



**CONFIDENT 'KAAGAZ' WILL
CREATE IMPACT WHEN
RELEASED: SATISH KAUSHIK**
pg 08

**COULD BCG, A 100-YEAR-OLD VACCINE
FOR TUBERCULOSIS, PROTECT
AGAINST CORONAVIRUS?**
04

**SEEMA PAHWA WORRIED
ABOUT ACCEPTANCE FROM
AUDIENCE POST LOCKDOWN**
pg 08



SummitTIMES

Vol 05 | Issue 121 | Gangtok | Monday | 11 May 2020

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

RNI No. SIKENG/2016/69420

Pages 8 | 5

Liquor outlets in Bengal run out stock, down shutters

KOLKATA, MAY 10 (PTI): Off-shop liquor licensees in West Bengal on Sunday said most outlets that were allowed to reopen during the lockdown have downed their shutters after running out of stock.

The West Bengal government took the decision to reopen the shops in red, green and orange zones, barring the containment areas, but there was inadequate backend support for logistics, they alleged.

A former office bearer of the West Bengal Foreign Liquor Manufacturers, Wholesalers and Bonders Association told PTI that the shops generally keep three to four days of stock.

"Due to inadequate logistics support, replenishment of stock is not taking place and scattered sales are reported across the state. The situation is absolutely chaotic," he said, adding that manufacturing of spirits and beer in state's distilleries and breweries had started only two days back.

Following imposition of 30 per cent sales tax, companies have also been taking time to supply liquor bottles with new MRP to warehouses of the West Bengal State Beverages Corporation (BEVCO), he said.

"This also creates problem in the supplies of liquor to the shops. The entire supply chain is disturbed," the former official of the licensees' body said.

Of around 500 shops in the city, roughly 50 remained open in the last two days, he said, adding that the scenario is "more or less the same in other parts of the state".

"I think the problem will persist for another 45 days before the supply chain gets normal," said a present office bearer of the association.

Most orders are being placed for 750 ml bottles while demand for lower quantities is less in both offline and online segments, he said.

Owing to hefty increase in MRP, bottles of upscale liquor brands are not sold much, the official said.

He said only 30 per cent of the liquor shop owners across the state were able to keep their outlets open.

An official of the liquor shop and hotel owners' association said almost all the shops were closed on Saturday and sales were "negligible since Friday".

State Task Force takes stock of evacuations and COVID-19 mitigation

GANGTOK, 10 MAY [IPR]: Chief Secretary SC Gupta chaired a State Task Force meeting today to review the evacuation process and other aspects related to COVID-19 mitigation. The Chief Secretary took detailed feedback from the District Collectors, SPs and CMOs, and members of the State Task Force.

Chief Secretary expressed satisfaction about the process of screening and quarantine of returnees over the last few days.

The District Collectors briefed about the status of labourers who are stranded in Sikkim and are willing to return to their home states and shared the data of people in this category.

The Chief Secretary said that Sikkim has done much better than other States in terms of resumption of economic activities. This he said was evident from the data

provided by the District Collectors that most of the labourers are preferring to stay back in Sikkim.

Further, the Chief Secretary informed that the Government of India is likely to make provision for special trains for North Eastern States, to evacuate people. He said that the State Government is pursuing the matter. He said that the State Government is in correspondence with the Governments of North Eastern States.

The Chief Secretary emphasized on strict implementation of social distancing norms. He said that resumption of normalcy does not mean that people start taking things for granted. He informed about the immediate implementation of "The Sikkim Public Health and Safety (COVID-19) Regulations, 2020" as a regulatory measure for containment of Covid-19 in the



State of Sikkim, which makes violation of norms as a punishable offence.

He informed that Land Revenue & Disaster Management Department has notified this Rule. He issued strict

directives to all the DCs and SPs to strictly implement the rules and ensure that social distancing norms are not violated. There will be strict implementation of these rules on the ground, he informed.

Secretary, Land Revenue & DM Department informed that copies of the Rule are ready and have been dispatched to the District Collectors and SPs for immediate enforcement.

Regarding the movement of

trucks, the Chief Secretary called for strict enforcement of the notified norms and guidelines.

In conclusion, the Chief Secretary called for utmost vigilance, and ensuring compliance of all the guidelines.

Trouble brewing for tea producers as coronavirus lockdown hits harvests

REBECCA RATCLIFFE

NEW DELHI, 10 MAY

[THEGUARDIAN]: Trouble is brewing for the world's tea producers as the coronavirus lockdown shut down the harvest in several important regions, including the picking of India's "champagne of teas".

Despite forecasts of increased demand from drinkers stuck at home across the world, producers have become frustrated by the enforced quarantining of their workforce, with India's output expected to drop by 9% in 2020.

Lockdown measures in the north-eastern Indian state of Assam halted work for more than a month. The global coronavirus outbreak escalated at the worst possible time for Indian tea producers, just as the most valuable harvest of the year was ready to be plucked. India has very specific production periods, experts said, called flushes. The prized first flush of Darjeeling, the "champagne of teas" harvested in the country's north-eastern, has been severely hit. This harvest, which is generally picked between March and April, accounts for as much as 40% of annual revenue.

Other tea exporting countries, including China, Sri Lanka and Vietnam, have also experienced disruption, though Kenya - the main supplier of tea to the UK - has so far avoided major problems. The International Tea Committee has predicted the country may see output rise by 15% this year.

"Because of the weather, [Kenya] can produce tea all year

round," said Ibi Idoniboye, senior market analyst for Mintec.

Operations have also been affected in Sri Lanka, where tea production in the first quarter of the year declined to the lowest levels in decades. Exports have also suffered compared with the same period last year, falling 14.1 million kilograms to 59.5 million kilograms.

The country's weekly tea auctions, a 125-year-old tradition, were held online for the first time in April to comply with social distancing measures. The auctions, usually held in Colombo, are among the biggest in the world and attract around 200 people.

"This [the pandemic] is the first time tea production was affected in a country wide level," said Roshan Rajadurai of the Planters' Association. Work stopped completely for a couple of days, he said, but the government allowed agricultural activities to resume again.

Hundreds of thousands of workers continue to work plucking the tea. Other areas of productions, for example packaging, are not operating at full capacity.

On top of the complications posed by the Covid-19 outbreak, tea producers have also faced an unprecedented drought, added Rajadurai. Meanwhile, in Vietnam exports fell 2.5% in volume to 26,000 tonnes during the first quarter of 2020.

While there hasn't been any disruption to supply of tea in the UK, it is likely that prices will continue to rise, driven by the disruption to operation and speculation over shortages, said Idoniboye.

Tripura MLA demands blacklisting of firms that supplied 'substandard' PPE kits, sanitiser to govt

AGARTALA, MAY 10 (PTI):

Ruling BJP MLA in Tripura and former state health minister Sudip Roy Barman has demanded blacklisting of companies that had allegedly supplied "substandard" PPE kits and hand sanitiser to the state government.

Roy Burman, in a letter to Chief Minister Biplob Kumar Deb on Saturday, said, "Out of different categories of PPE kits totaling 9,000 as received by the State, only 914 PPE kits supplied by HIL were found to be appropriate & the rest were found to be permeable to liquid & such permeability is hazardous in COVID-19 treatment intervention."

"The procured 'gog-

gles' were found to be unable to provide the much-needed protective seal essential for the protection of the eyes. The 500 ml bottles of hand sanitiser 'Ventiz Clear All' were found to contain only 57.68% alcohol, much less than the required percentage," Roy Burman said.

He said the frontline workers are bound to be vulnerable to COVID-19 if they use the kits and requested Deb to "blacklist those companies/traders who have provided such substandard materials".

The legislator further alleged that he also found that "the process and disbursement of the allocation of funds for the persons stranded in

other states" is in a mess.

"...there are a large number of stranded persons in actual who have not received single farthing assistance to date despite fulfilling all formalities. It is a matter of concern that it is not clear as to what mechanism has been adopted by the State Government to ascertain the genuineness of the claims made & reimbursement made to that effect.

"My observation in this aspect is that some vested persons are trying to tarnish the image of the Government & intentionally malign your noble & constructive efforts. May I, therefore, request you to refer this matter to Lokayukta, Tripura

turn to pg 02

Fire razes home in Thambung



RUDRA KAUSHIK

GYALSHING, 10 MAY:

A house was razed at Upper Thambung under Soreng constituency in West Sikkim on Saturday night.

DP Dhital's house was gutted in a fire that broke out at around 11:30PM on Saturday. Although an ancestral property was lost in the incident, no one was hurt. The fire was eventually brought under control by local villagers, but nothing could be salvaged.

Mr Dhital resides in Daramdin with his family and had allocated his

two-storeyed house at Upper Thambung free of cost to security personnel deployed in the area to oversee the law and order situation during the ongoing lockdown.

Soreng SDM, Himmat Rai, and a team of official visited the affected family today and handed over a cheque of Rs One lakh and assured further help to the family as per state government norms.

Mr Dhital shares that it was sad to lose the ancestral property which was a heritage for his family. The loss, he said, was irreparable.

Gas leak and after: The misery continues for some

VISAKHAPATNAM, MAY 10 (PTI):

The styrene vapour leak from the LG Polymers plant at nearby R R Venakatapuram village killed his father and left five-year old Manideep blinded.

His mother too fell sick due to the vapour effect and was hospitalised.

The family's plight was such that they did not know about Govinda Raju's death till relatives saw his picture in the media and came rushing to the hospital on Friday.

Govinda Raju, incidentally, worked as a daily wage in the LG plant.

But Manideep could not even take a look at his deceased father as he could not open his eyes.

On Saturday, he was taken to the LV Prasad Eye Institute, where specialists attended on him and Manideep could fi-



nally open his eyes for a few moments. "He also suffered a wound on his leg and though he could finally open his eyes, he was unable to walk. We somehow took him out and showed him his father's body before the final rites were com-

pleted," Manideep's aunt, who was tending to him in the hospital, said.

The child's mother is now recovering in hospital from the breathlessness she suffered due to the vapour leak on Thursday. Another heart rend-

ing tale is that of nine-year-old N Grishma's family.

She died in the mishap even as her parents lay sick on hospital beds. "Grishma died on Thursday itself but we could not break the news to her mother till today.

After post-mortem, the body was handed over to us this morning and it was then that we finally told her about the tragedy, a wailing uncle said.

Grishma's brother too suffered the effects of the vapour, but recovered quickly and was sent to his relative's house.

Grishma's mother Lakshmi was inconsolable but she accompanied her daughters body to their village Venkatapuram on Saturday.

She jumped over the LG plant gate and made her way to the Director General of Police D G

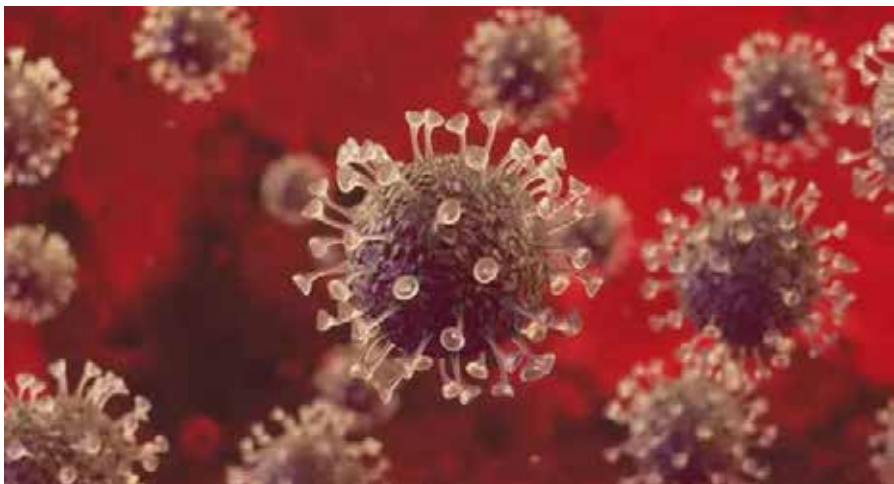
turn to pg 02

CONTACT**SUMMIT TIMES
REPORTERS****SINGTAM
8170070813****MANGAN/ DIKCHU
9832612485/
9434011213****GANGTOK
8116388176
9832424750
8016270440****HAVE A
STORY TO
SHARE?**email us: [news@
summittimes.com](mailto:news@summittimes.com)

Sample collection unit set up at SIRD Quarantine Centre

NAMCHI, 10 MAY [IPR]: As per information received from DC South, Ragul K, a sample collection unit was set up at SIRD Quarantine Centre at Karfector today. For the remaining quarantine centres in South District, collection units will be made available tomorrow.

Will Covid-19 mutate into a more dangerous virus?

**IAN SAMPLE**

LONDON, 10 MAY [THEGUARDIAN]: As the coronavirus spreads around the world, there are concerns that it will mutate into a form that is more transmissible, more dangerous or both, potentially making the global health crisis even worse. What do we know about the way the virus is evolving?

Is the virus mutating?

All viruses mutate and the Sars-Cov-2 coronavirus that causes Covid-19 is no exception. Mutations arise when the virus replicates inside cells and mistakes are made in copying its genetic code. Unlike humans, whose genes are written in double-stranded DNA, the coronavirus genes are carried on single-stranded RNA.

How fast is the virus mutating?

The coronavirus is actually quite stable. Scientists have analysed about 13,000 samples in Britain since mid-March and found that new mutations appear roughly twice a month. The rate of mutations is important because the faster a virus mutates, the quicker it changes behaviour. A fast-evolving virus can be harder to make a vaccine against because by the time it has been developed, the parts of the virus the immune system attacks might have changed. Seasonal influenza mutates so rapidly we need a different vaccine each year.

How does coronavirus vary around the world?

The genetic code from coronaviruses around the globe show that it splits into groups as it spreads. There is nothing unusual about this. Researchers in Germany identified three main genetic groups of the virus in April, which they named A, B and C. Groups A and C are mostly found in Europeans and Americans, while group B is most common in East Asia. But there are smaller groups too, which scientists can use to trace infections back to their sources, and ultimately back to a region such as Wuhan or northern Italy.

Why do mutations matter?

Mutations happen by chance all the time. Most have little effect, and some hamper the virus, but over time single or multiple mutations can potentially build up that make the virus more successful by enabling it to spread more easily. Mutations can also make the virus more dangerous, for example by making it more efficient at infecting cells.

What mutations has the virus

picked up?

A number of mutations have caught scientists' attention. Researchers at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine studied more than 5,000 coronavirus genomes from around the world and discovered several mutations that may be evidence of the virus adapting to humans. Two mutations are in the critical "spike" protein that the virus uses to invade cells.

The spike mutations are rare at the moment, but Martin Hibberd, a professor of emerging infectious diseases and a senior author on the study, which has yet to be peer-reviewed, said their emergence highlighted the need for global surveillance of the virus. That will reveal whether the new mutations help it to spread and whether vaccines may need to be redesigned.

In another preliminary study, scientists at Sheffield University and Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico found similar mutations in the spike protein which the authors claim may help the infection to spread. While that is possible, other scientists believe it is too early to know whether any of the mutations are helping the virus thrive.

Prof Nick Loman at the University of Birmingham said that all coronaviruses are very similar and that viruses with particular mutations can rise up in different areas for a range of reasons. A major factor is which virus gains a foothold first, the so-called founder effect, which may come down to one person's travel plans rather than any adaptation of the virus. "From the point of view of people who are understandably concerned about this pandemic, I'm sure it will not matter which mutations the virus has. It's not a good virus either way," he said. "We look to see if any of the mutations change behaviour and we don't have any evidence for that."

What else can mutations tell us?

As scientists learn more about the genetic makeup of coronaviruses, they will be able to use the information to trace an individual's infection to nearby clusters and ultimately back to its origin. That can be useful for tracing outbreaks and spotting newly imported infections. But intense monitoring will also flag up how the virus mutates and acquires resistance to and drugs and vaccines that are used in the future. "As those become available, we would expect to see functional mutations just like with see with antibiotic resistance in bacteria," Loman said.

Global Update: Covid-19 cases rise in Germany as Wuhan reports first infection in weeks

LONDON, 10 MAY [THE-GUARDIAN]: New coronavirus infections rose again in Germany at the end of last week, a few days after leaders loosened social restrictions, while the Chinese city of Wuhan announced it had detected its first case in weeks, helping to push the global total past 4m on Sunday.

On the eve of the UK starting to ease its lockdown on Monday, the new cases in Germany and China illustrated the difficulties governments will face over the next months as they attempt to reopen their societies without triggering a second wave of infections.

France, which also plans to begin easing its tough seven-week lockdown from Monday, announced the discovery of a cluster of at least nine cases linked to a funeral in Dordogne, in the country's south-west.

A local prefect, Frédéric Perissat, said the cluster was "an illustration of what we are hoping not to live through in the next few weeks". "There's a slackening off, people gather in a group of 20 or 30 and one person contaminates others," he added.

South Korea warned of a resurgence of Covid-19 on Sunday as infections rebounded to a one-month high as restrictions were starting to be eased.

"It's not over until it's over," the president, Moon Jae-in, said, warning of a potential second wave of the virus later this year.

The Korea Centres for Disease Control and Prevention reported 34 new infections, the highest since 9 April, after a small outbreak emerged around a number of nightclubs, prompting the authorities to close temporarily all nightly entertainment facilities around the capital.

The country is examining whether it will reopen schools in stages starting from Wednesday this week as it had planned, the health minister, Park Neung-hoo, said.

China reported 14 new confirmed corona-

virus cases on Saturday, the highest number since 28 April, including the first in five weeks in the city of Wuhan, where the outbreak was first detected late last year.

Eleven of 12 domestic infections were in the north-eastern province of Jilin, which prompted authorities to raise the threat level in one of its counties, Shulan, to high risk, days after downgrading all regions to low risk.

Authorities said the Shulan outbreak originated with a 45-year-old woman. She had no recent travel or exposure history but spread it to her husband, her three sisters and other family members. Train services in the county were being suspended.

Germany's Robert Koch Institute for disease control said in a daily bulletin on Sunday the number of people each sick person was infecting in the country - known as the reproduction rate, or R - had risen to 1.1.

The government's disease control agency warned there could be some fluctuations in its estimate of the R number but said developments in the coming days needed to be watched closely.

The chancellor, Angela Merkel, bowed to pressure from leaders of the country's 16 federal states to restart social life and revive the economy, announcing on Wednesday measures that included more shop openings and a gradual return to school. At the same time, she launched an "emergency brake" to allow for the reimposition of restrictions if infections pick up again.

Karl Lauterbach, a Social Democrat lawmaker and professor of epidemiology, warned coronavirus could start spreading again quickly after seeing large crowds out and about on Saturday in his home city of Cologne.

"It has to be expected that the R rate will go over 1 and we will return to exponential growth," Lauterbach said in a tweet. "The loosening measures were far too poorly prepared."

Loosened lockdowns were also causing caseloads to grow elsewhere, including Iran, which has allowed small businesses, malls and barbers to reopen in the past weeks, arguing the economy, which was already sagging under punitive US sanctions, needed to begin functioning. New cases have since grown from 802 in early May to double that over the weekend, taking the total number of confirmed infections beyond 107,000.

Lebanon has reinstated some restrictions after its caseload grew again over the weekend, after falling to zero at the beginning of last week. "The situation is getting worse," the country's interior ministry said in a statement announcing a curfew that had been pushed to 9pm would be two hours' earlier.

It cited a "lack of commitment of many citizens to preventive and public safety measures, and due to the selfishness, disregard and indifference to their health and the health of their communities".

Singapore announced another 876 new coronavirus infections on Sunday, taking the city-state's total to 23,336 cases. The vast majority of the newly infected people were migrant workers living in dormitories, the health ministry said in a statement.

In Italy, which began easing its restrictions last Monday, there were scenes of busy parks in Milan and Turin over the weekend, drawing criticism from lawmakers.

Milan's mayor, Beppe Sala, said he was "pissed off" at the scenes of socialising in Navigli, a canal district of the city, and warned he would close the area completely if citizens did not respect the rules. Bars and restaurants across Italy can provide takeout services, but people are not allowed to gather outside.

Spain has logged its lowest single-day death toll in almost two months as around half the country prepares to move into the next phase of its lockdown de-escalation plan on Monday.

Railway Minister Goyal urges states to allow special trains to ferry migrants

NEW DELHI, MAY 10 (PTI):

Railway Minister Piyush Goyal has appealed to all states to permit the operation of migrant special trains so that the stranded can reach home in the next three to four days.

The appeal comes a day after Home Minister Amit Shah wrote to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to allow such trains to run.

"As per the directions of Hon'ble PM @ NarendraModi ji, Railways is fully geared up to run 300 Shramik Special trains everyday at short notice since the last six days.

"I appeal to all the states to give permission to evacuate and bring back their stranded migrants so that we can get all of them back to their homes in the next 3-4 days itself," Goyal tweeted on Sunday.

On Saturday the WB government claimed it had given clearance to eight trains to be run carrying its migrant home. Four of these trains, it said, were to depart on

Saturday, which did not.

Senior railway officials say the national transporter has a capacity to run around 300 trains per day ferrying around 20 lakh migrants in a maximum of five days.

However, they said, clearances from states are not forthcoming, especially from states like West Bengal and Rajasthan, which till now have accepted the least number of such trains despite being a significant source of migrant population.

As on May 10, a total of 366 Shramik Special trains have been operationalised across the country, of which 287 had reached their destinations and 79 trains are in transit.

These 287 trains were terminated in various states like Andhra Pradesh (1 train), Bihar (87), Himachal Pradesh (1), Jharkhand (16), Madhya Pradesh (24), Maharashtra (3), Odisha (20), Rajasthan (4), Telangana (2), Uttar Pradesh (127), West Bengal (2).

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

Tripura MLA..

in reaching out to the root of the corrupt practice," the letter stated.

Roy Barman, in the letter, also alleged that he had tried to speak to the chief minister and the chief secretary over the phone but did not get any response from either of them.

"I firmly believe you will give serious thought to all the issues being raised and issue directives to your chief secretary and other officials to respond to the call made by state legislators," he said.

Roy Burman, a former Tripura Pradesh Congress Committee president, joined the BJP before the 2018 Assembly elections in the state and was sworn-in as the health minister in the BJP-IPFT government.

He was, however, removed from the post just after the Lok Sabha elections last year on the charge of "anti-party activity"

Gas leak ...

Sawang as he was inspecting the unit and fell at his feet, pleading that the LG management be brought to book immediately.

With folded hands, she pleaded that the plant be shut down immediately.

Police tried to console her, but she came out of the factory and poured out her grief.

The King George Hospital in Visakhapatnam swarmed with grieving relatives as members of many families were bed-ridden and provided treatment for ailments like shallow breathing, nausea, sore eyes and gastro-intestinal problems.

Over 200 people were still undergoing treatment in the KGH, but their condition was said to be stable.

Visakhapatnam district in-charge Minister K Kanna Babu, who visited the hospital and spoke to some of the victims, said all the patients were fast recovering.

"As a precautionary measure, we are not allowing the people to return to their villages. They are being provided safe shelter in relief camps in the city," Kanna Babu said.

~ SummitTIMES ~ CLASSIFIEDS

GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

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

Contact: 9800201335

LAND FOR SALE

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

LAND FOR SALE

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

Arithang taxi drivers repair road, residents support

GANGTOK, 10 MAY [IPR]: Arithang Local Taxi Drivers Welfare Association, along with the support of the local residents, successfully completed the renovation and repair of the Arithang road today.

The Arithang road had been in a deplorable state owing to heavy rainfall in the past months thus causing inconvenience to commuters. The repair work was started voluntarily by the association starting from the Bypass link road after the State government granted relaxations on construction works during the second phase of the lockdown.

President, Arithang Local Taxi Drivers Welfare Association, Ravi Thapa, informs that the Association has extended manpower support for the



repair works while the materials required were contributed by the residents of Arithang.

He said that they took the matter in their hands as a social responsibility in order to relieve the State government from additional

burden during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

He further stated that the repair works were undertaken keeping in view the approaching monsoon rains.

“Damaged roads will cause more inconve-

nience to residents during the monsoons and since facilitating proper roads is one of the major aspects of monsoon preparedness, we decided to volunteer for the repair works of the Arithang road stretch instead of

keep waiting for the COVID-19 pandemic to end,” said Mr Thapa.

He has extended immense gratitude to the members of the Association and the local residents of Arithang for their undying support.

Mizoram records 10-point drop in Infant Mortality Rate

AIZAWL, MAY 10 (PTI): Mizoram has registered a 10-point drop in Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) in 2019-20 fiscal, making it to the second spot in the country after Nagaland.

State health minister R Lalthangliana said the IMR has dropped from 15 to 5 (per 1000 live births), citing the latest Sample Registration System (SRS) bulletin.

With 10-point drop in IMR in 2019-20, Mizoram is the best-performing state in the country, he said.

Over the past three years, the state has achieved a 27-point drop in IMR.

The minister attributed the achievement

to efforts of healthcare workers and support of people.

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan had on Saturday congratulated Mizoram and Lalthangliana on the achievement.

The state had recorded IMR at 21 in 2016-2017, with 405 infants dying before attaining the age of one.

During 2017-18, it fell to 20, and the following year to 15.

According to Sample Registration System (SRS) bulletin released recently, Nagaland tops the list with IMR at 4 followed by Mizoram at 5. Goa, Kerala and Sikkim jointly stood third with IMR at 7 each.

Sir Ganga Ram Hospital to resume OPD services Monday

NEW DELHI, MAY 10 (PTI): Sir Ganga Ram Hospital in the national capital will resume its OPD services in a graded manner from Monday.

The services will be available from 10 am to 4 pm and each doctor will see a maximum of four patients in an hour, hospital authorities said.

“The main Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, which is a Non-Covid facility, will resume OPD services in

a graded manner from Monday,” a statement said. The hospital has created proper infrastructure facilities to minimize the spread of COVID-19, keeping in mind that nearly 70 per cent of coronavirus cases are asymptomatic.

Patients are advised to show their “risk status” on Arogya Setu app and appointment details on their mobiles on demand, it said.

SC questions Haryana govt over remission policy, seeks response in two weeks

NEW DELHI, MAY 10 (PTI): The Supreme Court has questioned the Haryana government over a policy of granting remission to life-term convicts aged 75 years or above, saying it appeared to be in “conflict” with a provision of law. The apex court has directed the state government to respond within two weeks on whether such a policy, which the court said appeared running counter to section 433-A of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), could be framed under Article 161 of the Constitution.

While Article 161 of the Constitution deals with the power of governors to grant pardons and to suspend, remit or commute sentences in certain cases, section 433-A of the CrPC relates

to restriction on these powers in certain cases.

Section 433-A of the CrPC also says that a convict shall not be released from jail unless he had served at least 14 years of the imprisonment, if he has been sentenced to life for an offence that entails maximum of death sentence or in cases where capital punishment has been commuted.

The issue came up before a bench of Justices U U Lalit and Dinesh Maheshwari which was hearing an appeal in a criminal case. The bench was informed about a policy which stated that on the occasion of August 15, 2019, the Governor of Haryana had granted special remission to certain prisoners who were undergoing sentence.

Shramik train to arrive in C’garh from Gujarat on Monday

BILASPUR, MAY 10 (PTI): A Shramik special train carrying 1,208 natives of Chhattisgarh, who were stranded in Gujarat due to the lockdown, will arrive in Bilaspur district of the state on Monday, officials said. This is the first Shramik special train to be reaching the state, they said.

“The first train ferrying migrant labourers, students and others from Chhattisgarh, who were struck in Gujarat amid lockdown, will arrive at Bilaspur station at around 10 am on Monday,” a statement from the Public Relations De-

partment said.

Arrangements of health checkup and buses to ferry them to quarantine facilities have been made at the railway station, it said.

Bilaspur Collector Sanjay Alang on Sunday reviewed the preparations and gave necessary directives to the authorities concerned, it said.

After the train reaches the station, passengers will be given hand sanitiser and mask before they disembark. A health department team will be posted at every gate of the railway station for their medical

examination and screening, he said. The labourers will be sent by buses to their villages and districts, where they will be kept in the quarantine centres.

At least 60 buses have been arranged for natives of Bilaspur district.

Two ambulances will also be kept ready outside the station for emergency situation, he said.

Meanwhile, the district administration has ordered to shut all shops and other commercial activities around the railway stations as a precautionary measure in view of the arrival of the migrants, it said.

Seven new cases in Kerala, total cases touch 20



THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MAY 10 (PTI): Seven people, including three who had arrived from Abu Dhabi on May 7 in the repatriation flight from the gulf sector, tested positive for COVID-19 on Sunday, taking the total number of people under treatment for the virus in Kerala to 20.

With this, five foreign returnees who reached the state from the gulf as part of the centre’s ‘Vande Matram’ to bring back stranded Indians and expatriates in other countries, especially the GCC, due to the COVID-19 lockdown, has reached five.

Days after the state had declared that it had flattened the curve, new cases were being reported.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, had on Saturday said the new cases were a “warning to those coming back from abroad and for other states to be on the alert.”

Of the seven fresh cases, three are from Wayanad, two from Thrissur and one each from Ernakulam and Malappuram, State Health Minister K K Shailaja said.

“Two from Thrissur and one person from Malappuram reached the state on May 7 in the Abu Dhabi flight. Two persons from Wayanad contracted the disease through contact and one patient in Wayanad and one in Ernakulam had reached the state from Chennai,” Shailaja said in a press release.

Four positive cases were cured on Sunday and two are from Kannur and one each from Palakkad and Kasaragod. “With this, Kasaragod, which was

once the hotspot of COVID-19 in Kerala has become free of positive cases now.

Of the total 512 positive cases, 489 people have been cured and discharged and currently 20 are under treatment in various districts,” the minister said.

As per the latest medical bulletin, at least 26,712 are under observation out of which 362 are in isolation wards of various hospitals across the state.

The health department also informed that the state has till now sent 37,464 samples for testing.

As of now, there are 33 hotspots in the Kerala.

Presently, Wayanad has seven patients, which is the highest in the state followed by Kollam, Kannur and Ernakulam with three each cases.

Thrissur has two cases and Malappuram and Kozhikode have one case each.

Kerala was among the first states in India to report the deadly virus infection, but it has also earned global praise for having effectively tackled the crisis by being among the states with much higher recovery rates and much less spread so far.

For several days in the recent weeks, the state had reported either nil or just 1-2 fresh cases.

The state has also reported three deaths so far.

Meanwhile, shops were shut in Kerala and vehicles were off the roads, as part of the Sunday lockdown imposed by the state government.

Essential services were allowed to function.

Shops, vehicles to operate in Meghalaya from Monday

SHILLONG, MAY 10 (PTI): Apart from Shillong which currently has two active COVID-19 cases, the Meghalaya government has allowed shops to reopen and 50 per cent vehicles to ply across the state from Monday.

The decision was taken at a review meeting chaired by Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma, official sources said.

“The deputy commissioners and district transport officers have been asked to work out the modalities for regulating (public and private transport) on a rotation basis,” Deputy Chief Minister Prestone Tynsong said on Saturday. All passenger vehicles have been asked to run with 50 per cent occupancy.

In Shillong, Tynsong said, the government has

granted permission to automobile and stationery shops for resuming business, while adhering to social distancing norms.

The relaxations, however, do not apply to two main commercial hubs Lewduh market and Khyndailad market for now, he stated.

Meanwhile, the state has ordered mandatory home quarantine for people who recently visited two medical facilities in Assam, where a COVID-19 case and a death due to the disease have been registered.

A postgraduate student at Guwahati Medical College Hospital tested positive for novel coronavirus on May 7.

At Dr B Barooah Cancer Institute, Guwahati, a COVID-19 death was re-

ported on the same day.

“People who have visited the two medical institutions (in Assam) with effect from April 23 are requested to call 108 helpline number so that necessary instructions can be given to them (for home quarantine),” Tynsong said.

Contending that there was no need to panic, the deputy CM gave assurances that the government was committed to take care of all such people placed under quarantine.

On Saturday, one person tested positive for COVID-19 in Meghalaya, taking the total count in the state to 13.

Of the 13, ten have recovered and two are active cases. One person had succumbed to the disease last month.

South Korea prez says surge no reason to panic

Seoul, May 10 (AP): South Korea’s president is urging citizens not to lower their guard down, but said there’s no reason to be panicked amid worries about a new surge in the coronavirus outbreak in the country.

President Moon Jae-in made the comments in a speech Sunday as his health authorities detected a slew of new cases linked to nightclubs in Seoul’s Itaewon district in recent days. Earlier, South Korea’s caseload had been waning for weeks, prompting authorities to relax their social distancing rules.

The infection cluster which recently occurred in entertainment facilities,” Moon said, “has raised awareness that, even during the stabilisation phase, similar situations can arise again anytime, anywhere in an enclosed, crowded space.

Moon added that, We must never lower our guard regarding epidem-

ic prevention.

But he also said there’s no reason to stand still out of fear. Moon says South Korea has the right quarantine and medical systems combined with experience to respond quickly to any unexpected infection clusters that might occur.

South Korea reported 34 additional cases of COVID-19 over the past 24 hours as a spate of transmissions linked to clubgoers threatens the country’s hard-won gains in its fight against the virus.

Figures released Sunday by the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention increased national totals to 10,874 with 256 deaths. The agency said 9,610 have recovered and 10,128 others were undergoing tests to determine whether they’ve contracted the virus.


The agency said a tentative assessment

showed 26 of the 34 new patients were locally transmitted cases, while the rest were imported. South Korean media reported it was the first time that South Korea’s daily jump has marked above 30 in about a month.

The agency didn’t immediately provide further details. But most of the new cases in the past few days were linked to nightclubs in Seoul’s Itaewon entertainment neighborhood.

Officials on Friday said they detected at least 15 infections linked to a 29-year-old man who had visited three Itaewon clubs before testing positive Wednesday.

The infections raised worries about a new surge in South Korea, which had for weeks recorded a continuously declining number of new cases after having once had hundreds of new cases each day until early March.



What is Novel Coronavirus - nCoV?

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

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

Contribute to Social Capital

Engage, get involved and develop

Writing in 1958, influential political scientist and thinker, Edward Banfield, presented what he saw as the reason for backwardness – communities which cannot work together.

In his seminal book, “The Moral Basis of a Backward Society”, he studied the reasons behind the underdevelopment of a village in the southern tip of Italy. His conclusion: “The extreme poverty and backwardness is to be explained largely by the inability of villagers to act together for their common good.” His work was followed up thirty-five years later by a Harvard professor Robert Putnam who returned to the same theme and villages in 1993. In his book “Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy”, he concluded that local governments work in northern Italy and fail in south Italy because northern Italians are more likely to get involved in neighbourhood activities like singing groups, football clubs, cooperatives and networks of small entrepreneurs, while the southern Italians remain aloof and uninvolved, and also backward. Both tips of Italy were governed by the same government and subject to the same policies, and yet, while one region progressed, the other refused to develop. Banfield’s central thesis was that social capital was a key ingredient to high institutional performance and the maintenance of democracy.

Surf the net or search Wikipedia and you will find gigabytes of more details on the findings encapsulated in the two tomes, but even the condensed essence presented above is convincing enough. Putnam set out to understand the conditions required for developing “strong, responsive, effective representative institutions,” each, a necessary building block for effective democratic expression.

Turn the mirror on Sikkim in this light and it becomes apparent that societal engagement and community participation has not achieved the spontaneity required for expressions to become free and assertions more frank and forthright. There will always be those who try and secure positions and berths for themselves, and while these aspirations are not always conspiratorial, they are never healthy either. When people distance themselves from public engagement and shy away from collective action, they end up building distrust even in an environment of democracy which should have inspired confidence.

One has often rued the absence of an active civil society in Sikkim, and if one looks at how people, by and large, have refused to engage voluntarily even in local area issues and have instead waited for someone to claim leadership role, the hollowed out building blocks of a civil society explain the absence. Even the Chief Minister has spoken often about the civil society’s reluctance to engage in Sikkim, but one must realise that third-party enforcements cannot fabricate a civil society. Social capital is of value only when it is voluntary and cooperative; it is worthless when it is stage-managed. Take the Bhanu Jayanti celebrations which will be held across the State later this week. At one level, they involve a wide swathe of people, but take away the organising committees [which remain same for this celebration as well as plantation drives] and the event will flounder. How many members of the Sikkimese community will be moved to make private contributions to sustain something they have grown up with if State patronage is withdrawn? There might be many who will be willing to, but few will step forward and do so. And therein lies the engagement-deficit.

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

Could BCG, a 100-year-old vaccine for tuberculosis, protect against coronavirus?

KYLIE QUINN, JOANNA KIRMAN, KATIE LOUISE FLANAGAN & MAGDALENA PLEBANSKI
theconversation.com

This week, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation announced it will donate A\$10 million to help fund an Australian trial testing whether a very old vaccine, BCG, can be used against a new threat, COVID-19.

So what is the BCG vaccine and what might its place be in the fight against coronavirus?

THE ABCs OF BCG

The BCG vaccine has been used for nearly a century to protect against tuberculosis, a bacterial disease that affects the lungs. Tuberculosis is caused by a bacterium called *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*.

BCG is short for *Bacillus Calmette-Guérin*, as it was created by Léon Charles Albert Calmette and Jean-Marie Camille Guérin in the early 1900s.

To make the vaccine, they used *Mycobacterium bovis*, a bacterium found in cows and closely related to *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. They grew it on a nutrient-rich jelly in the lab for nearly 13 years. The bacterium adapted to this comfortable lifestyle by losing elements in its DNA it no longer needed, including elements that cause disease.

This process is called attenuation and it results in a live but weakened microbe that can be given to humans as a vaccine.

BCG is offered to infants in some parts of the world where there are still high rates of tuberculosis. It protects 86% of the time against some rarer forms of tuberculosis more common in children.

But it only protects about 50% of the time in adults.

Scientists and clinicians generally feel we need a better vaccine for tuberculosis. However, epidemiologists have noticed children who received BCG had significantly better overall health, with fewer respiratory infections and fewer deaths.

Immunologists suspect this is caused by a type of immune response called “trained immunity”.

Trained immunity is distinct from how we traditionally think of immunity, or “immune memory”, because it engages different types of immune cells.

IMMUNE MEMORY VS TRAINED IMMUNITY

There are two main types of cells within our immune system: innate cells, which respond rapidly to microbes that cause disease, and adaptive cells, which initially respond quite slowly.

Adaptive cells include B cells, which make antibodies to block infection, and T cells, which can kill infected cells. Importantly, adaptive cells can remember particular microbes for years, or even decades, after we first encounter them.

This phenomenon is called “immune memory”.

When adaptive immune cells encounter the same microbe a second or subsequent time, they respond much more quickly, and the immune system can effectively clear an infection before it causes disease. Immune memory is why often we don’t get infected with a specific microbe, like chickenpox, more than once.

Most of our current vaccines exploit immune memory to protect us from infection.

For decades, scientists believed innate cells lacked the ability to remember previous encounters with microbes. However, we’ve recently

learnt some innate cells, such as monocytes, can be “trained” during an encounter with a microbe. Training can program innate cells to activate more quickly when they next encounter a microbe – any microbe.

Some live attenuated vaccines, such as BCG, can trigger trained immunity, which can enhance early control of other infections. This raises the tantalising possibility that BCG could train innate cells to improve early control of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, to re-

CURRENT CLINICAL TRIALS

The ultimate test of BCG as a preventative measure for COVID-19 is to run randomised clinical trials, which are now underway.

Researchers across Australia and the Netherlands are preparing to give BCG to the people who have arguably the highest risk of COVID-19: frontline health-care workers.

These phase III trials will collect data on wheth-



duce COVID-19 disease or even prevent infection.

And as a bonus, BCG could potentially protect us against other pathogens too.

COULD BCG PROTECT AGAINST COVID-19?

We don’t know yet whether BCG will reduce the severity of COVID-19, but the vaccine has some interesting features.

First, BCG is a potent stimulator of the immune system. Currently, it’s used alongside other therapies to treat bladder cancer and melanoma, because it can stimulate immune cells to attack the tumour.

BCG also seems to benefit lung immunity. As we mentioned, children who have had the vaccine appear to get fewer respiratory infections.

There’s a study underway in Melbourne looking at whether BCG can reduce symptoms of asthma in children.

And finally, BCG has been shown to limit viral infection. In one study, human volunteers were given BCG or a placebo one month before being infected with a virus. Volunteers who received BCG had a modest reduction in the amount of virus produced during infection compared to those who received the placebo.

However, BCG can cause side-effects to be mindful of. It usually causes a small raised blister on the skin at the vaccine site and it can cause painful swelling in the surrounding lymph nodes.

Importantly, because it’s a live bacterium, it can spread from the vaccine site and cause disease, called disseminated BCG, in people who are immunodeficient, like people with HIV. This means BCG can’t be given to everyone.

er workers vaccinated with BCG have fewer or less severe COVID-19 infections.

If BCG is shown to be effective, we’ll face other challenges. For example, supply of the vaccine is currently limited. Further, there are many different strains of BCG and they might not all provide the same protection against COVID-19.

Protection would likely start to wane relatively quickly. When trained immunity was tracked in humans after BCG, it started waning from three to 12 months after vaccination.

Protection would also not be as strong as what we see with many traditional vaccines, such as the MMR vaccine which protects against measles 94.1% of the time.

So BCG would be most helpful for people at high risk of exposure, but it wouldn’t replace a traditional vaccine based on immune memory.

These studies are important to give us options. We need a complete toolkit for control of COVID-19, consisting of anti-viral and anti-inflammatory drugs and vaccines. But an effective COVID-19 vaccine is likely still many months, even years, away.

By repurposing an old, well-characterised vaccine, we could bridge this gap and provide some protection to our health-care workers as they confront COVID-19.

[Kylie Quinn is Vice-Chancellor’s Research Fellow, School of Health and Biomedical Sciences, RMIT University; Joanna Kirman is Associate Professor, University of Otago; Katie Louise Flanagan is Infectious Diseases Specialist and Clinical Professor, University of Tasmania; Magdalena Plebanski is Professor of Immunology, RMIT University]

How artificial intelligence can save journalism

PATRICK WHITE
theconversation.com

The economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic has caused an unprecedented crisis in journalism that could decimate media organizations around the world.

The future of journalism — and its survival — could lie in artificial intelligence (AI). AI refers “to intelligent machines that learn from experience and perform tasks like humans,” according to Francesco Marconi, a professor of journalism at Columbia University in New York, who has just published a book on the subject: *Newsmakers, Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Journalism*.

Marconi was head of the media lab at the Wall Street Journal and the Associated Press, one of the largest news organizations in the world. His thesis is clear and incontrovertible: the journalism world is not keeping pace with the evolution of new technologies. So, newsrooms need to take advantage of what AI can offer and come up with new business model.

For Marconi, journalists and media owners are missing out and AI needs to be at the heart of journalism’s business model in the future. As a professor of journalism at the Université du Québec à Montréal, I have been closely following the evolution of this profession since 1990, and I am mostly in agreement with him.

In Canada, The Canadian Press news agency is, for example, one of the rare media outlets to use AI in its

newsrooms. It has developed a system to speed up translations based on AI. The *_Agence France-Presse_* news agency (AFP) also uses AI to detect doctored photos.

AI DOES NOT REPLACE JOURNALISTS

Artificial intelligence is not there to replace journalists or eliminate jobs. Marconi believes that only eight to 12 per cent of reporters’ current tasks will be taken over by machines, which will in fact reorient editors and journalists towards value-added content: long-form journalism, feature interviews, analysis, data-driven journalism and investigative journalism.

At the moment, AI robots perform basic tasks like writing two to six paragraphs on sports scores and quarterly earnings reports at the Associated Press, election results in Switzerland and Olympic results at the Washington Post. The outcomes are convincing, but they also show the limits of AI.

AI robots analyzing large databases can send journalists at Bloomberg News an alert as soon as a trend or anomaly emerges from big data.

AI can also save reporters a lot of time by transcribing audio and video interviews. AFP has a tool for that. The same is true for major reports on pollution or violence, which rely on vast databases. The machines can analyze complex data in no time at all.

Afterwards, the journalist does his or her essential work of fact-checking, analyzing, contextualizing and gathering information. AI can

hardly replace this. In this sense, humans must remain central to the entire journalistic process.

A BROKEN BUSINESS MODEL

Marconi is quite right when he explains that the media must develop a paid subscription model, get closer to their communities with even more relevant content, develop new products (newsletters, events, podcasts, videos) and new content. AI can facilitate some of this by generating personalized news: recommendations for readers, for example.

In this sense, AI is part of a new business model based on breaking down media silos. There needs to be a symbiosis in the sense of establishing a “close collaboration” between the editorial staff and other media teams such as engineers, computer scientists, statisticians, sales or marketing staff.

In a newsroom, more than ever before, databases must be used to find stories that are relevant to readers, listeners, viewers and internet users.

And there are already various AI tools available to detect trends or hot topics on the internet and social media. These tools can also help newsrooms distribute content.

BEWARE OF BIAS

Of course, newsroom size must be taken into account. A small weekly or a hyper-local media organization may not have the means to act quickly in adopting AI. But for the others, it’s important to start taking action right away. Journalists need to be bet-

ter trained and begin to work with start-ups and universities to get the best out of this. AI is not a fad. It is here to stay.

Take the current example of COVID-19. This is an opportunity to analyze public health data to make connections, analyze and dig into the data neighbourhood by neighbourhood and street by street. AI can help with that. But it takes well-trained data reporters to do this work.

One of the dangers of AI, on the other hand, is algorithm bias. Because algorithms are designed by humans, there will always be biases that can alter data analysis and lead to serious consequences. And human verification of content before publication will always remain a safeguard against errors.

AI has also helped developing systems for detecting fake videos (deepfakes) and fake news, which are of course supported by experienced journalists from Reuters and AFP, for example.

In this sense, the transformation of newsrooms is only just beginning and Marconi’s essay is a must-read for identifying survival scenarios for media organizations and journalists. Because that’s what it’s all about. We need to better equip our newsrooms and completely rethink the workflow to achieve better collaboration and better content that will attract new and paying subscribers.

[the writer is professeur de journalisme, Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM)]

African swine fever kills over 13,000 pigs in Assam

GUWAHATI, MAY 10 (PTI): The outbreak of African swine fever (ASF) has claimed more than 13,000 pigs in the last few days in parts of Assam, affecting the livelihood of hundreds of people involved in the animal husbandry in the state, an official said.

The infection has spread rapidly as the deaths have been reported from nine districts in Assam, he said.

A total of 13,013 pigs have died in the last few days due to the ASF, which was first detected in Assam in February this year, a spokesperson of the animal husbandry and veterinary department said.

"The infection has spread from six districts to three more, namely Majuli, Golaghat and Kamrup Metropolitan," he said in a release.

The outbreak of the disease was initially detected in Dibrugarh, Sivasagar, Jorhat, Dhemajai,



Lakhimpur and Biswanath districts. Assam Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Minister Atul Bora had on Saturday visited the Kaziranga National Park and reviewed the steps taken to protect the wild boars from the deadly disease.

A six-feet deep and two-km long canal was

dug inside Agoratoli range to deter the wild boars from going to nearby villages and the domestic pigs from entering the park, he said.

Bora said the state has been apprising the Centre of the situation regularly.

Earlier, Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda So-

nowal had directed officials of the veterinary and forest departments to work in coordination with the National Pig Research Centre (NPRC) of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) to save the animal from the disease.

According to a 2019 census by the department,

the pig population in the state was 21 lakh, which has increased to around 30 lakh, Bora said.

Despite the go-ahead from the Centre, the state government has decided not to cull the pigs immediately and chosen an alternative option to prevent the spread of the disease, he said.

Amid lockdown, MP govt reshuffles 50 IAS officers

BHOPAL, MAY 10 (PTI): In a major administrative reshuffle amid the lockdown, the Madhya Pradesh government has transferred 50 Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers, including some additional chief secretaries, principal secretaries and a former chief secretary.

This is the first major bureaucratic rejig by the BJP-led state government since Shivraj Singh Chouhan became chief minister in March this year.

As per the order issued on Saturday night, former chief secretary Gopal Reddy has been posted as chairman of the revenue board at Gwalior, I C P Keshari as vice chairman of the

Narmada Valley Development Authority, Vinod Kumar as additional chief secretary (ACS) of the general administration department and J N Kantotia as ACS of the animal husbandry department, official sources said.

Besides, Anupam Rajan is posted as principal secretary of the public relations and higher education departments.

The government has removed P Narhari as commissioner of the public relations department and replaced him with Sudam P Khade. Narhari has now been made managing director of the marketing federation and will continue as commissioner of the urban development and

administration department. As per the order, Sanjay Shukla is posted as principal secretary of the industrial policy and promotion department, replacing Rajesh Rajora, who is transferred as principal secretary of the labour department.

Neeraj Mandloi is posted as principal secretary of the public works department, replacing Malay Shrivastava, who is now posted as principal secretary of the public health engineering department.

Forty other senior IAS officers, including two who suffered from COVID-19 and later recovered, have also been transferred, the sources said.

NDMA issues guidelines for restarting industrial activities to avoid Vizag-type tragedy



NEW DELHI, MAY 10 (PTI): In the wake of the gas leak at a factory in Visakhapatnam, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has issued detailed guidelines for restarting industries after the lockdown and the precautions to be taken for the safety of the plants as well as the workers.

In a communication to all states and union territories, the NDMA said due to several weeks of lockdown and the closure of industrial units, it is possible that some of the operators might not have followed the established standard operating procedures.

As a result, some of the manufacturing facilities, pipelines, valves may have residual chemicals, which may pose risk. The same is true for the storage facilities with hazardous chemicals and flammable materials, it said.

The NDMA guide-

lines said while restarting a unit, the first week should be considered as the trial or test run period after ensuring all safety protocols.

Companies should not try to achieve high production targets. There should be 24-hour sanitisation of the factory premises, it said.

The factories need to maintain a sanitisation routine every two-three hours especially in the common areas that include lunch rooms and common tables which will have to be wiped clean with disinfectants after every single use, it added.

For accommodation, the NDMA said, sanitisation needs to be performed regularly to ensure worker safety and reduce the spread of contamination.

To minimise the risk, it is important that employees who work on specific equipment are sensitised and made

aware of the need to identify abnormalities like strange sounds or smell, exposed wires, vibrations, leaks, smoke, abnormal wobbling, irregular grinding or other potentially hazardous signs which indicate the need for immediate maintenance or if required shutdown, it said.

At least 11 people lost their lives and about 1,000 others were exposed to a gas leak at a factory in Andhra Pradesh's Visakhapatnam on May 7.

The incident took place after it restarted operations when the government allowed industrial activities in certain sectors following several weeks of lockdown.

The lockdown was first announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 24 for 21 days in a bid to combat the coronavirus threat. The lockdown was then extended till May 3 and again till May 17.

COVID-19 may force auto cos into more automation on shop-floor, less reliance on contract labour: EY



NEW DELHI, MAY 10 (PTI): The Indian automotive sector will continue to face challenges related to non-availability of labour and concerns over health and safety management on the shop-floor following the coronavirus pandemic, which may force firms to accelerate adoption of digital technologies in manufacturing, a report by consultancy firm EY said.

This health crisis will settle gradually and would leave a profound impact on people and the ways of working especially on the shop-floor. There will be several changes to existing working norms and guidelines that organisations will need to abide by in order to ensure safety at the workplace, said the report titled 'Now, next and beyond: Auto factory of the future'.

Elaborating on how automotive shop-floors will evolve and adopt digital technologies post COVID-19, the report said automobile companies will now have to rebuild and reinvent a new ecosystem to accommodate the new normal that is likely to emerge.

"The auto sector will continue to face challenges related to non-availability of labor, concerns on health and safety management on the shop-floor. A digital shop-floor with specific interventions on planning and execution will become the new normal," it said.

The report further said, "Due to growing apprehensions during the lockdown, workmen are

refraining from attending work. Some shop floors have been left deserted. Further, due to large scale migration of labour across India, availability and redeployment of contract labour post lockdown is a major concern."

As contract labour accounts for more than half of India's auto industry's workers, the lockdown could lead to several complexities around supply of contract labour, forcing companies to automate and thereby reducing the reliance on contract labour, it added.

Stating that the COVID-19 outbreak is having a profound impact on the automotive shop-floor, the report said, "This makes it important for the firms to expedite a well-planned journey to manage the crisis and build resilience for future uncertainties. Digital is emerging as a real option to enable manufacturing and supply chains attain strength and adapt to the new normal."

EY India Partner and Automotive Sector Leader Vinay Raghunath said, "In a post COVID-19 world, we do expect continued adherence to social distancing norms. Apart from demand-side variability, the auto sector will continue to face challenges related to non-availability of labor, concerns on health and safety management on the shop-floor."

He further said, "A digital shop-floor with specific interventions on planning and execution will become the new normal. Every player in

the auto sector must invest ahead of the curve to achieve greater resilience and develop immunity against the future market uncertainties."

The EY report said auto firms must adopt digital manufacturing technologies to uplift operational efficiencies in all aspects with the current constraints of manpower and resources in the automotive industry.

"Adopting these technologies, along with its modularity and infrastructural backbone in a gradual and phased manner has become imperative in preparation for the next 'Black Swan' event," it said.

The report, however, said although digital adoption on manufacturing shop-floors in India is at a nascent stage, unlike other industries, the automotive shop-floor still leads in the adoption of emerging technologies in India.

A few factories in India are using substantial automation in their production lines -- physical robots, automated guided vehicles, artificial intelligence, machine learning, and predictive maintenance.

"The COVID-19 outbreak would serve as a reminder and would force other automotive players to review their current maturity stages and embark on a journey to transform their operations leveraging digital technologies. New business and operating models will require close integration of both manufacturing and supply chain," it said.

Over 300 labourers leave Bengal for Bihar in bus

KOLKATA, MAY 10 (PTI): More than 300 migrant labourers of Bihar, stranded in Bengal since the imposition of the lockdown, left for their homes in buses from Alipurdwar district on Sunday, an official said.

The district administration, in coordination with various government departments, made adequate arrangements to send home the labourers, he said. Measures were

also being taken to transport another 368 labourers, stuck in Kalimpong, to different districts within the state.

The district magistrate of Kalimpong has asked the North Bengal State Transport Corporation to provide 18 buses to transport these 368 labourers to their hometown in Coochbehar, Alipurdwar, Uttar Dinajpur, Malda, Murshidabad, the official added.

Five Air India pilots test positive for coronavirus

MUMBAI, MAY 10 (PTI): Five pilots of Air India have tested positive for coronavirus, airline sources said on Sunday.

Air India, which is operating flights to evacuate Indians stranded in foreign countries, have asked its pilots to undertake coronavirus? test before they operate such flights, the sources said.

"Five Air India pilots have tested positive for coronavirus. These pilots were tested one after one. We suspect it could

be a case of faulty testing kit as well," one of the sources told PTI.

The five pilots fly Boeing 787 planes, the second source said.

Air India spokesperson did not offer any comment.

A senior airline official said the five pilots had not operated any flight in the last three weeks.

"These pilots had operated cargo flights to China prior to April 20," the official said.

Nearly 100 migrants found in trucks bound for Bihar

New Delhi, May 10 (PTI): Delhi police detected nearly 100 migrants hiding inside two trucks in a desperate bid to reach home in Bihar, and arrested the drivers of the vehicles for illegally transporting them during a nationwide lockdown, officials said on Sunday.

The trucks were intercepted near South-east Delhi's Kalindi Kunj on Saturday night. One of the trucks had 63 migrants and the other was carrying 34, they said.

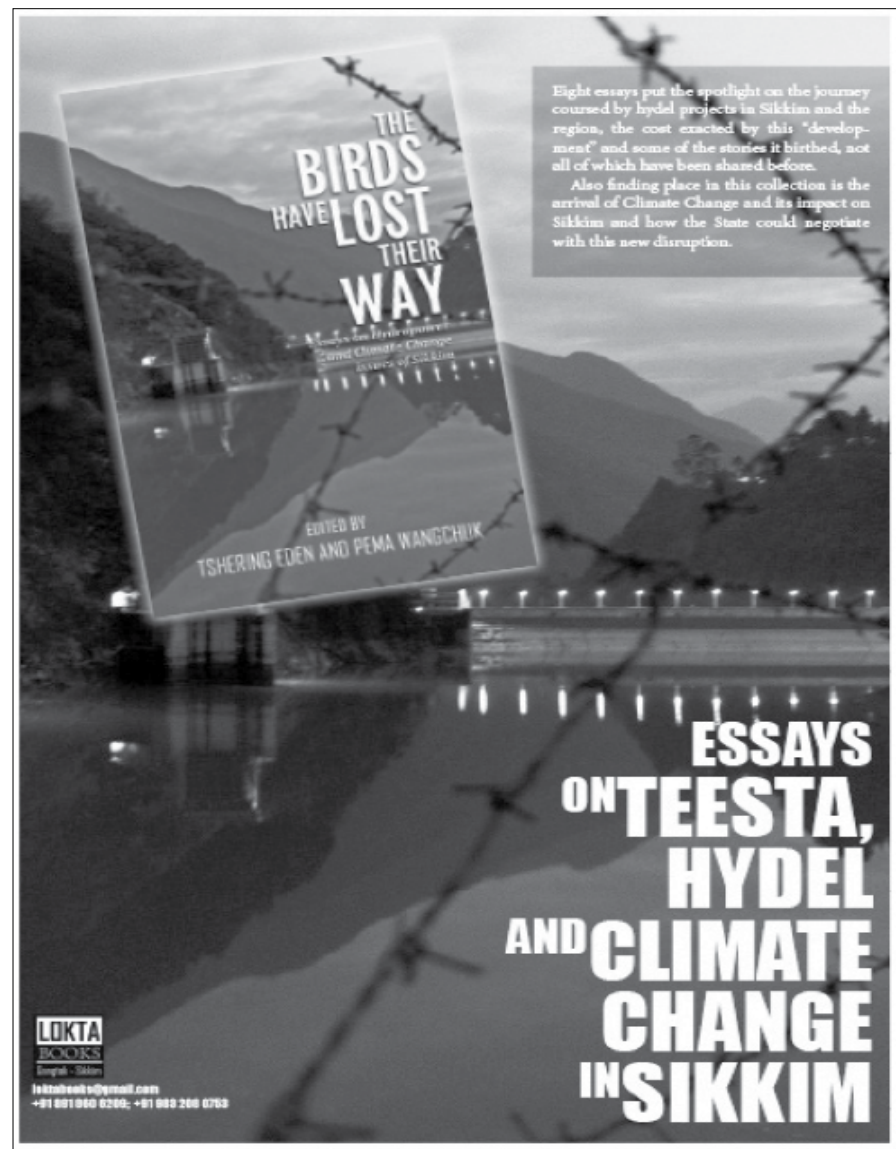
Driver Upender Singh Yadav, who also owned the vehicle, was ferrying migrants to Lakhisarai district. The other truck driven by Dharmendra Kumar Yadav was carrying 34 migrants to Madhubani district, said RP Meena, the deputy commissioner of police

(southeast). The owner of the second vehicle, Shrawan Yadav, was not in the vehicle.

The migrants, living in jhuggi colonies in RK Puram and Okhla Phase-1 in the national capital, were charged money for the travel by the transporters, Meena added. A case was registered under various charges, including for violating the lockdown and negligent act likely to spread infection, officials said.

Delhi police said their counterparts from Noida helped them in impounding the vehicles and added that the labourers have been sent to their colonies.

Since the lockdown was imposed on March 25, migrants across the country have been trying to reach home in various parts of the country.



US bobsleigh Olympian Jovanovic dies at 43

LOS ANGELES, MAY 10 (AFP): Pavle Jovanovic, who competed in bobsleigh for the United States at the 2006 Olympics, took his own life last weekend at the age of 43, the US Bobsled and Skeleton federation said Saturday.

“The winter sports community has suffered a tragic loss,” said federation chief executive Aron McGuire, a former teammate of Jovanovic.

“Pavle’s passion and commitment towards bobsled was seen and felt by his teammates, coaches, competitors, and fans of the sport. He lived life to the fullest and had a lasting influence on all those who had the opportunity to spend time with him.”

Jovanovic, who competed in bobsleigh for the United States at the 2006 Olympics, took his own life last weekend at the age of 43, the US Bobsled and Skeleton Federation said Saturday.

“The winter sports community has suffered a tragic loss,” said federation chief executive Aron McGuire, a former teammate of Jovanovic.

“Pavle’s passion and commitment towards bobsled was seen and felt by his teammates, coaches, competitors, and fans of the sport. He lived life to the fullest and had a lasting influence on all those who had the opportunity to spend time with him.”

Another US Olympic teammate, Steve Mesler, posted a moving tribute on Instagram, which was all the more anguished because Jovanovic’s suicide comes three years after American bobsleigh driver Steven Holcomb died at the age of 37.

“Pav, I can’t believe another one of these needs to be written,” Mesler wrote. “I can’t believe it’s you I’m writing this about. My personal legend - the athlete that set the standard for focus, dedication, meticulousness, and drive - tragically took his own life at the age of 43.”

Jovanovic missed the 2002 Olympics after failing a drugs test and served a two-year ban before competing at the 2006 games. He placed seventh in the two- and four-man events as a pusher in driver Todd Hays’ sleigh.

“You never know what people are going through from outward appearances,” former teammate Jason Dorsey commented on Facebook. “We have to talk to them and listen more. I’m going to work on that going forward.”

Batsman should be given out LBW if any ball goes on to hit the stumps: Chappell

NEW DELHI, MAY 10 (PTI): Former Australia captain Ian Chappell has proposed radical changes in the LBW laws, stating that a batsman should be given out leg before as long as the ball is hitting the stumps irrespective of the spot of its landing and impact.

Chappell also said captains should agree on one way of working up the ball which will encourage swing bowling, even as the ICC is considering the use of artificial substances to shine the ball instead of sweat and saliva in post COVID-19 scenario.

“The new lbw law should simply say: ‘Any delivery that strikes the pad without first hitting the bat and, in the umpire’s opinion, would go on to hit the stumps is out regardless of whether or not a shot is attempted,’” he wrote in a column for ESPNcricinfo.

“Forget where the ball pitches and whether it strikes the pad outside the line or



not; if it’s going to hit the stumps, it’s out.”

The 76-year-old said the change in lbw law would attract expected criticism from the batsmen but it would make the game more fair.

“There will be screams of horror - particularly from pampered batsmen - but

there are numerous positives this change would bring to the game. Most important is fairness.

“If a bowler is prepared to attack the stumps regularly, the batsman should only be able to protect his wicket with the bat. The pads are there to save the batsman from injury

not dismissal.

“It would also force batsmen to seek an attacking method to combat a wristspinner pitching in the rough outside the right-hander’s leg stump,” said Chappell.

He cited Sachin Tendulkar’s example on how he negotiated Shane Warne’s

round the wicket tactic during the 1997-98 Test series in India.

“Contrast Sachin Tendulkar’s aggressive and successful approach to Shane Warne coming round the wicket in Chennai in 1997-98 with a batsman who kicks away deliveries pitching in the rough and turning in toward the stumps. Which would you rather watch?”

“The current law encourages “pad play” to balls pitching outside leg while this change would force them to use their bat. The change would reward bowlers who attack the stumps and decrease the need for negative wide deliveries to a packed off-side field,” he said.

Chappell said his proposed change to the lbw law would also cut down “frivolous” DRS challenges.

“This change to the lbw law would also simplify umpiring and result in fewer friv-

olous DRS challenges. Consequently, it would speed up a game that has slowed drastically in recent times.

“It would also make four-day Tests an even more viable proposition as mind-numbing huge first-innings totals would be virtually nonexistent.” On the substitute of shining the ball without sweat and saliva, Chappell said international captains should find out a way of working up the ball.

“With ball-tampering always a hot topic, in the past I’ve suggested that administrators ask international captains to construct a list (i.e. the use of natural substances) detailing the things bowlers feel will help them to swing the ball.

“From this list, the administrators should deem one method to be legal with all others being punishable as illegal,” the cricketer-turned-commentator added.

Less is more for Mitchell when rugby resumes post virus



LONDON, MAY 10 (AFP): Former New Zealand head coach and current England defence chief John Mitchell believes some good may come for rugby union from the coronavirus if it creates “greater professionalism” thanks to a concentration of talent at fewer clubs worldwide, including Super Rugby.

Even before COVID-19 saw this year’s edition of Super Rugby suspended after seven rounds in March, there was a widespread view the southern hemisphere’s now 15-string premier club tournament had become increasingly unattractive for fans and broadcasters alike, with talent spread too thinly.

The pandemic has already had a huge financial impact on rugby and there are concerns current club structures won’t survive the outbreak fully intact.

England’s Rugby Football Union has lost ?15 million (19 million) so far due to the crisis, with Twickenham chiefs forecasting a total loss of ?107 million if the autumn internationals are cancelled.

Meanwhile Rugby Australia, already reeling after reaching a multi-million dollar settlement with star player Israel Folau over his sacking for homophobic comments, have reported a 6 million operating deficit for last year.

They have also laid off 75 percent of staff, with chief executive Raelene Castle resigning amid ac-

cusations of mismanagement and sexism. Japan’s Sunwolves are set to be axed from the 2021 Super Rugby season, which is planned to be a 14-team tournament featuring sides from South Africa, New Zealand, Australia and Argentina.

- ‘Lost its value’ - ===== But Mitchell, once the coach of Australia’s now former Super Rugby side Western Force, indicated greater contraction was still required if the tournament was to return to its mid 1990s and early 2000s heyday. “I’d like to probably see less markets...The example I give you is Super Rugby,” Mitchell told reporters in a conference call.

“When it first started it was 12 teams, I think I even played in the first Super 10 but it was probably at its best when it was 12 teams and the best players were playing,” added the 56-year-old, who coached the Chiefs in the Super 12 before guiding New Zealand to a third-place finish at the 2003 World Cup.

“They obviously wanted to create a style of rugby that suited the southern hemisphere from an athletic point of view.” Ultimately, because they’ve spread that all round the world, it’s in some ways spread players all round the world, creating greater costs.

“It’s probably lost its value in some ways because people want to watch the best players playing in

their competition.”

The pandemic provided a backdrop to the recent re-election of Bill Beaumont as chairman of World Rugby, with the former England captain narrowly seeing off a challenge from Argentina great Agustin Pichot, who positioned himself as a reform candidate.

But while Mitchell, who as United States coach helped the Eagles qualify for last year’s World Cup, was sympathetic to the aspirations of emerging nations, he said there were still too many clubs where players could earn a salary.

“Japan has expanded, the second division in France has also. There’s a number of markets where players can derive an income and the thing is that ultimately there are so many players that can call themselves ‘professional’ I guess in position and title, but not necessarily in action.”

And Mitchell, who helped Eddie Jones plan England’s stunning 19-7 World Cup semi-final win over the All Blacks in Japan last year, said talented players had nothing to fear from a reduction in team numbers.

“Clearly, the players will probably still be the critical (thing), the biggest value but I’m sure it’s going to contract a lot more which in the end is going to create greater professionalism and more competition for places, which is healthy for the game as well.

UFC 249 ushers in fan-free, mask-filled era of sports

JACKSONVILLE (FLORIDA), MAY 10 (AP): Kicks, punches and grunts echoed through the empty arena. Coaches, commentators and camera clicks resonated like never before.

Blood, sweat, swollen eyelids and face masks signaled the return of UFC, the first major sporting event to resume since the coronavirus shuttered much of the country for nearly two months. UFC 249 ushered in a new look for sports, too. One without fans and amid several safety precautions.

It was definitely different two fighters adjusted their approaches because of what they heard announcers say and a welcome reprieve for a sports-craved country that went nearly eight weeks without any live events.

Nearly five hours after President Trump congratulated UFC for restarting the sports world, Justin Gaethje stunned heavily favored Tony Ferguson (26-4) in the main event, earning a TKO in the fifth and final round of the headliner that was deemed an interim lightweight title

bout. It essentially gives Gaethje (22-2) the right to fight titleholder Khabib Nurmagomedov next. Nurmagomedov was unable to fight this weekend because of travel restrictions.

Gaethje flipped himself out of the octagon and back in after the victory and then screamed repeatedly.

“I want the real one,” he said as he threw down the interim belt.

The stacked fight card saw 33-year-old Henry Cejudo, with blood gushing from his forehead and running down his chest, defend his bantamweight title against Dominick Cruz and then announce his retirement in the middle of the octagon.

It also included heavyweight contender Francis Ngannou pummel another opponent, former NFL defensive end Greg Hardy, to win for the sixth time in eight fights and former welterweight champion and fan favorite Donald Cowboy Cerrone lose his fourth straight. Trump was part of the event as well. His taped message was played during ESPN’s broadcast of the undercard.

“I want to congratulate

late (UFC President) Dana White and the UFC,” Trump said. “They’re going to have a big match. We love it. We think it’s important. Get the sports leagues back. Let’s play. Do the social distancing and whatever else you have to do. We need sports. We want our sports back.”

UFC 249 was originally scheduled for April 18 in New York, but was postponed in hopes of helping slow the spread of COVID-19.

The mixed martial arts behemoth will hold three shows in eight days in Jacksonville, where state officials deemed professional sports with a national audience exempt from a stay-at-home order as long as the location is closed to the public.

The UFC came up with a 25-page document to address health and safety protocols, procedures that led to Jacar Souza testing positive for COVID-19 on Friday. His middleweight bout against Uriah Hall was canceled that night. Souza’s two cornermen also tested as positive, the UFC said.

Current Indian team lacks complete fielder: Mohd Kaif

NEW DELHI, MAY 10 (PTI): The current Indian team has good fielders but none of them is a “complete package” like Yuvraj Singh and he himself, reckons Mohammed Kaif.

The hero of India’s Natwest victory played more than 100 ODIs, primarily because of his superb fielding. The superior fielding skills prolonged his career even as his batting form declined steadily.

Asked about his take on Indian fielding compared to the times when Yuvraj Singh would man the point and he would outline the lacking in the current set-up.

“To be a complete package, you need to be a good catcher, you should be able to hit the stumps often, you should be able to run fast, you should have the right technique

to grab a moving ball,” Kaif said on YouTube channel ‘SportScreen’

“When we were playing, me and Yuvraj made our mark as good fielders. Today, you will find a lot of good fielders in the Indian team, but I don’t think there is anyone who is a complete package as a fielder.

“A person who can catch in the slips, who can take a catch at short-leg, can field in long-on boundary by running fast .that package I think is missing,” said Kaif, who has always been hailed as one of India’s best fielders. The 39-year-old said that Ravindra Jadeja is becoming better with age but India’s slip catching has still left a lot to be desired.

“Ravindra Jadeja is a good fielder, in fact as he is adding on the years, his fielding is also improv-

ing. But India’s slip fielding isn’t up to scratch.”

In the debate between Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma in white ball cricket, Kaif said that if he had to choose between the two had they been playing for different teams, he would prefer watching the stylish Mumbaikar.

“If there are two matches happening in the same city simultaneously and Virat is playing in one and Rohit in another, then I will head to the match featuring Rohit Sharma.

“No doubt, Virat has an outstanding record in Tests and white ball cricket both, but Rohit has the elegance, so much time while facing a bowler. He is one batsman who can smash a bowler without the bowler even realising that he is under attack.

CONTACT
SUMMIT
TIMES
REPORTERS
SINGTAM
8170070813
MANGAN/
DIKCHU
9832612485/
9434011213
GANGTOK
8116388176
9832424750
8016270440

Citing virus, Iran says it's ready for prisoner swap with US

TEHRAN, MAY 10 (AP): Iran says it is ready for unconditional prisoner swap talks with the United States because of fears that the coronavirus could put the lives of the prisoners at risk, Iranian media reported Sunday.

An Iranian news website, Khabaronline.ir, quoted Cabinet spokesman Ali Rabiei as saying there is a readiness for all prisoners to be discussed without condition.

But the US has refused to answer, so far, said Rabiei. We hope that as the outbreak of the Covid-19 disease threatens the lives of Iranian citizens in the US prisons, the US government eventually will prefer lives to politics.

Rabiei said Iran considers the U.S. government responsible for the health of the Iranian prisoners, adding that it seems that the U.S. has more readiness to bring the situation to an end. Rabiei did not elaborate but Iranian media in recent months said there are several Iranians in US custody, including Sirous Asgari, a 60-year-old university professor.

Last week, US officials said they were mak-



ing progress in efforts to secure the release of a detained Navy veteran in Iran. But they were also pushing back on Iranian suggestions that a swap was in the works for the imprisoned Iranian American officials have been trying to deport since last year.

Ken Cuccinelli, the acting deputy Homeland Security secretary, said Wednesday that the cases of American detainee Michael White in Iran and Asgari, the Iranian

imprisoned in the United States, have never been connected. He expressed frustration with recent comments from Iranian officials that there may be a link between the two and complained that Iran had been slow to accept Asgari's return.

White, of Imperial Beach, California, was detained in July 2018 while visiting a girlfriend in Iran. He was convicted of insulting Iran's supreme leader and posting private information on-

line. He was released from prison in March on a medical furlough that required him to remain in the country. White is among tens of thousands of prisoners granted medical furloughs by Iran, which was one of the first countries to be hit hard by the spreading coronavirus.

Trump administration officials have repeatedly said they consider the release of American hostages and detainees to be a high priority. In December, Iran

released a Princeton University scholar held for three years on widely disputed espionage charges in exchange for the release of a detained Iranian scientist.

In March, the family of former FBI agent Robert Levinson, who vanished in Iran 13 years ago, said they had been informed by U.S. officials that they had determined that Levinson was probably dead. Officials have not said how they reached that conclusion.

In Japan, pandemic brings outbreaks of bullying, ostracism



TOKYO, MAY 10 (AP): The coronavirus in Japan has brought not just an epidemic of infections, but also an onslaught of bullying and discrimination against the sick, their families and health workers.

A government campaign to raise awareness seems to be helping, at least for medical workers. But it's made only limited headway in countering the harassment and shunning that may be discouraging people from seeking testing and care and hindering the battle against the pandemic.

When Arisa Kadono tested positive and was hospitalized in early April, she was only identified as a woman in her 20s in food business. Soon, friends let her know that groundless rumours were circulating: that the family-run bar she helps with was a hotbed of virus; that she had dined with a popular baseball player who was infected earlier but she has never met; that she was sneaking out of the hospital and spreading the virus.

It was as if I was a criminal, Kadono said in an interview from her home in Himeji, western Japan, after ending her three-week hospitalization.

Apart from a fever on the first day and a loss of smell, Kadono had no major symptoms though she repeatedly tested positive for the virus that causes COVID-19. Her mother developed pneumonia and was briefly in intensive care at another hospital.

There are many other people who also have faced discrimination and prejudice, (asterisk) said Kadono, who decided to speak out on her own behalf and that of other COVID-19 survivors and their families.

"I really want to change people's tendency to blame those who get infected, (asterisk) Apart from fear of infection, experts say the prejudice against those even indirectly associated with the illness

also stems from deeply rooted ideas about purity and cleanliness in a culture that rejects anything deemed to be alien, unclean or troublesome.

Medical workers risking their lives to care for patients are a main target, but people working at grocery stores, delivering parcels and carrying out other essential jobs also are facing harassment. So are their family members.

I can imagine people fear the virus, but we are working hard at the front lines under enormous pressure, said a nurse in her 30s, speaking on condition of anonymity out of fear she might be targeted if identified.

We also have our own families we care about. Discrimination against us just because we are medical workers is discouraging and demoralizing.

Another nurse was approached by a few mothers and asked to leave a Tokyo park she was visiting with her children. Some nurses are unwelcome at restaurants they usually eat at. Some are rejected by taxi drivers.

The Health Ministry issued a directive to day care facilities after some barred the children of doctors and nurses.

A veteran nurse in the northern island of Hokkaido said the mother of one of her coworkers was suspended from work. The husband of another was told at a job interview he wouldn't be hired because of his wife's job.

The nurses, both assigned to COVID-19 patients, were staying at hotels to protect their families while working under severe conditions without adequate protective equipment and testing. We understand people's fears, but medical workers are doing their utmost to prevent infections at hospitals. We seek your support, said Toshiko Fukui, head of the Japanese Nursing Association.

We are not asking for anything special. ... Just a word of thanks is a huge

reward that boosts our motivation, Fukui said.

The backlash against coronavirus patients may lead some who fall sick to avoid seeking medical care, raising the risks of infection spreading further, clinical psychologist Reo Morimitsu at the Suwa Red Cross Hospital said in an interview with NHK public television. Reports said Japanese police last month found about a dozen people dead at home alone or collapsed on the streets who later tested positive for the virus.

The virus not only infects our body but also our minds and behavior, harming us and dividing our society, Morimitsu said. Prejudice against those not viewed as mainstream or pure" is a legacy of feudal times, when some Japanese engaged in professions such as leather tanning and butchering were deemed unclean. Their descendants still face discrimination. People suffering from ailments such as Hansen's disease, or leprosy, were likewise forced to live in isolation decades after a cure was found.

Victims of the 1945 U.S. atomic bomb attacks on Japan, known as hibakusha," and others injured in industrial accidents such as mercury poisoning have faced similar treatment. More recently, some who fled the 2011 nuclear meltdowns in Fukushima have suffered bullying and harassment.

Underlying the (coronavirus) discrimination is a sense that the patients are impure, Naoki Sato, an expert on criminology and Japanese culture at the Kyushu Institute of Technology, wrote in a recent article in the Gendai Business online magazine. Growing anxiety and fear of infection are adding to discrimination against the infected.

Random acts of hatred have been reported from across the country: Arson threats were made against Kyoto Sangyo University after some of its students were infected.

Pope calls for EU solidarity to deal with virus

VATICAN CITY, MAY 10 (AP): Pope Francis is calling on leaders of European Union countries to work together to deal with the social and economic consequences of the coronavirus pandemic.

The pope noted in his Sunday blessing that 75 years have passed since Europe began the challenging process of reconciliation after World War II. He said the process spurred both European integration and the long period of stability and peace which we benefit from today.

He prayed that the same spirit that inspired European integration efforts not fail to inspire all those who have responsibility in the European Union to deal with the coronavirus emergency in a spirit of harmony and collaboration.

Throughout his papacy, the pope has urged European countries to resist nationalism and instead pull together on issues like migration.

During the pandemic, hard-hit countries like Italy and Spain have that insisted EU leaders demonstrate solidarity.

NY's Cuomo criticised over highest nursing home death toll

NEW YORK, MAY 10 (AP): New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, who has won bipartisan praise for rallying supplies for his ravaged hospitals and helping slow the coronavirus, is coming under increasing criticism for not bringing that same level of commitment to a problem that has so far stymied him: nursing homes.

In part-lecture, part-cheerleading briefings that have made him a Democratic counter to President Donald Trump, Cuomo has often seemed dismissive and resigned to defeat when asked about his state leading the nation in nursing home deaths.

We've tried everything to keep it out of a nursing home, but it's virtually impossible, Cuomo told reporters.

Now is not the best time to put your mother in a nursing home. That is a fact.

Residents' relatives, health care watchdogs and lawmakers from both parties cite problems with testing and transparency that have prevented officials and the public from grasping the full scale of the catastrophe.

And they are second-guessing a state directive that requires nursing homes take on new patients infected with COVID-19 an order they say accelerated outbreaks in facilities that are prime breeding grounds for infectious diseases.

The way this has been handled by the state is totally irresponsible, negligent and stupid, said Elaine Mazzotta, a nurse whose mother died last month of suspected COVID-19 at a Long Island nursing home.

They knew better. They shouldn't have sent these people into nursing homes."

Of the nation's more than 26,000 coronavirus deaths in nursing homes and long-term care facilities, a fifth of them about 5,300 are in New York, according to a count by The Associated Press, and the toll has been increasing by an average of 20 to 25 deaths a day for the past few weeks.

The numbers, the deaths keep ticking up," said MaryDel Wypych, an advocate for older adults in the Rochester area.

It's just very frustrating. Cuomo faced criticism at a recent briefing for saying that providing masks and gowns to nursing homes is not our job because the homes are privately owned.

It was such an insensitive thing to say, said state Assemblyman Ron Kim, a Queens Democrat who noted that it wasn't until just this past week that New York and neighboring states announced a plan to combine forces to buy protective gear and medical supplies for nursing homes.

If we had focused on that early on, he said, we could have saved a lot of lives. Cuomo's administration defended its response to the crisis, saying it has provided more than 10 million pieces of protective equipment to nursing homes and created a database of 95,000 workers who have helped out in hundreds of New York homes.

This was an overwhelming situation for everyone, said Jim Malatras, who serves on the governor's COVID-19 task force. There were deaths and it's unfortunate. But it doesn't mean we weren't aggressive.

One key criticism is that New York took weeks after the first known care home outbreaks to begin publicly reporting the number of deaths in individual homes and still doesn't report the number of cases.

By the time New York began disclosing the deaths in the middle of last month, the state had several major outbreaks with at least 40 deaths each, most of which were a surprise to the surrounding communities and even some family members.

They should have announced to the public: 'We have a problem in nursing homes. We're going to help them, but you need to know where it is,' said former New York Lt. Governor Betsy McCaughey, a Republican who now heads the nonprofit Committee to Reduce Infection Deaths.

Instead, they took the opposite tack: They hid it. Further, there has been a lack of testing in several recent New York outbreaks, including one that killed 98 residents, many of whom died with

COVID-19 symptoms without ever being tested.

Unlike West Virginia, New York has not mandated testing in its more than 1,150 nursing homes and long-term care facilities.

Nor has Cuomo followed the lead of such states as Maryland, Florida, Tennessee and Wisconsin in dispatching National Guard teams to homes to conduct testing, triage and some care.

To be sure, it's difficult to gauge the impact of such actions. New York accounts for about a third of all COVID-19-related deaths in the U.S.

And while those states reported fewer nursing home deaths than New York, all have a larger share of nursing home deaths out of their state's totals than New York's 25 per cent.

No state is doing even close to an adequate job, said Elaine Ryan, AARP's vice president for state advocacy.

New York has faced particular scrutiny for a March 25 state health department directive requiring nursing homes to take recovering coronavirus patients.

A number of nursing homes have felt constrained by the order and admitted hospital discharged patients without knowing what their COVID status was, said Chris Laxton, executive director of the Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine.

This order made an already difficult situation almost impossible.

The order, similar to one in neighboring New Jersey, was intended to help free up hospital beds for the sickest patients as cases surged.

But critics have suggested nursing homes were already overwhelmed and a better solution might have been sending them to the virtually empty Jacob K Javits Convention Center, which was retrofitted to treat COVID-19 patients, or an even less utilized Navy hospital ship that has since left Manhattan.

As the virus was racing through his nursing home, the head of Brooklyn's Cobble Hill Health Center frantically emailed state health officials April 9 asking just that.

HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?

email us: news@summittimes.com

Com

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

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

To book ad-space, contact SummitTIMES at

GANGTOK:
For circulation details Contact: +91-9749897495, +91-9647702492
& for Advertisement booking at: +91-9933427905 or at office no 03592
208/6B, Mall on advertise@summittimes.com

SILIGURI:
Mr. Mani Rai, M/s. Space Ads. B.R. Ambekar Building, Room No.7, Tel: 993983977, E-mail: contact.syrupae@gmail.com/irishad.shil123@gmail.com

KOLKATA OFFICE:
Irrshad Ali/Intelyez, Synapse, 6, Modan Street, Mezzine - 2, 2nd floor, Kolkata - 700072. Ph. 033-22124348/ fax 033-22124337/ mob. +91-9830947774/ +91-9830947774

www.summittimes.com
news@summittimes.com
summittimes6@gmail.com
advertise@summittimes.com

Address:
Santa Bhawan Complex, Church Road
Near Delhi Power House (DPH)
Gangtok, East Sikkim, 737101

VIDEO NEWS SECTION
facebook.com/SummitTIMES



WORKOUT BEFORE WEEKEND! Actor, Gregg Sulkin sweat it out while exercising in L.A.

Jay-Z's Team Roc calls for fast action in Ahmaud Arbery case

ATLANTA (AP) — The social justice arm of Jay-Z's Roc Nation entertainment company on Sunday called on Georgia officials to take quick action in the case of Ahmaud Arbery, a black man who authorities say was killed by two white men as he ran through a Georgia neighborhood.

Musicians Shawn "Jay-Z" Carter, Alicia Keys, Mario "Yo Gotti" Mims, Robert "Meek Mill" Williams and two attorneys signed Team Roc's open letter published in The Atlanta Journal-Constitution and directed at state officials.

The letter said District Attorney Tom Durden should be recused from the case due for a conflict of interest since Gregory McMichael, one of the two men charged with murder, was a former police officer. The letter urges state Attorney General Christopher Carr to instead appoint a special prosecutor to help achieve a fair trial. It also says a neighbor should be charged as an armed accomplice.

"We are all Ahmaud Arbery," rapper Yo Gotti said in a statement. "Everyday activities should not end in death sentences. We must hold people responsible for their actions. Ahmaud Arbery was unarmed and innocent and his killers must be brought to justice." Arbery was fatally shot on Feb. 23 in Brunswick but no charges were brought for more than two months.

Andre Harrell, Founder of Uptown Records, Dead at 59

"He gave you the best soundtracks of your life man and you didn't even know it," Questlove writes of music exec who helped launch Sean Combs' career.

Andre Harrell, the music executive who founded the influential Uptown Records, has died at the age of 59.

"We can confirm the passing of Andre Harrell," Revolt network, where Harrell served as vice chairman, said in a statement. "Everyone in the REVOLT family is devastated by the loss of our friend, mentor and Vice-Chairman. Andre's impact on Hip Hop and the culture and on us has been immeasurable and profound. May he Rest In



Peace."

Harrell's ex-wife, Wendy Credle, told The New York Times that the cause of death was heart failure.

The Bronx-born Harrell entered the music business as one-half of the hip-hop duo Dr. Jeckyll and Mr. Hyde. The group scored some mi-

nor hits (including "Genius Rap") before Harrell began exploring the business side of music.

In 1983, Harrell began working under Russell Simmons and that music mogul's Def Jam Records. Three years later, Harrell founded his own label, Uptown Records.

"So many can say they are successful because Andre Harrell gave them their start," Simmons wrote in a tribute following news of Harrell's death Friday. "He was so beloved because he made his living uplifting others... We celebrate him in his passing because we were so blessed for his presence... He gave everything he had."

Javed Akhtar calls to end azaan on loud-speakers, says it causes discomfort to others

MUMBAI, MAY 10 (PTI): Azaan is an integral part of the faith, not the gadget, says veteran writer-lyricist Javed Akhtar, asking that the Islamic call to prayer on loudspeakers should be stopped as it causes "discomfort" to others.

In a tweet on Saturday, Akhtar wondered why the practice was 'halaal' (allowed) when it was, for nearly half a century in the country, considered 'haram' or forbidden.

"In India for almost 50 years Azaan on the loud speak was Haraam. Then it became Halaal and so halaal that there is no end to it, but there should be an end to it. Azaan is fine but loud speaker does cause of discomfort for others. I hope that atleast this time they will do it themselves (sic)," Akhtar tweeted.

When a user asked his opinion on loud-speakers being used in temples, the 75-year-old writer said everyday use of speakers is a cause of concern.

"Whether it's a temple or a mosque, if you're using loudspeakers during a festival,

it's fine. But it shouldn't be used everyday in either temples or mosques.

"For more than thousand years Azaan was given without the loud speaker. Azaan is the integral part of your faith, not this gadget," he replied.

Earlier in March, Akhtar had supported the demand to shut mosques amid the coronavirus outbreak in the country, saying even Kaaba and Medina have been closed due to the pandemic.

He had also appealed to the Muslim community to offer prayers from home in the holy month of Ramzan, which began on April 24.

"I request all the Muslim brothers that now that Ramzan is coming, please say your prayers but make sure that this doesn't cause problems to anyone else. The prayers that you do in the mosque, you can do that at home. According to you, the house, the ground, this all has been made by Him. Then you can do your prayers anywhere," he had said.

Confident 'Kaagaz' will create impact when released: Satish Kaushik

BY JUSTIN RAO

MUMBAI, MAY 10 (PTI): Actor-filmmaker Satish Kaushik is happy his directorial "Kaagaz" was complete much before the lockdown was announced and said the Pankaj Tripathi-starrer will be a winner whenever it is released.

"Kaagaz" is based on the life of Bharat Lal aka Lal Bihari from Azamgarh, who fought a legal battle for 18 years to prove that he is alive. The film is presented by Bollywood superstar Salman Khan.

Kaushik said he is thankful to Salman for "believing" in the film and coming on board as a presenter, which marks the filmmaker's comeback to direction after six years.

"Salman heard the story while I was shooting with him in Malta for 'Bharat' and liked it immensely. 'Kaagaz' will again be a film to remember from our combination, the way 'Tere Naam' is," the actor told PTI in an interview.

Kaushik, 64, said the team was ready to release in second week of May, but everything came to a standstill due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"Now in the era of 'content is king', I have a great content on my hand, absolutely ready with a great actor like Pankaj Tripathi, a great presenter in Salman Khan Films.

"I am confident that in whatever way, whenever we get window to release, 'Kaagaz' will create an impact and will be a winner," he added.

The director said he is relieved that the shooting of the film was complete much be-

fore the lockdown began, otherwise they would have been "stranded".

"I'd have had to wait for the shooting to get completed which would have taken time. But thankfully the shoot is completely over. There is only two-three days of post production left to make the final print."

Asked if he is worried him that the audience's consumption pattern of entertainment stands to change post the pandemic, Kaushik



said he is confident things will go back to normal. "It will take time for movies to come back on track as usual post this pandemic, but I am confident that people will surely come back because entertainment is the only diet necessary after food in India.

"But audiences will have to maintain social distancing and safety measures will be adhered in post-coronavirus times for at least a year or till a vaccine is found with 100 per cent assurance and cure."

The actor said he is currently working on a lot of scripts from home and is constantly in touch with writers for various projects.

Kaushik also recently turned singer for a track penned and conceptualised by lyricist Rashmi Virag to spread positivity amid the current global crisis.

Seema Pahwa worried about acceptance from audience post lockdown



BY KOMAL PANCHAMATIA

MUMBAI, MAY 10 (PTI): It has taken Seema Pahwa close to three decades to climb the success ladder as an actor and she believes she might have to start all over again after the nationwide lockdown is lifted.

The actor made her debut in 1984 with the landmark television series Hum Log and appeared in few films and TV shows.

Her performance in recent films like "Dum Laga Ke Haisha", Bareilly Ki Barfi and Shubh Mangal Saavdhan won her acceptance from the young audiences.

Audience had started welcoming content-driven cinema but now one might think twice before paying money and risking their

lives to go to theatres. So the struggle has come back in life about how to bring the audience to theatres, Seema told PTI in an interview.

Citing the examples of actors Ayushmann Khurrana, Rajkummar Rao and Vicky Kaushal, the 58-year-old actor said while they have re-defined the Indian film hero and enjoy a huge fan following, it would be tough for even them to pull the audience to the cinema halls.

They all had just come in and they had given a new turn to the cinema as a hero, who is not a chocolate boy but a boy next-door. These faces had achieved so much and created an audience for themselves and the struggle to start it again will be difficult, she said.

Seema added that the fear induced by the pandemic may stop people from coming to cinema halls, which will make it tough for the artistes to sustain.

For every actor, their work will be zero if the audience is not coming to see their performances. All we want is people to see our work and appreciate it.

The actor, who is spending the lockdown with her husband, actor Manoj Pahwa, and two children, said she is happy being at home with her family.

In this lockdown I am cooking delicious recipes for the family. We are all in the same field so we are watching movies, plays or reading stories. We end up discussing cinema for hours, she said.

ARIES:

The full moon in Scorpio, which lit up the sky on May 7, brought to surface a host of unpleasant emotions unexpectedly—emotions you were not necessarily in the mood to deal with. Embrace the ebb like you would the flow as it is bringing your attention to the parts that need to be healed so you may reach your highest potential. What the cards are asking you to do today is confront the shadow aspect of your personality. Reflect upon the beliefs that you need to part ways with. Tip: Honour this as a time of release.

TAURUS:

Spoiler alert, Taurus: you now have the time to do all the things you claimed you couldn't in the past. This is your chance to get back to singing, try your hand at baking and sign up for a virtual yoga class, among other things. Channelling your creative energy through words is also a wonderful idea. Some of you may find solace in poetry. Others may turn to prose. Stay connected with the cosmic currents. Tip: Put pen to paper and allow the words to flow.

GEMINI:

They say life is a combination of magic and pasta but you've committed to clean eating while you're under lockdown, and so now all you ever dream about is baked lasagna and four cheese pizza. You don't have to be so hard on yourself, Gemini. Laying down a few rules is a good idea, but the more rigid

you become, the more your inner rebel will want to come out and play. Consider following a middle path (aka moderation) when it comes to your diet.

Tip: Follow the middle path when it comes to your diet.

CANCER:

The full moon may have passed us by but we're still under its spell, Cancer. The Plutonian energy speaks of death and rebirth. It speaks of death as a portal to the new self—metaphorically, of course! When you sit down to meditate today, ask yourself the question, "What do I need to let go of in order to step into my magic?"

Tip: Cleanse and purge physically, emotionally, and mentally.

LEO:

In Italian, the term 'dolce far niente' refers to the sweetness of doing nothing. Case in point, the scene in Eat Pray Love where Julia Roberts consumes her spaghetti marinara like it's the most sacred task in the world. Like her, you're being asked to adopt the slow life with a newfound passion; to find pleasure in the profane. Everything you need is right here and in this moment. Breathe. Allow yourself to take it all in.

Tip: Your time away from the mad rush is helping you realise the virtues of slowing down.

VIRGO:

"Do whatever brings you to life, then. Follow your own fascinations, obsessions, and compulsions. Trust them. Create

whatever causes a revolution in your heart." Wise words by Elizabeth Gilbert to help you expand your creative vocabulary. You now have the time to do all the things you didn't in the past. Make the most of this opening.

Tip: Expand your creative vocabulary. Follow your passion.

LIBRA:

Boundaries—the one thing that differentiates an empowered empath from a disempowered one. On which end of the spectrum do you stand, Libra? Do you believe in prioritising yourself or do you end up giving away your energy to others? The cards are urging you to be gentle with yourself, to practice self-nurture and perfect the art of filling your own cup.

Tip: Trust that boundaries will help you serve the world better.

SCORPIO:

You can be multi-talented and still make nothing of your life because you fear being seen and heard. Carefully examine the beliefs and thought patterns that are keeping you from stepping into your magic as you discard the ones that have served their purpose.

Tip: Call your power back to you.

SAGITTARIUS:

What if the obstacle is the path, Sagittarius? No, you haven't reached a dead end. Call upon your higher self and find a new way to navigate the given situation. Commit to showing up for your dreams in a way you never have before. Spirit wants

you to know that you are *this* close to manifesting a miracle.

CAPRICORN:

"I can shake off everything as I write; my sorrows disappear, my courage is reborn." Golden words by Anne Frank to inspire you to put pen to paper and allow the words to flow. For some, this may be a form of catharsis and emotional release. For others, this may bring forth clarity and help find creative solutions.

Tip: Putting pen to paper will assist you in the process of emotional release.

AQUARIUS:

Today, you're being asked to observe your consumption habits. What you put on your plate is merely one part of the equation. The things you read, watch, listen to, and surround yourself with play an integral role in determining your frequency. So where do you want to vibrate at, Aquarius?

Tip: Eliminate the things that lower your vibration.

PISCES:

"Whenever we manage to love without expectations, calculations, negotiations, we are indeed in heaven." A heartwarming Sufi quote that illuminates the unconditional love you are experiencing in this moment. Your very own slice of paradise in this earthly realm. It's not that you haven't had your share of differences, it's that you choose to redirect your attention to the similarities.

Tip: The cards speak of love, harmony, and togetherness.