCB machine operator were injured as the 40-feet-long bridge,

built in 2009, crashed on Monday under the combined weight of the truck and the JCB machine, SDM of Munsiyari A K Shukla said.

The weight-bearing capacity of the bridge was 18 tonne while the combined weight of the JCB machine and the truck was 26 tonnes, he said. The SDM said the

truck driver and the JCB machine operator have been admitted to a hospital in Munsiyari.

Around 15 border villages of Johar Valley have been cut off. Legal action will be taken against the truck driver, the official said.

Construction of another bridge will take at least 15 days, the SDM said.

Nine new cases push Arunachal COVID-19 tally to 148

ITANAGAR, JUN 23 (PTI): Nine more people tested positive for COVID-19 in Arunachal Pradesh, raising the state's coronavirus count to 148, an official said on Tuesday.

Arunachal Pradesh now has 126 active cases, while 22 patients have recovered from the disease, State Surveillance Officer L Jampa said.

Six fresh cases were reported from worst-hit Changlang district, two from Longding and one from Leparada.

All of them had recently returned from other states -- Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and New Delhi, he said, adding they were in quarantine at a state government facility. The patients are asymptomatic, the official said.

"Arunachal Pradesh is still in the green zone as all COVID-19 cases have been reported from government quarantine facilities," Jampa added.

Gold falls Rs 57, silver prices tumble Rs 477

NEW DELHI, JUN 23 (PTI): Gold prices fell by Rs 57 to Rs 48,931 per 10 gram in the national capital on Tuesday due to weakness in global prices and rupee appreciation, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the yellow metal had closed at Rs 48,988 per 10 gram.

Silver also declined by Rs 477 to Rs 49,548 per kg from Rs 50,025 per kg on Monday.

"Spot gold prices for 24 carat in Delhi were trading down by Rs 57 with weak international gold prices and rupee appreciation," HDFC Securities Senior Analyst (Commodities) Tapan Patel said.

The rupee on Tuesday appreciated 37 paise to provisionally close at 75.66 against the US dollar, following a rally in domestic equity market and persistent foreign fund inflows.

In the international market, gold traded marginally higher at USD 1,755 per ounce, while silver quoted at USD 17.82 per ounce.

Sunder Pichai disappointed by Trump's immigration proclamation

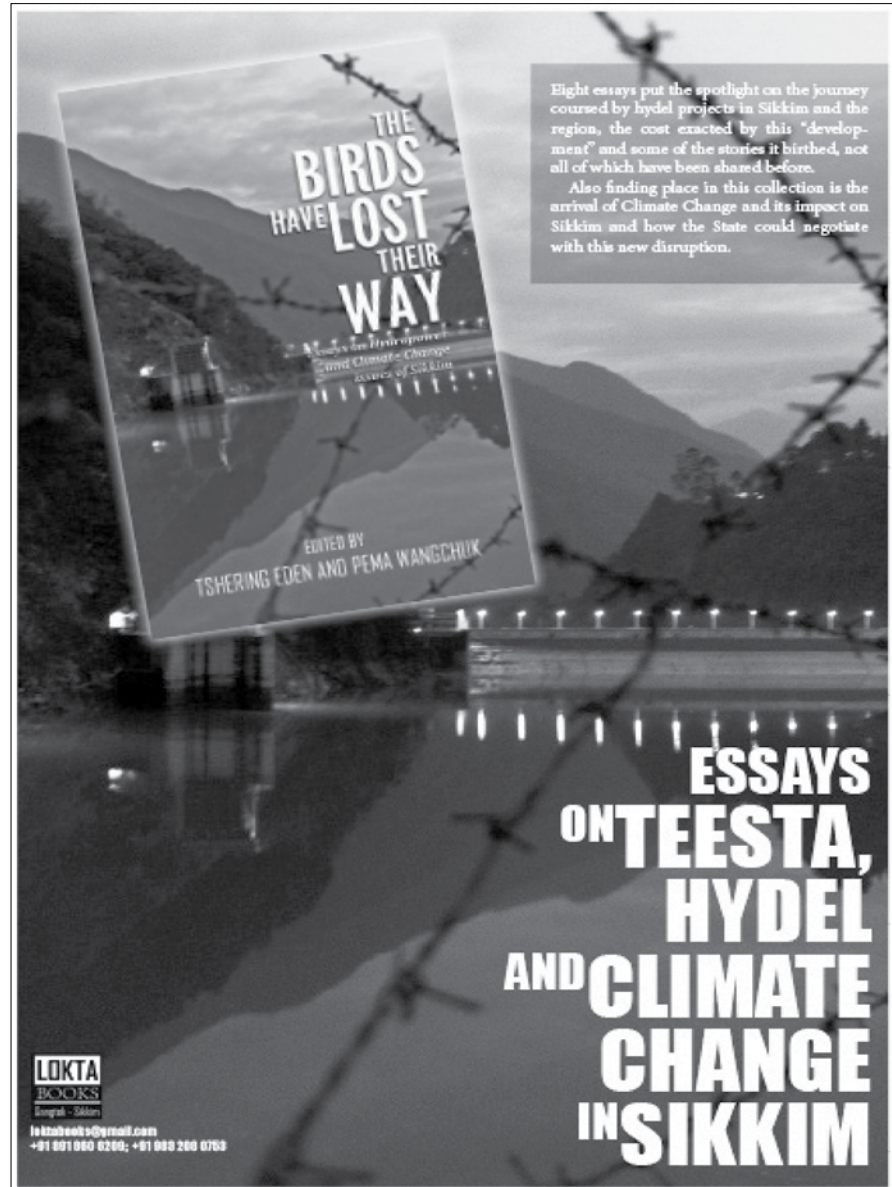
WASHINGTON, JUN 23 (PTI): Google CEO Sunder Pichai has expressed disappointment over the proclamation issued by US President Donald Trump to temporarily suspend foreign work visas, including the H-1B, and said he would stand with immigrants and work to expand opportunity for all. Immigration has contributed immensely to America's economic success, making it a global leader in tech, and also Google the company it is today, Indian-American Pichai said in a tweet hours after Trump issued his proclamation in this regard.

Disappointed by today's proclamation - we'll continue to stand with immigrants and work to expand opportunity for all, Pichai said.

In a separate statement, Vanita Gupta, president and CEO of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, slammed the latest move of the Trump administration.

The latest travel ban is a new season of the same racist, xenophobic show put on by Donald Trump and Stephen Miller, she said.

But Trump's transparent effort to rally his base and distract from his innumerable failures, including his disastrous response to COVID-19, will not work. Indeed, the courts will stop his unlawful actions targeting immigrants, Gupta said.



Sania Mirza signs up with Cornerstone

MUMBAI, JUN 23 (PTI): Indian tennis star Sania Mirza on Tuesday signed a deal with talent management agency Cornerstone.

The six-time Grand Slam winner will be working closely with the agency, which will be exclusively managing her brand endorsements, appearances, digital activations, and other potential business opportunities.

"Cornerstone has been successfully representing talent across India and I am confident we will do plenty of interesting work together going forward. The team is young, motivated and I have full faith in their capabilities to grow my brand across verticals," Sania said.

The 33-year old is the first and, so far, only Indian female player to have won a Grand Slam title in any format. Last month, she became the first Indian to win the Fed Cup Heart Award for her successful return to the court post motherhood.

After giving birth to her son, Izhaan in October 2018, Sania returned to the court in January this year and instantly achieved success by clinching the women's doubles title at Hobart International alongside Nadiia Kichenok.

Sania has won several international medals, including gold in both singles and doubles at the Commonwealth Games, Asian Games and Afro-Asian Games.

"Sania has been a world class athlete and a fantastic human being both on and off the court. She is one of the most recognisable and aspirational sporting icons India has produced till date. I've known and followed Sania for many years and we as an agency are delighted to work closely with her," Cornerstone chief executive, Bunty Sajdeh said.

Tongan flag bearer leads off 23 fellow Olympians in workouts

SYDNEY, JUN 23 (AP): Peta Taufatofua decided to leave his shirt on Tuesday when he led a group of 23 fellow Olympians in a home workout video to help celebrate Olympic Day across 20 time zones.

There were a few technical glitches when Taufatofua, who caused a stir when he went shirtless while carrying the Tongan flag shirtless at the 2016 Rio Summer Olympics opening ceremony and again in the cold of Pyeongchang, South Korea at the Winter Olympics two years later, began the workout at 11 a.m. Tongan time.

Taufatofua, who was a taekwondo competitor at Rio and a cross-country skier at Pyeongchang, appeared to have difficulty hearing the moderator but proceeded eventually while wearing a red Tongan shirt in what appeared to be a home gym.

A blog of the workouts later followed New Zealand women's rugby sevens player Tyla Nathan-Wong, Australian diver Melissa Wu and Japanese pole vaulter Yamamoto Seito, all at 11 a.m.

Virus-hit Dybala still dangerous for title-chasing Juventus

ROME, JUN 23 (AP): Paulo Dybala remains as dangerous as ever despite nearly 50 days with the coronavirus.

Cristiano Ronaldo had already given Juventus an early advantage by converting a penalty when Dybala doubled the lead with a splendid, curving effort in a 2-0 win at Bologna in the Serie A restart for both clubs on Monday.

Resuming its chase for a record-extending ninth straight Italian league title, Juventus moved four points clear of Lazio, which visits Atalanta on Wednesday.

It was a welcome complete performance for Juventus after being held scoreless over two Italian Cup matches and losing the final to Napoli last week when Dybala's saved kick in the penalty shootout proved key.

"It was essential to win," Juventus defender Leonardo Bonucci said.

"It was tough to restart after so long. Those two matches were underwhelming. This is the right path. We need to have the desire to bring home the result at any cost."

Dybala was isolated for 46 days starting in March when he continued to test positive for the virus week after week -- even though he was reportedly without symptoms. Dybala's girlfriend also tested



positive. "To tell you the truth, I didn't really feel that great today," Dybala said.

"But I'm happy that I played a great match. During the time when I was idle I tried to stay in form by eating nutritiously. Ronaldo, meanwhile, continued to struggle from missed chances.

Matthijs de Ligt earned the penalty that Ronaldo con-

verted then also started the play that led to Dybala's goal, which was set up by a back-heel pass from Federico Bernardeschi.

From just beyond the area, Dybala bent in a left-footed shot inside the left post.

After the break, Bernardeschi hit the post from the edge of the area and Ronaldo was unable to finish on

the follow up. Dybala also had another chance with his right foot but just missed the target.

Juventus finished with 10 men when second-half substitute Danilo picked up his second yellow card.

BEYOND IBRAHIMOVIC

AC Milan had no problem producing goals without the injured Zlatan Ibrahimovic in

beating relegation-threatened Lecce 4-1. Samu Castillejo, Giacomo Bonaventura, Ante Rebic and Rafael Leao scored for the Rossoneri, who were eliminated by Juventus in the Italian Cup semifinals following a scoreless draw 10 days ago.

The victory boosted Milan's chances of qualifying for Europe, moving level on points with sixth-placed Na-

poli, which visits Hellas Verona on Tuesday. Lecce captain Marco Mancosu equalized temporarily by converting a penalty early in the second half but Bonaventura and Rebic quickly restored the visitors' advantage in a span of three goals in four minutes.

Ibrahimovic, who injured his calf in training last month, is expected back soon. But his contract, which expires at the end of the season, is a source of debate.

Before kickoff, Milan director of football Frederic Massara said there will always be space for champions like (Ibrahimovic)" but then added the club "needs to contain costs amid the coronavirus pandemic.

NO BALOTELLI

Last-place Brescia drew at 10-man Fiorentina 1-1 without captain Mario Balotelli, who did not travel for the game amid a dispute with the club.

Alfredo Donnarumma converted a first-half penalty for Brescia and Fiorentina captain Germ n Pezzella equalized with a diving header before Mart n Ceres picked up his second yellow card for the Viola. Franck Ribery played for Fiorentina for the first time since Nov. 3 following an injury layoff.

All of the games are being played in empty stadiums.

Aguero gives Man City injury scare during 5-0 win vs Burnley

MANCHESTER, JUN 23 (AP): Sergio Aguero gave Manchester City a big injury worry inside the first week of the English Premier League's resumption by hobbling off with a right knee problem during the 5-0 win over Burnley.

"It doesn't look good," City manager Pep Guardiola said of the injury to the club's all-time top scorer.

"We will see tomorrow. He felt something in his knee. He was struggling in the last month about some pain in his knee." The Argentina

striker already appeared in discomfort after having a blocked shot midway through the first half, when he was fouled by Burnley defender Ben Mee in the area in stoppage time to earn a penalty on Monday.

Aguero stayed down, clutching his knee, and soon left the field. As he walked past Guardiola in the technical area, Aguero pointed to an area behind his right knee and the coach reacted by shaking his head.

Any lengthy absence

would leave City with just one recognized striker, Gabriel Jesus, as the team works to negotiate its way through a hectic schedule since the resumption of soccer after the coronavirus outbreak. City has eight more league games to play before July 26 and is also in the FA Cup, which resumes at the quarterfinal stage next weekend.

City is also still involved in the Champions League, which will restart at the last-16 stage in August.

Latif says result of Pakistan's upcoming tour of England difficult to predict



KARACHI, JUN 23 (PTI): Former captain Rashid Latif says the outcome of Pakistan's upcoming tour of England is hard to predict as the teams are playing under unprecedented circumstances due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Pakistan team, which is to depart for England on June 28, was hit hard on Monday with three players testing positive for coronavirus. The first of the three Tests begins on July 30 at Lord's while the three-match T20 International series begins at Headingley on August 29.

"It is difficult to predict whether Pakistan can win the series or not because this time conditions and environment is very different from previous tours," Latif said. "And don't forget, even last time our batting generally struggled without Younis Khan and Misbah-ul-Haq in England," he added.

Pakistan won the first Test at Lord's but lost the

second at Headingley in 2018. The 51-year-old Latif, who played 37 Tests between 1992 and 2003, does not see any management problems during the upcoming tour despite the squad having 29 players and 14 officials.

"I don't think (to have problems) because (head coach) Misbah is a calculated and calm personality who never shuts the door on anyone. And I think because of this coronavirus pandemic I think such a large squad is necessitated," he said.

The former wicket-keeper-batsman also felt that the partnership of Misbah and batting coach Younis Khan would be of big help to the team in England as both had a good understanding and many a times they have come together to rescue Pakistan in difficult circumstances.

"I think they will carry their batting partnership into coaching as well. I was disappointed that the PCB didn't hire

Younis as head coach of the junior team but even now I believe Younis has much to give to Pakistan cricket and should be given a long term contract as it will benefit the batsmen a lot, he said.

Latif said with no crowd pressure -- as the matches will be played without spectators -- it would be intriguing to see how both teams cope in the Test and T20 series.

"Crowd pressure does affect the players but playing in front of empty stadiums for full five days will be a totally different experience."

Latif also does not see senior player Sarfaraz Ahmed featuring in the Test series but said he may play in the T20 matches. "It will be an odd situation for him having to sit on the bench after having led the country in all three formats. But, it is something he has to get used to. He is a fighter and I am sure he will make a comeback.

Australia-NZ favoured for 2023 Women's WCup after Japan quits

MELBOURNE, JUN 23 (AP): Australia and New Zealand have become the clear favorites to jointly host the 2023 Women's World Cup after Japan withdrew from bidding.

The combined bid performed significantly stronger than its only remaining rival, Colombia, in the FIFA inspection report scoring 4.1 to 2.8.

Japan was marked 3.9 out of 5 and was likely to split the voting on FIFA's ruling council among the seven Asian Football Confederation representatives.

FIFA, soccer's world governing body, will vote Thursday.

Praising Japan's decision to quit the contest as "another impressive show of Asian football unity, AFC President Sheikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa called on Asia members to vote for the cross-confederation bid.

"This is the most technically impressive of the bids that the council must choose from on June 25 and we must be guided by the experts," he said.

None of the remaining bidders has ever hosted a senior men's or women's World Cup. Victory for the Australia and New Zealand would be the first time a World Cup has been split across two confederations.

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison issued a joint statement on Tuesday endorsing a bid they say would "embody our passion for women's football and proud commitment to equality and fairness."

"Football is the game that connects us all. We sincerely hope that an Australia-New Zealand FIFA Women's World Cup will bring us all together again in 2023, when we can all celebrate human-



ity, community and unity through football," the prime ministers wrote in the joint letter to the FIFA Council.

New Zealand is part of the Oceania soccer body that has three FIFA Council members. But New Zealand Football President Johanna Wood is ineligible to vote at the online meeting.

"One of the questions raised or comments made in the evaluation report was, it is a challenge across co-hosting of countries," Wood told The Associated Press recently.

"But I think what we have demonstrated through the Rugby World Cup (and) the Cricket World Cup, that we have done these events before.

"So we are well placed to manage it across confederations, as well as across different countries. The travel has been kept to a minimum because of the hubs, and that's really to help support players, but also fans getting around."

The tournament is due to be staged from July 10-Aug. 20, 2023 and will see the field expanded from 24 to 32 teams.

Japan, which co-hosted the men's World Cup in 2002 with South Ko-

rea, announced it was quitting the 2023 tournament contest at a news conference on Monday. The Japanese women won the title in 2011 and were runners-up in '15.

"I could not be more disappointed to have to make this very difficult decision," Japan Football Association President Kozo Tashima said.

The Women's World Cup was first staged in 1991 and has been twice staged in Asia, each time in China.. It has never been held in South America. But Colombia's chances were hit by the lowest score in the FIFA inspection that rated stadiums, national security, hotels and other infrastructure.

FIFA said Colombia's plan needed "significant amount of investment and support," while Australia and New Zealand was the "most commercially favourable" bid.

That prompted a complaint last week by South American soccer body CONMEBOL, which has had strained relations with FIFA in recent months.

CONMEBOL, which has five council members though only four eligible voters on Thursday, has worked to build closer ties with European soc-

cer body UEFA, which has the biggest voting bloc with nine. FIFA initially wanted the voting to be conducted in secret, but backtracked following criticism of the secrecy and promised to make them public.

But the Women's World Cup host is still chosen only by the 37-member ruling council, whereas the location of the men's tournament is now selected by the entire congress of more than 200 member federations.

The joint 2026 World Cup bid by the United States, Canada and Mexico beat Morocco two years ago in the first such public vote.

The policy was introduced under new FIFA President Gianni Infantino after longstanding criticism of secret votes by executive committee members in 2010 to pick Russia and Qatar as hosts for the 2018 and 2022 World Cups.

Those hosting campaigns have been investigated by FIFA and prosecutors in the US, France and Switzerland.

The United States has won the Women's World Cup four times including in France last year. Australia, Colombia and New Zealand have never finished in the top four.

In NY, KY primaries, mail-in deluge and lines in Louisville

WASHINGTON (AP) — Overwhelmed Kentucky and New York officials faced a deluge of mail-in votes likely to delay results for days after high-profile primaries Tuesday, contests testing if establishment Democratic congressional candidates can withstand challengers fueled by voter fury over racism.

The day's poster child for voting nightmares loomed potentially in Louisville, Kentucky. The state's largest city and hometown of a serious challenger for the Democratic nomination for the Senate, Louisville — population nearly 600,000 — had just one in-person polling place. Kentucky's Republican secretary of state, Michael Adams, said he hoped early voting and the large demand for mail-in ballots would avert long lines.

All of this flowed from the coronavirus pandemic, which has upended life in America since March. Tuesday, it was on track to take its toll on voters hoping to cast ballots without long waits and for officials hoping to quickly declare winners in all but the most one-sided contests.

Like other states, Kentucky and New York have made it easier for voters to cast ballots by mail, instead of risking exposure to the virus by waiting on long lines. That is likely to mean delayed election results caused by a perfect storm — far more mail-in votes than usual and ballot-counting proce-



dures that haven't been adjusted to handle them. The focus was on two races Tuesday. In both, Democrats were waiting to see if nationwide protests sparked by last month's killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis police custody would translate to decisive turnout by African American and progressive voters.

Amy McGrath, favored by party leaders and buoyed by a massive \$41 million war chest, faced an eleventh-hour scare as she fought to become Democratic nominee against Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky. She's a former Marine combat pilot with centrist views, which top Democrats like Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer view as a strong match for the Republican-heavy state.

But freshman state legislator Charles Booker's underfinanced campaign has caught fire after he attended recent protests against the March police killing of 26-year-old Breonna Taylor in her Louis-

ville home. That's helped Booker win support from progressive icons like Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., and the state's two largest newspapers, leaving the primary's outcome unpredictable.

Meanwhile, House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Eliot Engel, D-N.Y., embraced by a who's who of prominent Democrats, was battling for a 17th House term.

His challenger is educator and political neophyte Jamaal Bowman, who has drawn strength from anti-racism protests and his accusations that Engel has grown aloof from his district in parts of the Bronx and Westchester. Engel, a liberal, has support from the likes of Hillary Clinton, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and the Congressional Black Caucus. He's also outspent Bowman, who's been helped by progressive groups and a coveted endorsement by The New York Times.

Virginia was also holding congressional primaries, and there was

one Republican House runoff each in North Carolina and Mississippi.

Kentucky has been overwhelmed by such an increase in mail ballots that the state's two biggest counties, Jefferson and Fayette, aren't planning to release results election night, said Secretary of State Michael Adams. Jefferson County is home to Louisville.

Kentucky typically receives few mail ballots, but expects them to account for the majority of votes this time. With the state now allowing any registered voter to vote by mail, more than 400,000 mail ballots were returned as of Sunday. All received by Saturday will be counted.

New York officials expect the vast majority of votes to be mail ballots this year, compared to their typical 5% share. Counties have until eight days after Election Day to count and release the results of mail ballots, with 1.7 million requested by voters. Other notable contests Tuesday includ-

ed an effort by one-time CNBC anchor and former Republican Michelle Caruso-Cabrera to grab the Democratic nomination from Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y. Ocasio-Cortez, who has become a progressive icon, was an unknown 28-year-old when she won a 2018 primary over longtime Rep. Joe Crowley, who seemed in line to become House speaker.

As Tuesday's voting approached, President Donald Trump continued his effort to undermine Americans' faith in mail-in voting by repeating his unfounded claim that the system is rife with fraud.

"Because of MAIL-IN BALLOTS, 2020 will be the most RIGGED Election in our nations history - unless this stupidity is ended," he tweeted, accusing proponents of "using Covid in order to cheat."

Already this year, problems like long lines and lost mail-in ballots have plagued elections in Georgia, Nevada, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania.

SKorean activist floats leaflets to North amid high tensions

SEOUL, JUN 23 (AP): A South Korean activist on Tuesday said hundreds of leaflets had been launched by balloon across the border with North Korea overnight, after the North repeatedly warned it would retaliate against such actions.

The move is certain to intensify tensions between the Koreas, after the North abruptly raised its rhetoric against South Korean civilian leafletting and pushed to resume its psychological warfare against the South.

Police in the South Korean border town of Paju said Tuesday they were checking into details about the reported leafletting.

Activist Park Sanghak said his organization flew huge balloons carrying 500,000 leaflets, 2,000 one-dollar bills and small books on North Korea from Paju on Monday night.

Park, formerly a North Korean who fled to South Korea, said in a statement his leafletting is a struggle for justice for the sake of liberation of North Korean residents.

Calling North Korean leader Kim Jong Un an evil and his rule barbarism, Park said he'll keep sending anti-Kim leaflets despite worries about his safety.

Though North Korean residents have become modern-day slaves with no basic rights, don't they have the rights to know the truth? he said.

South Korean officials have vowed to ban leafletting and said they would press charges against Park, who has sent leaflets toward North Korea for years.

Authorities said Park's activities are unnecessarily raising animosities between the Koreas and potentially endangering residents

in border areas. In 2014, North Korean troops opened fire at propaganda balloons flying toward their territory, triggering an exchange of fire that caused no known casualties. Last week, North Korea blew up an inter-Korean liaison office on its territory and threatened to take unspecified steps to nullify 2018 agreements aimed at lowering front-line military tensions.

On Monday, North Korea's state media said it had manufactured 12 million propaganda leaflets to be floated toward South Korea in what it said would be the largest-ever anti-Seoul leafletting campaign.

Experts say North Korea is likely using the South Korean civilian leafletting as a chance to boost its internal unity and apply more pressures on Seoul and Washington amid stalled nuclear diplomacy.

Trump says China trade deal still on after adviser's remarks



WASHINGTON, JUN 23 (AP): President Donald Trump is tweeting that an initial trade agreement with China is still on after a top White House adviser's comments seemed to suggest it was over, spooking markets late Monday.

Trump tweeted: The China Trade Deal is fully intact. Hopefully they will continue to live up to the terms of the Agreement!"

The Trump administration has been extremely critical of China's efforts to contain the novel coronavirus early on and the president repeatedly blames China for the pandemic in his remarks, leading to questions about future cooperation in areas such as trade.

Peter Navarro, direc-

tor of trade and manufacturing policy at the White House, told Fox News it's over," when asked a question that was focused on the China trade deal.

(Trump) obviously really wanted to hang onto this trade deal as much as possible. And he wanted them to make good on the promises, because there had been progress made on that trade deal, but given everything that's happened and all the things you just listed, is that over?" Navarro was asked.

It's over, yes," Navarro replied.

But when contacted by The Associated Press, Navarro said his comments had been taken out of context and had nothing to do with the deal.

I was simply speak-

ing to the lack of trust we now have of the Chinese Communist Party after they lied about the origins of the China virus and foisted a pandemic upon the world," said Navarro, a longtime critic of the Asian country.

In January, the U.S. and China reached an interim trade deal to reduce tariff tensions. China agreed to buy massive amounts of U.S. products.

United States Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer testified on Capitol Hill last week that he is confident China will live up to its purchase commitments even though its economy has been weakened by the coronavirus pandemic and the lockdowns and travel restrictions imposed to contain it.

Seattle plans to dismantle occupied protest zone after shootings

(REUTERS) - Seattle authorities, alarmed by two weekend shootings, plan to start dismantling six blocks of streets in a part of the city occupied by activists protesting against police brutality and racial inequality across the United States.

A teenager was killed and at least two other people were wounded in the shootings in what is known as the Capitol Hill Organized Protest (CHOP) zone.

Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan said city authorities were working to bring the CHOP zone to an end and that the Seattle Police Department (SPD) would soon move back in to a precinct building its forces had largely abandoned in the area. "SPD will be returning to the East Precinct. We will do it peacefully and in the near future," Durkan told a news conference on Monday.

Durkan condemned the violence, writing on Twitter that it was "unacceptable". She said such violence distracted from changes in policing demanded by demonstrators. U.S. President Donald Trump has said the demonstrations in the Seattle protest zone are being run by "anarchists".

Anti-racism protests and demonstrations against police brutality have spread around the world since an unarmed Black man, George Floyd.

Suspension of foreign work visas to free up to 5.25 lakh jobs in US: White House

WASHINGTON, JUN 23 (PTI): The temporary suspension of foreign work visas is expected to free up to 5,25,000 jobs in the US, senior officials said after President Donald Trump issued a proclamation to ban until the end of the year popular non-immigrant visas, including H-1B and L1, which benefit Indian IT professionals. "The sum total of what these actions will do in terms of freeing up jobs over the course of the rest of 2020 is about 5,25,000 jobs," a senior administration official told reporters during a conference call on Monday.

"Quite a significant number, where President Trump is focusing on getting Americans back to work as quickly as possible after we've suffered this hit to our economy based on the coronavirus and the harm it's done," the official said.

A proclamation of Trump on Monday temporarily suspended till the end of the current year a number of popular non-immigrant visas including the H-1B, H-4, H-2B visa, J and L visas.

"The H-1B is the high-tech visa. H-4 is the spouses of certain other visa holders, including H-1B and H-2B. H-2B is a bit of a low-skill catch-all. The only ones that'll come in under the H-2B will be those in the food service industry, which is



less than 15 per cent of all H-2Bs." "Then, almost all working J visas will be excluded, and then all L visas. Ls are intra-company transfers from, say, company X, their facility in Germany to their facility in Michigan," the official said.

While maintaining the integrity of the asylum system, the president has closed a bunch of those loopholes, which, in addition to cleaning up the asylum system, will also free up more jobs for Americans. "That is done by regulation, however, not by the executive order," the official said.

Trump in his lengthy proclamation has directed the Department of Homeland Security to eliminate work permits of those who have final orders of removal or commit crimes in the United States or are deportable. The category alone is in excess of 50,000 jobs a year that will be opened up for Americans, the official

said. The White House later said the proclamation is part of the 'America first recovery' effort of Trump as he is expanding the suspension of certain visas through the end of the year to ensure American workers take first priority as the country recovers from the economic effects of the coronavirus.

Noting that Trump is extending the pause on new immigrant visas through the end of the year to ensure that the US continues putting American workers first during the ongoing coronavirus recovery, the White House said the president is building on this measure with an additional pause on several job-related non-immigrant visas H-1Bs, H-2Bs without a nexus to the food-supply chain, certain H-4s, as well as Ls and certain Js preserving jobs for American citizens.

Asserting that this will ensure businesses look to American workers first when hiring, the

White House said that many workers have been hurt through no fault of their own due to coronavirus and they should not remain on the sidelines while being replaced by new foreign labour.

"The Trump administration has also finalised regulations to eliminate the incentive to file an asylum application for the primary purpose of obtaining an employment authorisation document. With some exceptions, we should not permit large numbers of foreign workers to enter the United States at a time when so many Americans are out of work," the White House said.

The White House asserted that American people stand by Trump as he takes common-sense action to preserve jobs for American citizens. "Polls show that the overwhelming majority of Americans support pausing immigration as we recover as a nation from the coronavirus pandemic," it said.

A Washington Post-University of Maryland poll found that 65 per cent of those polled support pausing immigration into the country, including 61 per cent of minority respondents. A Pew Research Center poll found that 81 per cent of Americans see mass immigration as a threat as we confront the challenges posed by the coronavirus, it added.

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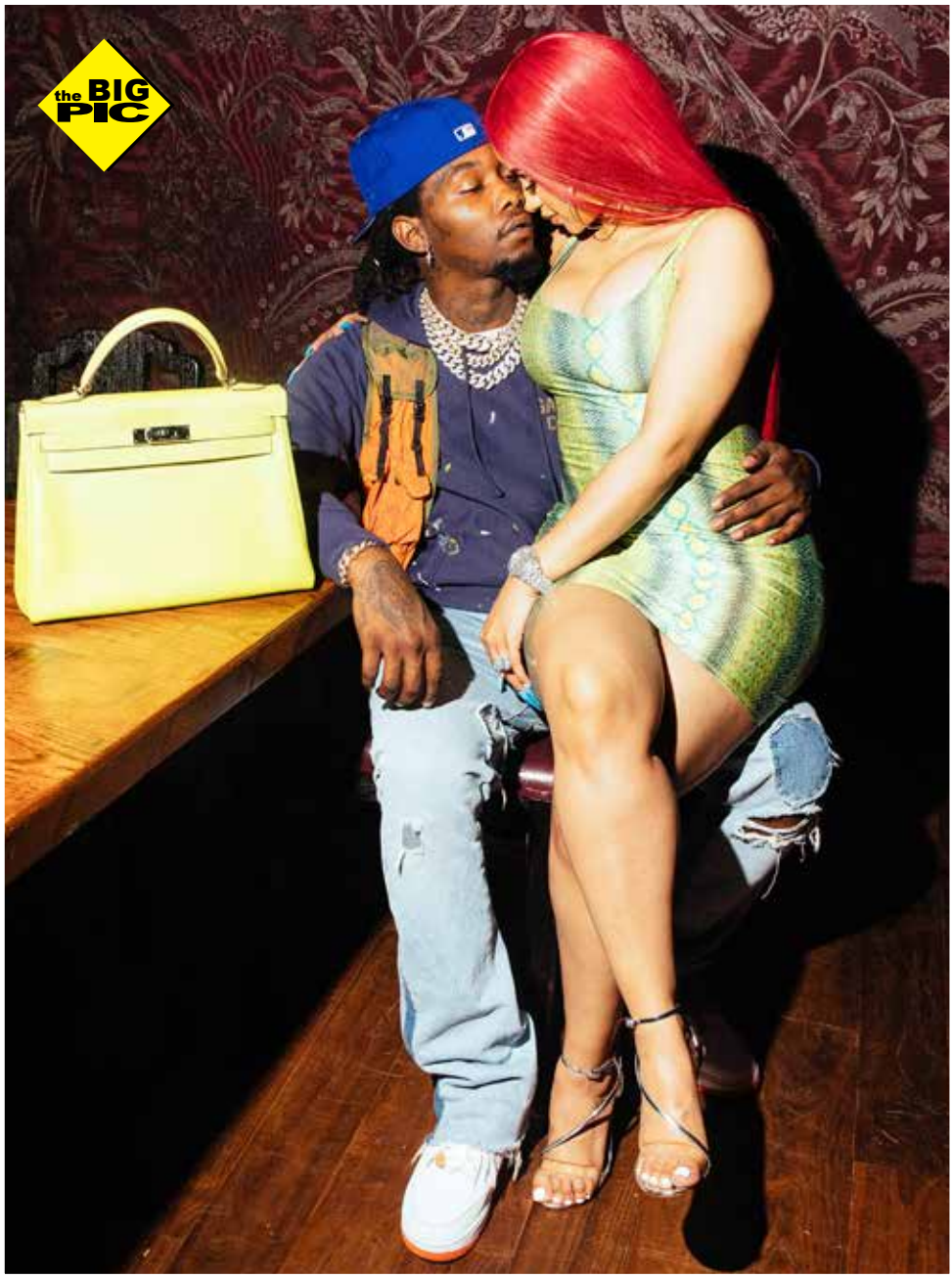
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FEEL THE LOVE! The couple, Cardi B & Offset spending Father's Day to at TAO in Los Angeles.

Joel Schumacher Dies: 'St. Elmo's Fire,' 'The Lost Boys,' 'Batman Forever' Director Was 80

The filmmaker passed away peacefully on Monday after battling cancer, leaving behind a career of cult classics and reappraised curiosities. Joel Schumacher, the outspoken and shameless American filmmaker whose often flamboyant productions have become cult classics, died Monday morning at the age of 80. He passed away peacefully after a year-long battle with cancer, Schumacher's representatives confirmed to IndieWire. His last efforts behind the camera were directing two episodes of the Netflix series "House of Cards" in 2013, though he'd since continued to regale with his unfiltered stories of Hollywood lore, most recently in a 2019 profile of the filmmaker in New York Magazine. Born in New York City, Schumacher studied at Parsons New School for Design and the Fashion Institute of Technology — an education that informed his dazzling visual style as a filmmaker — before moving to Los Angeles to study at UCLA. His earliest credits in Hollywood included as costume designer on "Play It as It Lays" and Woody Allen's "Sleeper" and "Interiors," and as screenwriter of cult favorites "Sparkle," "Car Wash," and "The Wiz," before he made his directing debut with the 1981 B-movie-inspired sci-fi "The Incredible Shrinking Woman," starring Lily Tomlin. His first major success as a director was the Brat Pack-inspired "St. Elmo's Fire," starring Rob Lowe, Demi Moore, Emilio Estevez, and Ally Sheedy. He next directed one of the most iconic movies of the 1980s, "The Lost Boys," the vampire horror comedy starring Jason Patric, Corey Haim, Kiefer Sutherland, and Corey Feldman, putting Schumacher on the map as a genre moviemaker.



After the romantic farce "Cousins" in 1989, he continued directing thrillers into the '90s, including "Flatliners," "Dying Young," "The Client," and "A Time to Kill." But Schumacher gained notoriety for his two then-derided forays into the DC universe, "Batman Forever" in 1995 and "Batman & Robin" in 1997. These over-the-top, garish takes on the Batman franchise drew heavily from the Bob Kane comic books, as Schumacher wanted to root his vision in a cartoon aesthetic. Though the films were trashed by critics and have been endlessly mocked, they've achieved cult status in later years as entertaining, self-aware, and playful offshoots of the Batman mythology, which is now dominated by serious, grim takes that carry a social message. Schumacher's later credits included two excellent thrillers with Colin Farrell, who he discovered — "Tigerland" and "Phone Booth" — as well as the Cate Blanchett vehicle "Veronica Guerin," the reviled big-screen version of "The Phantom of the Opera," and finally, "Trespass," starring Nicole Kidman and Nicolas Cage. Schumacher's identity as an out gay man long before most Hollywood players would dare to be so is often reflected through his movies.

Jon Stewart's 'Irresistible': Film Review

In his second film as a director, Jon Stewart has made a small-town satirical comedy that takes on the big-money corruptions of American politics. The movie hits its target, but in a safe way. "Irresistible" is the second film written and directed by Jon Stewart, but unlike the first, the deadly serious and surprisingly accomplished true-life Iranian prison drama "Rosewater" (2014), this one comes straight out of Stewart's satirical-political wheelhouse. Set shortly after the 2016 presidential election, it's a close-to-the-bone tall tale — slightly exaggerated but still basically plausible — of what happens when America's two ruling political parties descend upon the rural heartland of Deerlaken, Wisconsin, to take over a small-town election for mayor. At the center of the movie is a cynical sharpie of a campaign consultant, Gary Zimmer (Steve Carell), who combines the philosophy of a liberal, the high-maintenance fussiness of an East Coast lifestyle elitist, and the do-what-it-takes amorality of a corporate sociopath. He's just coming off his time as "the grand consigliere" of Hillary Clinton's failed presidential bid, and like most Democrats he's in a slight state of shock at Donald Trump's victory. But he's enough of an image-politics brat to realize that his party, in order to regain power, needs a new kind of electoral star. He thinks he spies that candidate when he catches a viral YouTube video of Col. Jack Hastings (Chris Cooper), a Marine veteran and Midwestern farmer — a guy as Trump Country as you can get — who stands up at a town-council meeting and accuses the mayor of Deerlaken of screwing over the local immigrant community. Gary takes one look at Jack and sees a heartland conservative...with the soul of a liberal! Or as Gary puts it, "A church-going Bernie Sanders with better bone density." So he convinces Jack to run for mayor — and he marshals major party resources to back him, all with the hope of turning the national spotlight on a new brand of Democratic winner. In outline, "Irresistible" is a fusion of "The Candidate," "Wag the Dog," "Green Acres," a Preston Sturges comedy like "Hail the Conquering Hero," and one of those shrewdly funny and didac-



stistible," those include the takeover of politics by big money; the over-the-top fraudulence of campaign TV advertising; the focus-grouping and market-testing of every last voter demographic and policy idea; and the sound-bite candidates who are sold to the public like products. In short, "Irresistible" takes a gleeful, jocular look at the killing of electoral democracy by the twin demons of money and packaging. All of which may inspire you to ask: So what else is new? In theory, "Irresistible" is clever and scathingly illuminating, kind of like the way (in theory) that "Bob Roberts" was back in 1992. In practice, however, the film depends on reveling in most of the clichés and stereotypes it says it's against. When Gary first shows up in Deerlaken, he goes to the local bar, the Hosfrau, and orders "a Bud and a burger," as if that would mark him as a manly regular guy. (In truth, he favors caprese salads on his private-jet rides.) Jack's longtime rival is Faith Brewster (Rose Byrne), a Republican operative in killer pumps who shows up to manage the campaign of the incumbent, Mayor Braun (Brent Sexton). She's as ruthless as Gary is, but their face-offs — fueled, of course, by hate-on sexual tension — have the glib proscribed feel of something out of "The Office." The rest of the movie does, too. In "Rosewater," Stewart proved that he could summon a convincing dramatic atmosphere, but in "Irresistible" there's no discovery to the film's broad and rather knee-jerk comic attitude. The tone is overly obvious yet pretend sub-

tle, with pauses that keep nudging you in the ribs. (It's as if Harold Pinter wrote a sitcom.) More than that, the film keeps telling us what to think. As the campaign ratchets itself up from a homespun political contest to a fake-news war, Stewart flings potshots at a great many targets, and a handful of them hit: a skewering of Fox News in which the right-wing jabs sound as laughably scripted as some of them actually are; a commercial in which Jack fires off a machine gun like Rambo, then turns to the camera to say "I'm Jack Hastings and I approved this message"; a rueful moment when Gary concedes that "It's not politics anymore — it's just math." Yet the notion that Gary has reduced "idealism" to a kind of opportunistic political app is itself, in "Irresistible," a message that gets reduced to an app. It's a comedy of signifiers that keeps pointing its finger at the superficiality of signifiers. Near the end, there's a big twist that gives everyone their just desserts and the American campaign system a kick in the pants. Stewart's message: Our politics is being toxified — strangled — by money. And who would disagree? Yet you could also look at the politics of today and say that it's not that simple — that the Republicans have become the party of authoritarianism, and that the Democrats are undergoing an identity crisis of values that extends far beyond the corruptions of money. "Irresistible" scores points yet feels behind the curve. You wish it were a bold satirical bulletin, or maybe just Stewart's pricelessly amusing version of a Christopher Guest movie. Instead, the film is a lot like a politician: It makes a big show of leading the viewer, but without rocking the boat.

Michael Bisping reveals message he sent to 'steroid cheating f—k' Chad Mendes

One of the more unusual beefs in MMA, Michael Bisping revealed the expletive message he sent to Chad Mendes on Instagram. Michael Bisping has revealed a message he sent to Chad Mendes after the retired featherweight contender trashed Bisping on Instagram. Mendes' comments stem from an Instagram post in which Tim Kennedy uploaded in May, describing Bisping as "foul-mouthed asshole." It's fair to say there was no love lost between Kennedy and Bisping after their fight in 2014, but it's surprising to see Mendes weigh in on the situation. "I did see Chad Mendes the wee fucking sh—e," Bisping said on his podcast Believe You Me. "He f—ing went on Tim Kennedy's page and called me ignorant, disrespectful

and all this type of stuff." Bisping then continued by reading out the message he sent to Mendes after seeing his comment on the post. "You little steroid cheating fuck. Don't be sour because your career amounted to nothing. Ignorant and disrespectful? What, like disrespecting the sport by taking steroids by dishonoring yourself and your opponent in a sport that someone could die? Shame on you, you little dipshit." Mendes was handed a two-year USADA suspension back in 2016 after testing positive for a growth hormone. "Money" fought just twice after serving his ban, picking up a stoppage win against Myles Jury and losing a decision to now champion Alex Volkanovski. The 35-year-old announced his retirement after the loss.

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THE DAY AHEAD

ARIES: It's easy to recede into a space of insecurities, to convince yourself that everybody is making their way to the finish line while you're stuck in a rut. Let us tell you where the real rut is, Aries: in your head. Spirit wants you to recognise the unique gifts and talents you have been born with. You have a special place and purpose in the divine plan that only you can fulfil. Pick yourself up and commit to your goals with a newfound fervour today. We are in the energy of the new moon after all! Tip: Recognise the unique gifts and talents you have been born with. **TAURUS:** The process of creation and destruction are so closely interlinked. One cannot exist without the other. It's easy to convince yourself that everything is going wrong! But, when you awaken to your higher wisdom and look beyond the illusion of your external world, you will come to realise that everything is aligning for the greatest good. There are certain things that need to be moved from your path so you're able to invest in the future you've always dreamt of. Trust. Tip: Be grateful for the things that are being removed from your path. **GEMINI:** They say holding on to anger is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die. Could this be true for where you are? Spirit is urging you to look deeper, to examine the root of your resentment. Awareness is the first step to releasing what is no longer yours. Some of you could

be struggling with forgiving yourself. Remember, your consciousness was not as evolved then as it is now. Tip: Forgive yourself for all the ways you let yourself down. **CANCER:** The process of yin, or non-doing, is just as important as the yang aspects of creation. No great work of art can be created without retreating into 'shunya', or the womb space. Understand the importance of decluttering your schedule so inspiration can strike. Cancer. Trust that the answers you are seeking will come to you unexpectedly, as divine downloads often do. Know that you are being guided by your higher self now and in every moment. Tip: Allow yourself to retreat into the space of nothingness. **LEO:** Leo, you're in this world, but not of it. You are discovering that you are a multidimensional being, full of magical abilities that are waiting to be realised. Aligning yourself with the divine plan and uncovering the jewels buried within you is where your mind is at. Think of yourself as a vessel for divinity to express itself. Remember that things are happening through you, not to you. This will help you practice the art of non-attachment, even when life throws curveballs your way. Tip: You are a vessel for divinity to express itself. **VIRGO:** Most of us have been brought up to believe our hobbies are nothing more than hobbies. They're something you explore in your free time. Earning your bucks, on the other hand, is a serious job. No wonder we go through life with this much dissatisfaction! Today, you're being guided to get artsy and

crafty and rediscover the things you took pleasure in as a child. Tip: This is a call to align with your true path. **LIBRA:** Given that we're in the midst of Eclipse season, chaos and confusion are constant. But Spirit wants you to know that a parallel reality is available to you, one that will open the doorway to growth and infinite possibilities. You are ready to level up—to become the version of you that you have been working towards. Have the courage to take the first step. That's all! Remember, you're not denying your fears. You're moving ahead despite them. Tip: A parallel reality is available to you. **SCORPIO:** Time for a vibe check, Scorpio. What is the root of your resentment? Why are you taking a defensive stance here? Today, you're being asked to listen more than you speak despite your resistance. This way, you'll learn something about the other side of the story and find common ground. Remember, the aim is to move forward, not get stuck in a rut. Tip: Listen to the other side of the story. **SAGITTARIUS:** If the law of karma is anything to go by, everything you put into the Universe comes back to you manifold. As a sign that embodies wisdom, you understand the importance of planting the seeds of good. Today, in your own small way, play the harbinger of peace and love. Bring a smile to somebody's face by telling them how special they are or engaging in an act of kindness. What are the causes that inspire the activist in you? Stand up and speak up, Sagittarius.

Tip: Plant the seeds of goodness. **CAPRICORN:** We often look at love as something outside of us. A condition that arises as a result of somebody's actions or words. But what if love is something that emanates from deep within our being? Today, you are experiencing love as a vibration, with the power to transform everything it comes into contact with. As Maya Angelou said, "Be a rainbow in someone else's cloud." Tip: You are experiencing the alchemy of love. **AQUARIUS:** We all suffer from Imposter's Syndrome at some point or the other. We all doubt the gifts of the soul placed within us at birth. But there is a deep inner awakening within you, one that's inspiring you to embrace your true power. You understand that sharing your unique gifts is a part of your soul's mission. As you do, you're also letting go of the idea of what society perceives as success. Trust that the journey is as significant as the destination! Tip: You are where you need to be. **PISCES:** The divine plan is flawless. Everything is planned to precision, which we can only perceive through the eyes of wisdom. Spirit wants you to know it's not for you to worry about 'the how' and 'the why' of things. Things will work out better than you can imagine. For now, practice the art of non-attachment. You're also being asked to practice gentleness, especially with yourself. Tip: The divine plan is without a flaw.