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Summit **T**IMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Stressful weekend gives Sikkim record surge and two more deaths

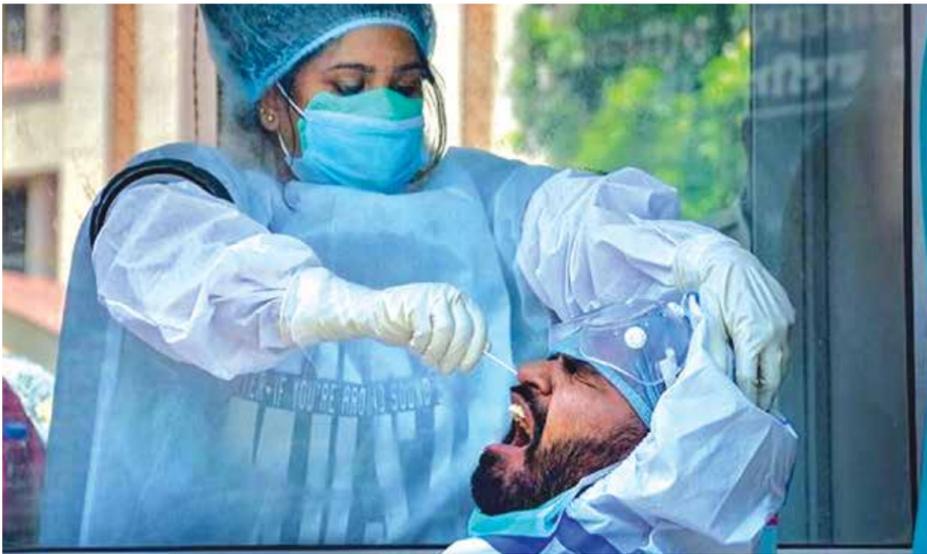
SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 02 MAY:

The number of active cases of novel coronavirus in Sikkim now stands at 1,808 with 489 new cases reported here in the last two days - Saturday and Sunday. In fact, on Saturday, the State set a new record when it comes to daily cases when in the preceding 24 hours it detected 259 cases.

The number calmed down slightly on Sunday when 230 new cases were reported.

Also over the weekend, two more lives were lost to the virus and the Covid death toll here now stands at 149.

Of the 230 new cases reported on Sunday, 143 are from East District, 26 from West District, 59 from South and three from North Sikkim. These cases were picked up from the testing of 799 samples collected on Saturday - 182 detected in RT-PCR testing of 628 samples, 08 through CB-NAAT testing of 18 samples and 40 in the rapid



antigen testing of 153 samples.

19 Covid patients were admitted to hospital today.

There are currently eight people admitted in the ICU facility of STNM Hospital. Of the 1,808 active cases, only 119 are currently in hospital - 92 at STNM Hospital, 08 at Mangan District Hospital and 19 at CRH-Tadong.

In the meanwhile, Sikkim has recorded its

149th COVID-related death when one more Covid-positive person passed away at Central Referral Hospital, Tadong.

On Saturday, a 26-year-old lady from Saramsa, Ranipool, in East District succumbed to coronavirus. It is informed that she was brought to STNM Hospital with high fever.

On the other hand,

the number of recovered cases of COVID-19 in Sikkim has shown some improvement with the release of 68 more persons from home isolation after completing their isolation period. Meanwhile, Sikkim's tally of confirmed cases of COVID-19 has now reached 8441.

Earlier on Saturday, Sikkim had recorded its highest ever daily surge

with 259 new cases.

Out of these 259 cases, 195 were reported in East District, 22 in West District, 32 in South District and 10 in North District. Also the same day, 41 people were discharged from home isolation after completing their isolation period to further improve the figure of recovered cases of COVID-19 in Sikkim to 6,236.

Health Minister reviews Covid preparedness, reassures people that Govt is prepped for the challenge

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 02 MAY:

Three weeks into the second wave of Covid-19 coursing through the State, a high-level review meeting of the Health Department was convened here at STNM Hospital on Saturday.

The meeting, which was chaired by Health Minister Dr MK Sharma, discussed the present situation of COVID-19 in Sikkim and preparedness levels to deal with the situation if the daily caseload continues to increase at the same rate.

Addressing a press conference after the meeting, the Minister stated that the review meeting has discussed on the present status of health services and facilities with regard to COVID management and future preparedness to deal with the pandemic.

He added that the meeting has explored possibilities to increase the number of beds, services and manpower if the daily caseload continues to increase.

"We want to reassure the people that the State is well-equipped and well-prepared to deal with the present situation of COVID-19 in Sikkim with enough beds, medicines, oxygen supply and other infrastructure," he said.

The Minister stated that the meeting mainly discussed on how to prepare for the crisis and took some important decisions.

He added that the department has decided to supplement manpower at the COVID-dedicated STNM Hospital by pulling personnel of different cadres deployed at Urban PHC, PHCs and District Hospital [East] and adjoining areas.

He added that the department has decided to utilise existing roster of nurses, technicians, non-technical, doctors and dentists.

He expressed that although this might inconvenience some, it was an emergency situation so everyone has to chip in.

He reiterated that there were

enough beds, medicines and oxygen to deal the present situation but if caseload continues to increase at the same rate, more options will need to be explored.

He informed that 72 more beds have been prepared on the 9th floor of STNM hospital and even private cabins inaugurated recently have been included in the COVID dedicated section and now the hospital has extra 115 beds.

He informed that 8th floor of STNM hospital will also be used for COVID patients. He mentioned that non-emergency surgeries will be postponed for some time and OPD shifted to the old STNM hospital from Monday.

"We have been doing best from our side so the people also need to support us by avoiding unnecessary movement and not to come out of their homes unless absolutely necessary," Dr Sharma said.

He added that the people should come for vaccination as some have not taken by going after rumours and urged all to get vaccinated to keep others safe from coronavirus as well.

He further urged the people to mask-up properly and strictly follow social distancing.

"If we, the government and the people, work together we can come out this crisis," he expressed.

He also urged asymptomatic patients not panic and not demand hospital admission and leave that decision on the doctors.

Responding to media queries, the Minister mentioned that the department has been sending random samples of positive patients came for RT-PCR testing time to time to the national institute to check for mutant strains. He added that results have shown that the UK strain and the double mutant strain have come to Sikkim.

He informed that 11 UK strains and 11 double mutant strains were found from 49 samples randomly picked for testing.

Governor refutes report that he has left Sikkim for Covid treatment

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 02 MAY:

Raj Bhawan has refuted and denied the new-report that Governor Ganga Prasad and his wife, Kamla Devi, have been flown to Apollo Hospital in Delhi for Covid treatment.

The Governor, his wife and several Raj Bhawan staff have tested positive for Covid in the past week, it may be recalled.

Contesting the report, published in Gangtok-based English daily, Sikkim Reporter, a press communique quotes

the Governor as saying, "Our basic health parameters are normal and we are at home isolation (Raj Bhawan) under the supervision of STNM doctors for Covid-19 positive treatment."

The Governor adds that the State government has all the required infrastructure including Covid beds, ventilators, oxygen facilities, vaccines, Remdesivir injections etc to fight Covid-19.

He has also reiterated his appeal to the people to follow Covid guidelines and the "Dawai Bhi, Kadai Bhi" mantra.

Marathon Man leads runners on holy trail to promote fitness



SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 02 MAY:

Carrying the message of health and fitness, a team of six long distance runners led by Marathon Man Amar Subba ran 36 KMs of the Neydham Nub Dechenphug trial from Darap to Nathan in West District on Sunday.

Neydham Nub Dechenphug trial is considered holy and located between Darap and Nathan at an al-

titude of around 13,000 ft. Mr Subba shares that the trail was full of very rich flora and fauna and that this trail could be converted as a holy run in the future.

He added that the main motive behind the run was to encourage people to live a healthy and fit lifestyle to fight diseases. He also thanked every individual who supported the run.

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Chamling advices Govt to get serious about Covid, releases 11-point list of suggestions

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 02 MAY:

Sikkim Democrat-ic Front president, former Chief Minister Pawan Chamling, has called on the SKM Government to get serious about governance issues when it comes to managing the Covid-19 outbreak in the State and warned that a third wave is also imminent.

In his weekly Q&A session on his Facebook page, the former CM warns that underestimating the virus "would be the greatest folly" and stresses that the government must prioritise human life and let everything else like celebrations, programmes and tours wait.

Taking a swipe at the SKM Government's priorities, he writes: "As if the Dandi March was not enough of a tour, now the state government has launched a bike rally. Why such a spectacle in the midst of a catastrophic pandemic? Does the Chief Minister not have other serious responsibilities? Is he so free? Is there not a single sensible person in the government to ask the CM to take the battle seriously and stop these tamashas?"

"There has been enough unnecessary, inhuman threats, intimidation and terror mongering. Our people need inspiration, safety and help," he adds.

The former CM has suggested that Covid wards be set up in district hospitals since there was no need for all Covid patients to be made to travel to Gangtok for treatment and advised that the pace of RTPCR tests be accelerated and people not be made to wait for several days.

He also wants non-surgical masks to be banned and the quality of sanitizers being sold be checked. The government can distribute surgical masks among the poor who cannot afford them, he adds.

Tourism, if the government wants to continue with it, needs better monitoring, he observes while adding that

annual taxes of all taxis registered with the state government be waived for this year along with waiving the loans taken by the youth to buy luxury vehicles under the Chief Minister Start Up Scheme, educational loans, SIDICO, SABCO loans and all other loans taken by farmers and youth.

This move should be further supplemented with relief packages for taxi drivers, manual labourers, farmers, small business vendors, other non-salaried workers, and BPL populations.

A statewide vaccination programme to immunize everyone here by State Day, 16 May, should also be considered, he

suggests while adding that all government meetings be held on virtual mode only.

"This is a collective war. The government must lead by example. It is also the government's responsibility to take everyone on board. The government must spearhead the mission and the people will cooperate," he states while ending with another swipe at the SKM Government: "Finally, I would like to request all Sikkimese people to be on guard. We have seen the government's alertness and efficiency. Expecting more would be at our own peril. We must fight this battle ourselves. Self-protection is the best protection."

Mamata Banerjee loses to Suwendu Adhikari in Nandigram, will go to court

KOLKATA, 02 MAY [NDTV]:

Mamata Banerjee today won a landslide victory in Bengal but lost in a cliffhanger in Nandigram to the BJP's Suwendu Adhikari, her former protégé. "I accept the verdict in Nandigram - it is not a big deal. Don't worry," said the Chief Minister.

The yo-yo trends in counting through the day saw Mamata Banerjee and Suwendu Adhikari alternately leading in different rounds, by margins ranging from six to 12,000.

Suwendu Adhikari was declared winner by 1,736 votes, not long after the Trinamool tweeted: "The counting process for Nandigram has not been completed. Please do not speculate."

The Bengal Chief Minister trailed Suwendu Adhikari in the early rounds of counting, which dimmed her party's euphoria over its spectacular victory. She scraped past him and managed a 1,200-vote lead in the afternoon. When the results seemed to be going the way of her

former lieutenant, she shrugged it off.

"Let the Nandigram people give whatever verdict they want, I accept that. Nandigram was a sacrifice that was needed in the larger victory. We have won the state," she said.

"Whatever happened is for the best. I will not have to go that far regularly now, I am saved in that way. But I will go to the court because I have heard there were some malpractices," she said.

Nandigram is the town that catapulted Mamata Banerjee to power for the first time in 2011 and winning here serves as a big message to aides - mainly Mr Adhikari -- who ditched her this time to cross over to the BJP.

In 2011, Suwendu Adhikari was by Ms Banerjee's side as she campaigned for farmers' land rights. He became an MLA in the constituency and for years, the Adhikari family had a firm grip over Nandigram. But in this election, he was weaponized by the BJP against the Chief Minis-

ter, who was pitched as an "outsider" in Nandigram.

Suwendu Adhikari's switch to the BJP in December led to mass defections that left Ms Banerjee without many of her loyal aides.

Stung by Mr Adhikari's betrayal, Ms Banerjee decided to take the fight straight to his stronghold to prove a point. She gave up her constituency Bhowanipore in Kolkata. In her speeches, she said she chose to contest Nandigram "to salute the Nandigram movement" and promised she would never abandon the constituency.

It is while campaigning in Nandigram that the 66-year-old Chief Minister suffered a leg injury; she accused the BJP of a role in the incident, in which her leg was allegedly crushed by her car door by the press of a large crowd. For the rest of the campaign, she was in a wheelchair, taking on the collective might of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and multiple BJP leaders from outside.

Accounts service welcomes Su Swastha Yojana as "bold and revolutionary"

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 02 MAY:

Sikkim Finance & Accounts Service Association has welcomed the recently-launched Su Swastha Yojana as "bold and revolutionary" and expressed gratitude towards the Chief Minister for making possible what "is probably the first State run employees Health scheme in the en-

tire North East region."

The scheme, the association states in a press release, "is observed to be employee centric to facilitate and improve healthcare, access, quality and costs to Govt. employees of the State & their dependents/families."

The low premium and the ability to access medical benefits much

more than those offered by the traditional medical insurance companies and the flexibility if the scheme make it path-breaking, the association states.

The fawning press statement goes on to say, "This is a bold and revolutionary initiative by our Govt. in providing the best health care facilities to its employees. We

are well aware that much sweat and midnight oil has been burnt by the Govt. to evolve such an ideal health coverage package for its employees."

The SF&AS members are "overwhelmed" by the concern and effort put in by the Govt and makes "special mention of gratitude" extended to

the Chief Minister "under whose express direction the Su SwasthaYojana has come about."

"We members of SF &AS therefore stand indebted to our Hon'ble Chief Minister and vow to commit ardent support in ensuring that the Su SwasthaYojana is a success story in these gloomy times," the release adds.

"Bengal saved the country," says Mamata Banerjee, set for hat-trick

NEW DELHI, 02 MAY [NDTV]: Bengal has saved the country, Mamata Banerjee said today as her Trinamool Congress raced to a landslide victory in the state, fighting off a formidable challenge from the BJP.

"Bengal has saved India. This is a victory of democracy. They said they would win 200-plus seats but they have been decimated. Bengal has decimated BJP's ego," Mamata Banerjee, 66, said.

"The BJP kept going on and on about double-engine sarkar, while I assured you all that I will score a double century. This is Bangla's win... this is Bengal's win... this is your win. This win has saved Bengal, it has saved the culture and tradition of Bengal."

Her own possible defeat in Nandigram to



Trinamool defector Suwendu Adhikari, who became the BJP's top face in Bengal, was somewhat sobering, but Mamata Banerjee all but shrugged it off. "Don't worry about Nandigram, I struggled for Nandigram because I fought a movement. It's ok. Let the Nandigram

people give whatever verdict they want, I accept that. I don't mind. We won more than 221 seats in the state and the BJP has lost the election," she said.

The Trinamool looked set to win over 210 of Bengal's 294 seats and the BJP was at 78 as counting neared a close.

Mamata Banerjee

emerged for the first time without her wheelchair - which became a constant in her campaign after she suffered a leg injury in Nandigram on March 10 - and said to celebrating party workers: "I appeal to you all to go home and take a shower, sanitise well and maintain social distance from others. Please do

not crowd around and indulge in celebrations."

With her state reporting a steady rise in Covid cases and deaths, Ms Banerjee said she would prioritise the fight against the pandemic.

"My first priority will be to work in the interest of the people - all who are affected by COVID-19. The priority of the government in Bengal will be to battle Covid," she said.

"I have not yet taken a decision on lockdown and that will be taken after I assess the situation after the oath taking ceremony of the new government."

On Saturday, Bengal reported the highest one-day COVID-19 deaths - 103 - and over 17,500 cases.

Since April 30, Bengal has been placed under a partial lockdown.

Delhi HC directs hospitals to give daily info on COVID patients; says choking of beds happening

NEW DELHI, MAY 1 (PTI): The Delhi High Court Saturday directed all hospitals in the national capital to provide information on daily admissions and discharge of COVID-19 patients and of those admitted for over 10 days, since April 1.

A concern was raised in the court regarding optimal utilisation of ICU and oxygenated beds and ICU beds in hospitals and nursing homes across Delhi.

A bench of justices Vipin Sanghi and Rekha Palli, which held a four-hour-long special hearing on a holiday on various issues relating to the COVID-19 situation, said it appears there is choking of beds taking place in hospitals and nursing homes.

"Looking into the dearth and shortage of beds, particularly oxygen beds and beds in ICU, we consider it necessary to have this aspect looked into as there are allegations of malpractice of patients not being discharged despite having recovered from the COVID-19 disease," the bench said.

It said, "We direct the medical superintendents/ owners/ doctors of all hospitals and nursing homes, including those of Delhi government, Centre and private, to place details of the number of COVID-19 patients admitted and discharged each day from April 1."

They shall also give details of the number of patients who have re-



mained hospitalised for 10 days or more and the type of bed occupied by them from April 1.

The bench said the details shall be emailed by May 4 to amicus curiae and senior advocate Raj Shekhar Rao who shall combine the information and place it before the court on May 5.

It also directed the Delhi government to forthwith update its portal about admission and discharge of COVID-19 patients from hospitals and to also keep it updated daily without fail.

It said the number of hospital beds available on the portal shall separately show how many of them are oxygenated and non-oxygenated.

"From what has emerged, it is well known that one who contracts COVID-19, takes about 10-14 days to recover in normal course... about 10 per cent of them require hospitalisation and 1 per cent of the total affected persons are likely to require greater medical intervention and admission to ICU," the court

noted. Delhi government counsel Satyakam submitted that in Delhi, there are a total of 20,938 beds for COVID-19 patients as on date in all hospitals here and the data include non-oxygenated, oxygenated, ICU beds.

To this, the bench said looking to this number, every day a substantial number of beds should become available for the patients, but that does not appear to be happening.

The patients who require hospitalisation with oxygen support should normally be in a position to leave the hospital within 8-10 days subject to the condition, unless it worsens and requires ICU, the court said, adding that in most cases, COVID-19 resolves itself in 10 days to two weeks with medicines.

"However it appears that there is choking of beds taking place in hospitals and nursing homes," the bench said.

Senior advocate Rahul Mehra, representing the Delhi government,

showed an office order by Directorate General of Health Services on the new discharge policy and also a document of the medical director of LNJP Hospital which stated that patients are staying in hospitals beyond seven days.

"Therefore, all unit heads and consultants are requested to discharge patients as per the revised discharge policy of the government so that more lives can be saved. Stable patients whose oxygen saturation is more than 91 per cent may be shifted to GNEC, Shehnaibanquet and Rouse Avenue School," the hospital order said.

Meanwhile, the court also said hospitals should learn from their experiences regarding oxygen scarcity during the prevailing pandemic and set up plants for generating the life-saving gas.

It said for commercial considerations, some hospitals reduce capital expenditures on things like oxygen plants which are essential in a hospital, especially the big

ones, and it is irresponsible not to have such plants.

Mehra also informed the court that a hospital in the name of Gandhi Hospital on Friday made a false statement that it has not received a single oxygen cylinder for the last 48 hours, despite getting various.

The hospital's owner submitted that there was some mis-communication between the management and their lawyer and there was no intention to make a false statement.

The court warned that such false claims shall not be made in future, particularly at this time as it wastes time and takes away time of the administration which is dealing with the situation on war footing.

Regarding a plea by a group of lawyers including Bar Council of Delhi chairman Ramesh Gupta seeking arrangement for treatment of lawyers contracting COVID-19, Mehra said they were working on it and something positive will come up by Monday.

Another plea was mentioned by Dwarka Court Bar Association President Y P Singh seeking to make operation Indira Gandhi Hospital in Dwarka, which has been under construction for the last 8 years and near completion now, which could accommodate 1700 beds.

The court asked the government to take instruction on this and apprise it with the development.



COVID IN SINGTAM: The second wave of Covid has been brutal across the country and the town of Singtam is no different. There is palpable fear among the people and the sight of contained shops, including medicine shops, keeps their worries high. Taking precautions and staying home and staying safe has been internalised the people and crowding has reduced. [from YOGEN THATAL]

Will return to India in a few days, says Adar Poonawalla

MUMBAI, MAY 2 (PTI): Serum Institute of India CEO Adar Poonawalla has said he will return to India from London in a few days.

Poonawalla made the announcement soon after he spoke out about the pressures he was under over the production of COVID-19 vaccines to meet the ever-increasing demand in India as the country battles through a devastating second wave of the coronavirus pandemic.

"Had an excellent meeting with all our partners & stakeholders in the U.K. Meanwhile, pleased to state that COVISHIELD's production is in full swing in Pune. I look forward to reviewing operations upon my return in a few days," Poonawalla said in a midnight tweet.

In his first comments since he was provided with 'Y' category security by the Indian government earlier this week, Poonawalla had told 'The Times' in an interview about receiving aggressive calls from some of the most powerful people in India, demanding supplies of Covishield -- the Oxford/AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine that the Serum Institute is producing in India.

That pressure was largely behind his decision to fly into London to be with his wife and children, the 40-year-old entrepreneur had said in the interview on Saturday.

"I'm staying here (London) for an extended time because I don't want to go back to that situation. Everything falls on my shoulders but I can't do it alone... I don't want to be in a situation where you are just trying to do your job, and just because you can't supply the needs of X, Y or Z you really don't want to guess what they are going to do," Poonawalla had told the newspaper.

According to Indian government officials, the protection to Poonawalla has been given in view of "potential threats" to him. Armed commandos of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) will be with him every time he travels to any part of the country, they said and added that the 'Y' security cover will entail a posse of about 4-5 armed commandos.

"The level of expectation and aggression is really unprecedented. It's overwhelming. Everyone feels they should get the vaccine. They can't understand why anyone else should get it before them," Poonawalla had said.

The businessman had indicated in the interview that his move to London is also linked to business plans to expand vaccine manufacturing to countries outside India, which may include the likes of the UK.

"There's going to be an announcement in the next few days," he had said when asked about Britain as one of the pro-

duction bases outside India.

According to the newspaper, by the time the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine was approved in January this year, the Serum Institute of India (SII) had increased its annual production capacity from 1.5 to 2.5 billion doses at a cost of USD 800 million, and stockpiled 50 million doses of Covishield.

The company began exporting to 68 countries, including Britain, as India seemed to have been over the worse, until the situation worsened in recent weeks.

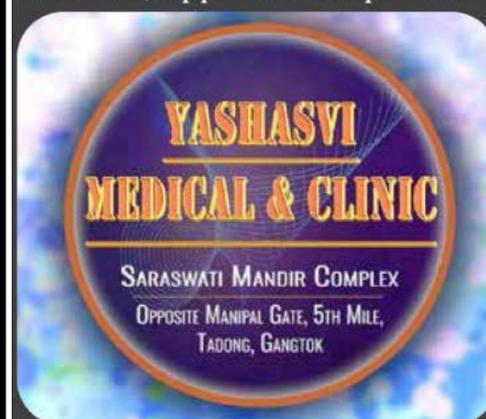
"We're really grasping for all the help we can get," Poonawalla had said in the 'Times' interview. "I don't think even God could have forecast it was going to get this bad," he had said.

India's daily coronavirus tally crossed the grim milestone of four lakh, while the death toll rose to 2,11,853 with 3,523 fresh fatalities, according to date updated by the Union Health Ministry on Saturday.

The infection tally rose to 1,91,64,969 with 4,01,993 new cases, while the active cases crossed the 32-lakh mark, the data updated at 8 am on Saturday showed.

Registering a steady increase, the active cases stood at 32,68,710, accounting for 17.06 per cent of the total infections, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate further dropped to 81.84 per cent.

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Odisha declares journalists as frontline Covid warriors

BHUBANESWAR, MAY 2 (PTI): Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Sunday declared working journalists of the state as frontline Covid warriors. While approving a proposal to this effect, the chief minister said, journalists are doing a great service to the state by providing seamless

news feed and making people aware of coronavirus-related issues. "They are a great support for our war against COVID-19," a statement issued by the Chief Minister's Office said. The decision would benefit over 6,500 journalists. "As many as 6,944 working journalists of the

state have been covered under the Gopabandhu Sambadika Swasthya Bima Yojana. They are getting health insurance cover of Rs 2 lakh each," the statement said. Odisha has also announced an ex gratia of Rs 15 lakh for the next of kin of journalists who die of COVID-19 while performing their duty, it

said. After being declared as frontline workers by the state government, journalists will now get priority in the vaccination programme, sources said. As many as 11 newspareons have died of the infection in Odisha since the beginning of the pandemic, sources said.

Horticulturists reinforce farms against Fruit Fly infestation

SANJAY AGARWAL RANGPO, 02 MAY: Farmers engaged in horticulture have begun reinforcing their orchards against Fruit Fly infestation, something which had run amuck in their fields last year.

The Horticulture Department, it is informed, has begun awareness sessions and providing antimicrobial medicines to farms.

Last year, due to the outbreak of a worm called Fruit Fly, farmers here suffered huge losses, especially in their Orange farms. Corrective measures could not be adopted in time last year. Hopefully, the scenario will be different this time around.



Today, experts from Horticulture Department reached Budang-Kamarey Gram Panchayat Unit and offered training to farmers on how to contain Fruit Fly outbreak and gave tips on kit management and gardening.

Cops clean up West Sikkim bazaars

GYALSHING, 02 MAY [IPR]: A massive cleanliness drive was carried out by Sikkim Police in West District today under the supervision of Sr SP-West, Tashi Wongyal Bhutia.

The theme of the program was "First Sunday Of The Month Clean Your Town".

Today being the first Sunday of this month, the drive was carried out at all the bazaar areas under



seven Police Stations of the district. The drive was supported by the local

populace. The small initiative of the West District Police for such a noble cause was applauded and appreciated by the civil society. The drive at Kaluk bazar, Bermiok bazar, Hee bazar and Dentam bazar was led by Nakul Pradhan, ASP.

The program concluded successfully with the brief public awareness programme on COVID 19 at Kaluk bazaar premises

Rongyek Chongey Yumi Chogpa helps repair Naag Mandir at Chongey

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 01 MAY: Rongyek Chongey Yumi Chogpa, a social organization, has extended financial support for the reconstruction and repair of a Naag Mandir at Chongey. Members of the association also vol-

unteered free labour to the undertaking. The temple is located at Chongey Tar village. The problem of space has also been addressed and the association has assisted with repairs, painting and expansion of the temple.



Rotarians serve lunch to frontline workers at Paljor stadium

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 02 MAY: Rotary Club of Gangtok, led by its president Anil Gupta, reached lunch packets to all frontline workers deputed for vaccination duty at

Paljor Stadium here, a press release informs. During the distribution program, selfie points were also installed for people to click their photos after the vaccination.



UN catalogues 'chilling tide of abuse' against female journalists

EMMA GRAHAM-HARRISON NEW YORK, 02 MAY [THEGUARDIAN]: An epidemic of online violence against female journalists worldwide is undermining their reporting, spilling over into real-life attacks and harassment, and puts their health and professional prospects in jeopardy, the UN has warned.

The avalanche of misogynistic abuse and threats is not only damaging women working in media, it is also weaponised "to undercut public trust in critical journalism and facts in general", a report commissioned by the UN's cultural agency Unesco has found.

"The Chilling: Global Trends in Online Violence Against Women Journalists" draws on interviews with 901 journalists from 125 countries. Journalists from diverse backgrounds faced particularly intense attacks, as misogyny mixed with racism, homophobia, and religious bigotry and other forms of discrimination, the report found. "Online violence against women journalists is designed to belittle, humiliate, and shame; induce fear,

silence, and retreat; discredit them professionally, undermining accountability, journalism and trust in facts," the report found, adding that it also aimed to freeze women out of public debate.

"This amounts to an attack on democratic deliberation and media freedom... and it cannot afford to be normalised or tolerated as an inevitable aspect of online discourse."

In-depth case studies analyse more than 2.5 million posts on Facebook and Twitter directed at two prominent women journalists. The first is Maria Ressa who heads the news outlet Rappler in the Philippines, and was recently awarded the Unesco annual press freedom prize. Her reporting has made her a target of her country's judiciary and online hate campaigns, and at one point she was receiving 90 hate messages an hour on Facebook, the report found. The second is the award-winning Carole Cadwalladr who writes for the Observer and the Guardian in the UK. The report found more than

10,000 instances of obvious abuse on Twitter alone, nearly half laced with sexist and misogynistic language.

There was also a significant element of "anti-journalism" rhetoric in attacks on Cadwalladr, "reflecting the demonisation of the press... and the weaponisation of terms like 'fake news' to chill critical reporting".

Online threats and attacks are highly damaging to women's careers and health. One in 10 had sought medical or psychological help after being targeted, and one in three had started self-censoring.

A large portion reported a professional impact from the attacks, with 2% of those affected leaving journalism entirely. "There is nothing virtual about online violence. It has become the new frontline in journalism safety - and women journalists sit at the epicentre of risk," the report said.

"Networked misogyny and gaslighting intersect with racism, religious bigotry, homophobia and other forms of discrimination to threaten women journalists, severely and disproportionately.

It also detailed how online violence is increasingly spilling offline. Case studies included the vandalising of an academy run by Sri Lankan journalist Sharmila Seyid, and people coming to the home and workplace of April Ryan, White House correspondent for the Grio, specifically to abuse her.

The report analysed multiple forms of online violence, including threats of sexual and physical violence, harassing private messages, coordinated "dog-pile" attacks from large groups, hacking and "doxing" - publishing personal information online.

As a result of the exposure of personal details, a number of journalists had to move home or even country, with cases in the US, Sri Lanka, the UK and South Africa.

The report also covered less well known forms of attack, including misrepresentation through spoof accounts and manipulated or fake content, and flooding search results on sites like Google with false and hateful content to drown out professional journalistic work.

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Notice Inviting Tender for "Supply, Installation & Commissioning of Servers, Server Operating Systems & tablets and Maintenance for a period of 5 (Five) Years" for implementation of e-Cabinet Project.

Department of Information Technology, Government of Sikkim invites Tenders for "Supply, Installation & commissioning of Servers, Server Operating Systems & Tablets and Maintenance for a period of 5 (five) years" for the implementation of e-Cabinet Project. The last date of receipt of Tender is 17th May 2021. For further details please visit www.sikkim.gov.in.

Sd/-
 Additional Director
 Department of Information technology
 Government of Sikkim

R.O. No. 37/IPR/Pub./Classi./21-22 Date: . 26.04.2021

SIKKIM STATE TEACHER'S RECRUITMENT BOARD
 (Constituted Vide Notification No. 933/HRDD, 2015)
 Upper Syari, Gangtok, East Sikkim

Memo No. **40/SSTRB/Adm** Date: **April 27, 2021**

(ADDENDUM to Memo No. 38/SSTRB/ADM Dated 12/04/2021)

Reference Notice inviting applications from In-service eligible Post Graduate Teachers and Headmasters/Headmistresses of Secondary Schools serving in the Government Schools of Sikkim for filling up the posts of Principals, following addendum are issued:

01. At para 1 Sl. No. 1, No of posts mentioned as 30 may be read as **31**.
 02. Para 2 may be read as below:
 Candidates must have possessed the following minimum educational and professional qualifications:

Sl. No	For Principal	Qualifications		Teaching Experience	Age limit
		Academic	Professional		
1	From PGT	a) Post Graduate Degree in any subject from a recognized University	a) B Ed degree from an institute recognized by the NCTE	a) Eleven (11) ** years of uninterrupted regular service as a Post Graduate Teacher as on March 31, 2021	No age bar
2	From HM, Secondary School	b) Post Graduate Degree in any subject from recognized University	b) B Ed degree from an institute recognized by the NCTE	b) Five (05) ** years of regular service as Headmaster / Headmistress of Secondary School as on March 31, 2021	

Note: Service period on deputation to any Department shall not be counted as regular service for the post of Principal. ** Reduced as one-time relaxation under provision of Rule 6 of the Education Department, (Principals of Senior Secondary Schools and Headmasters of Secondary Schools) Recruitment Rules, 1992

03. At para 3, the last date for submission of forms online and offline both may be read as **May 13, 2021, till 4:30 pm**.
 04. At para 6 after (g), following are added:
 (i) Applicants are also required to upload the documents mentioned in the Memo No. 38/SSTRB/ADM Dated 12/04/2021 in the link given in the website latest by **May 13, 2021**.
 (ii) Applicants who have already submitted the online forms are also instructed to visit the website and upload the required documents online through the link provided till **May 13, 2021, 4:30 pm**.
 05. Kindly visit the website www.sikkimhrdd.org for application form and uploading the documents.
 06. Educational and professional qualifications and syllabus for the examination to the post of Principal shall remain the same as per the Memo No. 38/SSTRB/ADM Dated 12/04/2021.

(Secretary)
Sikkim State Teachers' Recruitment Board

Cultures Survive

...provided we don't stifle them

Because some things need reiteration from time to time, we return here to arguments that have been tabled often and worries that have been raised frequently because the deliberations continue remain open, and will for some more time.

Turn to any corner of the world and one comes across voices of protest or groans of concern from a culture under threat, a way of life nearing extinction, a lifestyle on the brink. While there are always external elements like the influence of globalisation and the pressure to homogenise which eat away at the edifice of cultural uniqueness, the biggest threat comes from those who refuse to let cultures breathe - those who view it as a relic which needs to be preserved in the purest form as imagined or decided by them. Unfortunately for such groups, cultures are living systems which need to be nurtured, not pickled. But 'preserving' is easier since nurturing would entail allowing a culture to grow and that would go against ill-informed beliefs that cultures are perfect on which any growth is a blemish. Such mindsets refuse to accept that culture is not something that can be pickled and preserved as a museum piece for posterity. Culture, because it is about a people, is vibrant, alive and contemporary. It is spontaneous, almost instinctive, and not something that is learnt; it is imbibed. Since culture forms a part of evolution, it is also subject to fresh interpretations, nuances and relevance.

Because culture is about people, it cannot survive on state patronage alone - that would be relegating it to the status of a museum display. Some years ago, members of the Museums Association of India conferred in Gangtok. The focus of that conference was "Intangible Heritage - Preservation & Portrayal." In layman's terms, they were speaking of ecomuseology, the science, or rather the attempt, to allow cultures to breathe and thrive unencumbered in their natural habitats. But even this comes with its pitfalls. In the Journal of Indian Museums released at the conference, the editorial spoke of the "very amateurish and vulgar commercialisation" of culture that one sees in the tourism sector of Rajasthan. What was true of Rajasthan is true for Sikkim as well. The message - preservation of cultures should not come at the cost of reducing vibrant lifestyles into caricatures. Preservation can happen only if the people to whom the culture belongs want to nurture it. For the same reason, if a people reject their Culture as ripe for extinction, no amount of preservation helps. Yet, a culture should not be dismissed even before one has understood it. It is important that the repository of culture is passed on to the next generation to nurture and craft as it feels right. And yes, people can discard a culture if they want to, but only after they have understood it and decided that it does not serve their purpose any more. What the current holders of culture can do is pass it on to the next generation in an unadulterated form as possible. What the younger generation, equipped with its better education, can do is research deeper into their roots. Then, even if the physical form of cultures dwindles away, at least the records will survive for future generations, if it feels so inclined, to revive.

What is required of the establishment is to provide the support which allows these aspirations to manifest.

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COVID in India: The Deep-Rooted Issues Behind the Current Crisis

VAGEESH JAIN

THECONVERSATION.COM

India finds itself in the throes of a humanitarian disaster. Until March 2021, case numbers were low in most parts of the country, leading many to think that the worst was over. Much like in Brazil though, jingoism, overconfidence and false reassurance from the political elite negated hard-won progress.

Mass gatherings have acted as state-sanctioned super-spreader events. More infectious variants and a sluggish uptake of vaccines are also fuelling the current surge. These are the triggers, but there are more deep-rooted issues at the heart of the current crisis.

India is an inherently high-risk country for an epidemic. The country holds 1.4 billion people, living in crowded areas with extensive community networks and limited facilities for sanitation, isolation and healthcare.

Most do not have the luxury of isolating at home for prolonged periods. Over 90% of workers are self-employed with no social safety net. The vast majority rely on daily earnings to put food on the table. Many predicted that because of all of this, the initial wave of COVID in 2020 would have a devastating impact.

The fact that it did not lead some to believe that the Indian population was innately less vulnerable to COVID. An old theory, the hygiene hypothesis, was dusted off in an attempt to explain the low number of cases. The idea is that poor hygiene trains people's immune defences, so when people are exposed to the coronavirus, their bodies are well-equipped to deal with it.

But this theory largely relied on population studies that failed to account for various factors involved in disease severity at an individual level. Even with higher quality research, correlation does not imply causation, especially with the threat of new variants on the horizon. And yet this theory settled comfortably into the national psyche of a traditionally patriotic country.

Complacency gave the coronavirus an opportunity to spread. Unlike in the first wave though, proportionally more cases have progressed into deaths this time around because the health system was overwhelmed. Supplies of oxygen, ventilators, health



workers and beds are critically low in hotspots like Delhi. But the fact that so many require medical care in the first place, is a symptom of longstanding structural deficiencies in the Indian health system.

Age is the single biggest risk factor for severe disease and death with COVID. India has an exceptionally young population, with only 6% aged 65 and over. Even with a slightly more deadly virus, one would expect most to recover at home without the need for hospital care. But a relatively unhealthy middle-aged population in part offsets this advantage.

Air pollution is closely associated with lung and heart disease. A whopping 17.8% of all deaths in India were due to pollution in 2019, and Delhi, currently flooded with COVID patients seeking oxygen, is the most polluted capital in the world.

Obesity is also a growing concern in India, with high rates in urban areas where COVID outbreaks have been most concentrated. The prevalence of diabetes in those aged 50-69 years is over 30%, much higher than in other Asian countries. One in five women of reproductive age has undiagnosed high blood pres-

sure.

All of these are significant risk factors for death from COVID. Having an unhealthy population also leads to excess deaths because non-COVID health services are suspended during such emergencies.

Despite these health needs, total health expenditure in India represents only 3.9% of GDP, well below the 5% minimum recommended to achieve universal health coverage. The nation remains starved of the resources needed for a robust, resilient and well-equipped health system.

What money is spent goes into an expensive hospital-based system predominantly delivered through the private sector. Most people do not have insurance and pay for care out of their own pockets. This can lead to unnecessary costs and delays in seeking care or getting tested, which is critical to controlling epidemics in the early stages.

NO INCENTIVE TO PREVENT DISEASE

Private institutions operating in this way rely on people becoming unwell to generate revenue. There is no incentive to prevent disease. A largely commercialised and profit-driven system centred on treating disease has skewed investment away from

essential public health functions. It is this market failure that is in part responsible for India's ailments, and many avoidable deaths during this epidemic.

Despite a recent expansion of primary care centres and a large health insurance scheme for the poor, infrastructure remains poorly aligned with need. As a result, capacities for infectious disease control like surveillance, testing, contact tracing, guidance and research were limited at the start of the pandemic. Efforts to prevent and control chronic diseases have also been traditionally neglected despite their escalating burden and early onset in the Indian population.

India is a high-risk setting for an epidemic, but the current situation was not inevitable. As more are infected, the pool of susceptible people will shrink, the virus will relent, and the country will rebuild. There will be a chance to reflect on the fundamental goals of the health system. For future epidemics, bolstering hospital capacity will be necessary but not sufficient. Death must be averted not just by treating disease, but by preventing it altogether.

[the writer is NIHR Academic Clinical Fellow in Public Health Medicine, UCL]

Sang Culture: How a Reluctant Russian Singer Became the Hero of Young Pessimists Across China

XIAONING LU

THECONVERSATION.COM

For Vladislav Ivanov (aka Lelush), being finally kicked out of Produce Camp 2021 was a dream come true. In February, Ivanov signed up for the Chinese boy-band survival show but instantly regretted it. Since then he has tried all means to get voted off so as not to breach his contract. However, his dejected look, half-hearted performance and direct pleas to let him go had the opposite effect. Not only did Ivanov make it into the final, but he has also become an icon of China's Sang culture (sang wenhua).

The Chinese character "sang" (伤) is extracted from compound words and idioms that suggest a lack of courage, vigour and liveliness. These are words such as "tui sang" (dispirited), "ju sang" (frustrated), "hui xin sang qi" (disheartened) and "chui tou sang qi" (dejected).

Such feelings, alongside self-deprecation and pessimism, have in the last few years come to be unabashedly celebrated in China in a distinct youth subculture known as known as Sang culture. Thanks to social media platforms such as Weibo (the Chinese version of Twitter) and WeChat, this subculture is maintained and spread through funny memes and cynical sayings that turn the state of dejection into a sought-after style.

Many Chinese media scholars trace the emergence of Sang to the viral "Ge You Slouch" meme in 2016. The meme began as a screenshot of Ge You, a leading film comedy actor, in his role as a dishevelled loafer slouching on a sofa in a 1990s' TV sitcom.

Some on Weibo reinterpreted Ge You's poor posture as the full acceptance of a state of dejection, and the catchphrase "I am a total wreck" was soon added to the image.

Soon after, a handful of cartoon characters, including the self-loathing cynical alcoholic Bo Jack and depressed Pepe the Frog, also reached iconic status, becoming the embodiment of Sang culture. Self-justifying, humorous expressions such as "life is a series of closing doors" and "lie down flat where life knocks you down" also became popular.

AN ANTIDOTE TO UNREALISTIC POSITIVITY
Chinese millennials' embrace of Sang culture is a quiet deviation from China's mainstream political ideology, as well as a blatant rejection of the modern tendency for over-dosed positivity and productivity.

Since Xi Jinping took office in 2012, the Chinese Communist Party has turned a grassroots catchphrase "positive energy" (zheng nengliang) into a political buzzword. In doing so it has instrumentalised "promoting positive energy" for political goals. According to the Chinese studies academic Francesca Triggs, the "positive energy" discourse stresses the social responsibility of individual citizens. It is also used to justify the state's control over the internet for the purpose of safeguarding the health of cyberspace, and to shape ideological consensus and public opinion.

Parallel to the "positive energy" ideology propagated by the party is the neoliberal fable of self-making. Chinese bookstores have entire sections devoted to celebrity entrepreneur and their "do-it-yourself success stories". Such positivity

has turned sour for millennials, who bear the brunt of China's rapid economic growth.

Fierce academic competition, soaring housing prices, the "996" work culture (from 9am to 9pm every day, six days a week), and the closing off of upward mobility are some of the harsh realities faced by young people. For them, embracing "Sang", or having a defeatist attitude towards life and self, is a strategy to cope with an uncertain future and a way to bond with their peers.

The spread of Sang culture in China has invited commodification. "Achieved-absolutely-nothing black tea", "Failed-to-lose-weight latte", and other Sang-themed products have achieved some popularity among millennials.

It is common for a subculture to lose its edge after being commodified in this way. But Ivanov's unfortunate celebrity in the boy band reality show demonstrates that Sang culture can exploit commercial interest to reinforce itself and consequently have a real-life impact. Ivanov's half-hearted performance on stage endeared young Chinese audiences because they knew that he was not performing but "being" himself. They saw this Russian man as "one of us".

Chinese audiences bonded emotionally with Ivanov. They had to put him through the ordeal of the entire season's competition, just as they have to toil day in and day out. This begs the question: had Ivanov known about Sang culture and that his dejection would win him fans, would he have decided to try harder?

[the writer is Reader in Chinese Culture and Literature, SOAS, University of London]

“No election is easy...”: Prashant Kishor on wins in Tamil Nadu, Bengal

New Delhi, 02 May [NDTV]: Poll strategist Prashant Kishor is the man of the moment, yet again, after scripting what is likely to be a dominant win for Mamata Banerjee in a Bengal election tipped as a close race with the BJP.



However, amid all the Bengal buzz there is one other victory for Mr Kishor and his I-PAC in the 2021 Assembly elections; one that has flown under the radar somewhat, but which is no less significant.

The DMK-Congress alliance is set to return to power in Tamil Nadu after a decade in the wilderness, and Mr Kishor is the strategist behind that campaign too.

Asked which of his two wins was more difficult, Mr Kishor laughed and said they were both equally challenging, and that the nature of the results indicated this.

“It (the Tamil Nadu election) wasn't easy at all... no election is easy. Tamil Nadu had its own challenges... the language, the culture, the caste system, the politics...” Mr Kishor told NDTV.

“Lot of people thought Tamil Nadu was a cakewalk... go and you will have two-thirds majority. Look at the numbers... that is not happening. But in Bengal people said it will be difficult

and you won't get big numbers.. see what is happening,” he said.

“It only looks easy to those who sit outside, but when you have a formidable opponent like the BJP, it is very difficult,” he added.

Trends show the DMK and its allies ahead in 140+ seats. The ruling AIADMK, with whom familiar foes BJP has allied, is ahead in 90-odd seats. The majority mark in the southern state is 118.

The southern state has traditionally ping-ponged between the DMK and the AIADMK, with national parties like the Congress and the BJP reduced to minor players.

This was also the first Assembly election after the deaths of the AIADMK's J Jayalithaa and the DMK's M Karunanidhi - former chief ministers and iconic figures in the state's political landscape.

A major challenge for Mr Kishor was in re-branding Mr Karunanidhi's son - current party boss MK Stalin, whose only previous election win was the 2019 Lok Sabha poll - as a potential chief minister.

The campaign also featured a thorny issue - working with the Congress.

Mr Kishor played a big role in helping the Congress win Punjab in 2017 (the party won 77 of 117 seats). That victory, however, was preceded by a falling out with the party in Uttar Pradesh; he walked out, reportedly over differences in strategy, in late 2016.

Relations between the two have been frosty since, with Mr Kishor turning down an offer from the party's Madhya Pradesh unit to run its campaign for the June 2020 bypolls.

14-day lockdown in Odisha from May 5



BHUBANESWAR, MAY 2 (PTI): The Odisha government on Sunday declared a 14-day lockdown in the state from May 5 to contain the spread of COVID-19, an official order said.

Barring weekends, essential commodities would be available on all other days during the two-week-long lockdown, the order issued by Chief Secretary S C Mohapatra said.

“There shall be lockdown throughout the state with effect from May 5, 2021 (Wednesday) till 5 am of May 19, 2021 (Wednesday),” the order stated.

People will be allowed to purchase essential items within 500 metre radius of their residences between 6 am and 12 pm, according to the official order.

During weekends, they will only be able to avail medical services. The order further

said that the lockdown and the weekend shutdown will not be applicable to any poll-related work, such as movement of personnel engaged in facilitating by-election to Pipili assembly constituency.

Polling in Pipili is scheduled to be held on May 16.

“The lockdown is primarily aimed at regulating movement of common people. No restriction has been imposed on goods carriers,” the order said.

Mizoram records 168 new COVID-19 cases, tally at 6,299

AIZAWL, MAY 2 (PTI): Mizoram on Sunday reported 168 new COVID-19 cases, which pushed the tally in the northeastern state to 6,299, an official said. Of the fresh cases, 99 were reported from Aizawl district, 19 from Lunglei, 18 from Lawngtlai, 16 from Serchhip, 10 from Kolasib, five from Siaha and one from Champhai.



Forty-five new patients have travel history, and 123 detected during contact tracing, the official said.

Thirteen policemen, three Border Security Force personnel and two Armed Reserve Police Force staffers are among new patients.

Twelve of the 13 state police personnel, who tested positive for the disease in the last 24

hours, have recently returned from West Bengal after completing election duties there, he said.

According to the official, 71 new patients have developed symptoms of COVID-19.

The death toll remained at 15 as no new fatality due to the infection was reported since Saturday, he said.

Around 140 policemen, who were entrusted with poll duties in Assam and West Bengal, have so far tested positive for the disease in Mizoram.

The state now has 1,299 active cases, and 4,985 people have recovered from the infection.

The state has conducted 3,08,842 sample tests for COVID-19, including 2,128 in the last 24 hours.

State immunisation officer Dr Lalzawmi said that 2,09,089 people have been inoculated with 46,018 of them having received both doses of the vaccine.

Puducherry records 1,360 new virus cases, 16 deaths



PUDUCHERRY, MAY 2 (PTI): The Union Territory of Puducherry registered 1,360 new cases of COVID-19 and 16 deaths during the last 24 hours ending 10 AM on Sunday.

With this, the overall tally of cases is 61,361 and the death toll 833, said the Department of Health and Family Welfare.

There were 10,620

active cases including 1,842 patients in hospitals and 8,778 in home isolation, the director of the department S Mohan Kumar said.

He said 987 patients were discharged during the 24 hours.

The 1,360 new cases were identified at the end of examination of 5,173 samples spread over Puducherry

(1,075), Karaikal and Yanam with 116 each and Mahe (53).

Of the 16 deaths, nine were men and remaining seven women - 15 hailed from Puducherry and one belonged to Yanam.

A total of 8.09 lakh samples have been examined so far, out of which 7.42 lakh turned out to be negative.

Two COVID-infected found dead at their homes in Kolkata

KOLKATA, MAY 1 (PTI): Two persons, both patients of COVID-19, were found dead at their residences here on Saturday, a police officer said.

One of them, an octogenarian, apparently hanged himself from the ceiling fan on the ground floor of his two-storey home in Purba Putiyari area here, the officer said.

According to the officer, Barindra Kumar Kar, a resident of Babupara in Purba Putiyari area, may have been under “severe



stress” as he was undergoing home isolation.

“The deceased was COVID-19 positive. We

are waiting for his post mortem report,” the officer said.

In the city's Fern Road area, the police recovered the body of a 49-year-old woman from her flat.

The woman, identified as Sandhya Mahato, had tested positive for COVID-19 recently.

“She stayed alone in the flat. Neighbours did not reach out to her over the past few days for fear of infection.

We broke open the door to find the woman lying dead in her home,” the officer added.

Cyclonic circulation likely to persist over East India during next 4-5 days: Weather Office

NEW DELHI, 02 MAY: A cyclonic circulation lies over northwest Madhya Pradesh and the trough is likely to persist over east India during the next 4-5 days, said the India Meteorological Department on Sunday.

“A cyclonic circulation lies over northwest Madhya Pradesh & a trough runs from this circulation to Manipur at lower levels. A trough in west-erlies roughly along long 90degE to the north of lat 25degN in mid levels. The trough is likely to persist over East India during next 4-5 days,” the IMD tweeted.

It further said, “Isolated heavy rainfall is also likely over Sub Himalayan West Bengal & Sikkim and Assam & Meghalaya during 2-5 May, over Gangetic from May 3 to 5 and over Odisha and Arunachal Pradesh on May 4, 2021.

It also predicted isolated heavy rainfall is also likely over Kerala and Mahe on May 4 to 6 and south interior Karnataka from 4 to 6 May and over coastal Karnataka on May 5, 2021.

It further said that no heatwave is likely over any part of the country during the next five days.

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Kai Havertz stars as Chelsea cement hold on fourth place

LONDON, 02 MAY [AFP]: Chelsea cemented their grip on fourth place in the Premier League as Kai Havertz struck twice to seal a 2-0 win over struggling Fulham on Saturday. Thomas Tuchel's side warmed up for Wednesday's Champions League semi-final second leg against Real Madrid with a ruthless display at Stamford Bridge. Havertz netted in each half to lift Chelsea six points clear of fifth-placed West Ham in the race to qualify for next season's Champions League via a top-four finish. West Ham have a game in hand at Burnley on Monday, but Chelsea are looking up not down after they closed the gap on third-placed Leicester to just two points with four games left.

"We were spot on. It was what we demanded from ourselves. We showed the pride we are capable of, to do it in between two big games," Tuchel said.

"We knew Fulham gives everyone a hard time. I'm beyond happy. There was no lack of concentration."

Havertz's seventh and eighth goals of an underwhelming first season at Chelsea were a welcome sign the German playmaker is finally emerging from his funk.

Since arriving from Bayer Leverkusen, Havertz has endured a bout of coronavirus and a host of diffident performances that raised doubts about his desire.

But the 21-year-old thrived in the false nine role against Fulham in an indication he could still have a part to play in Chelsea's bid for a memorable end to the season.

"For sure, this is what we want if someone gets his chance. He scored two decisive goals and he was involved along with Timo Werner," Tuchel said.

Just as significant as Havertz's improvement, Chelsea remained rock solid at the back and have kept 17 clean sheets in 23 games under Tuchel.

The German coach's only worry was the sight of the influential Mason Mount being treated for a back injury which he played through before being taken off in the closing stages.

"I hope really that Mason is not a big thing and hopefully he can fully recover for Real Madrid," Tuchel said.

Chelsea have been revitalised by Tuchel since he replaced the sacked Frank Lampard in January.

The former Paris Saint-Germain boss arrived with Chelsea languishing in ninth place, but he has led them back into the top four and earned an FA Cup final date with Leicester in May.

The icing on the cake for Tuchel would be reaching the Champions League final, with Chelsea hosting Real on Wednesday as they look to capitalise on the 1-1 first-leg draw in Madrid.

Third-bottom Fulham sit nine points from safety with four games remaining and look set for relegation to the Championship.

King to kingmaker: Liverpool can seal EPL title for Man City

LONDON, MAY 2 (AP): Liverpool will like nothing more than to officially hand over its title as English Premier League champion to Manchester City on Sunday.

City moved to the brink of reclaiming the league crown by beating Crystal Palace 2-0 on Saturday.

One more win will complete the job for Pep Guardiola's players unless Liverpool does it for them with a victory at second-placed Manchester United, the only team that can mathematically stop City.

Liverpool has long since given up its title after a dramatic implosion in the second half of the season. The Reds even look likely to fall short of qualifying for next season's Champions League considering they are seven points adrift of fourth-placed Chelsea, which beat Fulham 2-0 on Saturday.

To have any realistic chance of finishing in the top four, winning at Old Trafford is a must for Jurgen Klopp's team even if that would mean its reign as English champion ends after barely 10 months.

Of course, there are plenty of more chances for City to wrap up a third title in four years,



and a fifth in the last decade. Should Liverpool fail to beat United, City can become champion again with a home win over Chelsea next Saturday, one of four remaining games for Guardiola's team.

The champagne is very much on ice for City. Or, as Guardiola put it after the win at Palace: We can start to think about putting it in the fridge.

Sergio Aguero, City's all-time record scorer who is leaving the club at the end of the season, took advantage of a rare start in the team by scoring a typically clinical goal to set City on its way in the 57th minute at Selhurst Park.

His control was instant off Benjamin Men-

ner for the second goal in the 49th as Chelsea cemented fourth place and moved six points clear of fifth-placed West Ham, whose game in hand is against Burnley on Monday.

What a goal, what an action, what a man, Guardiola purred.

Ferran Torres added the second just 84 seconds later as City belatedly flexed its muscles after a slow start, mainly due to Guardiola rotating heavily to give his first-choice players a rest between matches against Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League semifinals. City leads 2-1 after the first leg in Paris, with the return match on Tuesday.

MAGICAL MOUNT
Chelsea was blessed with an extra two days between matches, com-

pared to City, in its Champions League semifinal against Real Madrid, allowing manager Thomas Tuchel to field a strong lineup against Fulham.

Mason Mount was one of the regulars who started and the England midfielder produced a piece of individual brilliance to set up the first of Kai Havertz's two goals at Stamford Bridge.

Mount brought down a long ball forward by Thiago Silva with deft control, then slipped a pass between two defenders with his next touch to give Havertz time and space to finish into the corner in the 10th minute.

Havertz traded passes with fellow Germany international Timo Wer-

ner for the second goal in the 49th as Chelsea cemented fourth place and moved six points clear of fifth-placed West Ham, whose game in hand is against Burnley on Monday.

BLOW FOR EVERTON
Everton looks to be out of contention for Champions League qualification after losing to Aston Villa 2-1 at home.

Anwar El Ghazi's 80th-minute winner left Everton nine points behind Chelsea with a game in hand. Fifth place, and a spot in the Europa League, is still up for grabs, though. West Ham fills that place and is three points clear of Everton.

Villa went ahead in the 13th at Goodison Park through Ollie Watkins, then Dominic Calvert-Lewin equalized six minutes later.

BRIGHTON ALMOST SAFE
Brighton can start planning for a fourth straight season in the top flight.

A 2-0 win at home against Leeds pushed Brighton 10 points clear of the relegation zone with four games remaining.

Pascal Gross, with a penalty, and Danny Welbeck were the scorers.

Agüero shows his enduring class while Guardiola finds new ways to win

PAUL DOYLE

LONDON, 02 MAY [THEGUARDIAN]: Several stories unfolded at once at Selhurst Park, even when it looked like nothing was afoot. Manchester City started sluggishly and did not manage a shot on target in the first half yet they emerged as comprehensive winners, a fact that sums up this season's title race.

That they could dispose of mid-table opponents with something close to a shadow side, assembled at an average cost of more than £42m per player, says plenty about the depth of City's squad and pockets. Their third title in four seasons will be confirmed if Liverpool help them by beating Manchester United on Sunday, and that, too, tells a tale.

It is tempting to smear Liverpool as the worst champions since Andy Ruiz Jr but that does not really stack up. A closer comparison may be with Pheidippides, the messenger of lore who completed his marathon errand and then, upon declaring "joy, we have won!", collapsed and expired. Let us not get into whether Jordan Pickford has an alibi for circa 490BC; the point is that the sheer exertion of beating City to the title last season after running them agonisingly close the previous year ultimately broke Jürgen Klopp's team.

Klopp may reflect that he should have dispatched his players to whatever holiday destinations were available as soon as they clinched the title last season rather than spend the final seven



matches vainly chasing the 100-point milestone.

The thing is, of course, that for a while it looked like City were the broken side. After eight matches of this campaign they straggled in 11th position. A month later City still looked strangely bereft. After they trudged to a 0-0 draw at Old Trafford in December, Pep Guardiola demanded an improvement for their next match but they panted to a 1-1 draw at home to West Brom. They used to tear teams asunder but their sharpness seemed to have faded, inspiration only flickered. Yet Guardiola had other ideas.

His great achievement this season is that he found new ways to stimulate his team and new ways to win. Last season eight teams made more lineup changes than the eventual champions, Liverpool, but this season no one has made as many as Guardiola. Being able to do that is a

luxury; knowing how to do it well takes acumen. That, and the inadequacies of others, is what enabled City to recover and find an irresistible stride.

The manager coaxed outstanding performances out of players who, for different reasons, had contributed only fitfully before, most obviously Ilkay Gündogan, João Cancelo and even John Stones. Riyad Mahrez has had his best campaign to date for the club and Phil Foden has been inducted expertly into the team, evolving from an infrequent starter - he began only one of 10 matches from late October to early January - to a key creative influence.

None of Gündogan, Foden, Stones or Mahrez played against Crystal Palace and nor did Kevin De Bruyne, Kyle Walker, Rúben Dias or Bernardo Silva. All will probably start Tuesday's Champions League semi-final second leg against Paris Saint-Germain, when

City will aim to dominate the French champions like they did in the second half of the first leg. During that match a French television microphone picked up Idrissa Gueye grumbling, as he made his way off the pitch after earning a red card borne of frustration, that: "They are toying with us like you wouldn't believe."

That has been a recurring sense this season: that City have been playing with opponents, manipulating them as they please, keeping them at arm's length while searching for ways to bring them to their knees. They have been more patient, more considered than ever, simultaneously trying to disorient opponents while working through their own issues.

At Palace this was evident again. Guardiola made eight changes to his team from the game against PSG and used a different formation,

with two strikers rather than none and three centre-backs rather than two.

At first City looked a little unsure of themselves going forward, with Raheem Sterling and even Sergio Agüero hesitant. The 21st minute brought the almost incomprehensible sight of Agüero trying to pick out a difficult pass to Sterling when he himself had a clear shot from eight yards.

But City never lost their heads. They found their groove in the second half. Soon Agüero showed his enduring class. In the 57th minute he ran on to a smart low cross from the left by Benjamin Mendy, who delivered several. He took a touch to tee himself up and then lashed the ball into the net before the goalkeeper understood what he was up to. Palace were still reeling when, 84 seconds later, Ferran Torres made the outcome seem inevitable.

Derek Chisora calls split decision 'unbelievable' after Joseph Parker wins

DONALD MCRAE

LONDON, 02 MAY [THEGUARDIAN]: After an unpredictable week of good humour and erratic behaviour, of eating breakfast together and then squabbling over who would walk first to the ring, Joseph Parker beat the old warrior Derek Chisora on a split decision in a close and bruising fight at the Manchester Arena late on Saturday night.

The decisive third scorecard, which was awarded to Parker by a margin of 115-113, was disputed by Chisora who complained it was "unbelievable". Parker agreed that Chisora deserves a rematch - especially after the start he endured.

Seven seconds into the heavyweight fight, Chisora floored Parker with an overhand right. It was a shock opening for the favoured fighter but he looked off balance as the blow to the back of his head landed with crude force. Chisora, seeking an early finish, poured forward but Parker was not badly hurt. The New Zealander managed to keep the marauding Chisora at bay to see out the rest of the round without further mishap.

But Chisora maintained his rough-house tempo. Whenever Parker tried to hold and smother him, Chisora punished him with rabbit punches and uppercuts. Parker, the more skilful fighter, had sporadic success but he struggled to stem the brawling style of Chisora. Clearly Parker hoped his 37-year-old opponent would begin to wither in the later rounds.

Parker looked more authoritative in round six as, trailing on the scorecards, he boxed effectively. He won the round and entered the second half of the bout with renewed hope. Parker hurt Chisora in the seventh and the older man looked tired as he returned to the corner. His breathing sounded ragged as momentum swung back towards Parker. But Chisora is a brave and determined old warrior and a see-sawing ninth round featured heavy punches from both men as the contest hung in the balance.

Parker shaded the 10th round to edge ahead but Chisora landed a right hand on the bell as a clubbing reminder that he was still in the fight. It was desperately tight but Parker won the decision to end a surreal week.

On Friday afternoon Chisora had threatened to walk away from the contest when it was decided, by the toss of a coin, that he would be required to climb through the

ropes first. It was a ludicrous situation and presumably an attempt by Chisora to disrupt Parker's preparations or to drum up interest in a contest that was struggling to generate many pay-per-view buys. In the end Chisora backed down on Saturday morning, apparently on the instruction of his mother, Viola, and he allowed Parker to follow him to the ring.

The fighters had appeared to be much more dignified when sharing a breakfast of poached eggs and avocado on toast on Thursday. But even then Chisora pulled a stunt as they were joined by an unknown figure dressed as Spider-man - in a crude dig at the fact Parker had pulled out of the bout 18 months ago after suffering a spider bite. Chisora insisted Parker was simply too scared to fight him.

Chisora had been told by Buddy McGirt, his American trainer, that his best hope of winning was "to make it a dog fight". He succeeded in that aim but, crucially, only on the scorecard of Howard Foster, who had Chisora 115-113 ahead.

Parker, 29, is eight years younger and has only lost two of his 31 fights. Chisora, in contrast, suffered his 11th defeat in 43 bouts and this narrow loss was bitterly disappointing after he had worked so hard in the buildup. He had invested in a new trainer, the esteemed McGirt, in an attempt to roll back the years and find fresh impetus after a long career crammed with bruising and damaging battles against often superior opponents such as Vitali Klitschko, Tyson Fury, Dillian Whyte and Oleksandr Usyk. He insisted at the end that he would return to the ring - probably to face Parker again.

In the best fight of the night, Ireland's Katie Taylor retained her undisputed world lightweight title after stemming the desire and resolve of her English rival Natasha Jonas. Taylor and Jonas had last fought each other in a memorable encounter in the quarter-finals of 2012 Olympic Games. Taylor prevailed then, and went on to win gold in London, and she has since established herself as the biggest name in women's boxing.

Taylor's unbeaten record as a pro stretches to 18-0 but she was tested by the admirable and resilient Jonas. The two women produced a thrilling fight which was even on the scorecards at the end of the eighth round. But Taylor shaded the last two rounds to win a compelling contest.

Glacial lakes threaten millions with flooding as planet heats up

NEELIMA VALLANGI

KATHMANDU, 02 MAY [THEGUARDIAN]: An increasing number of people are being threatened by flooding caused by glacial lakes bursting, scientists have warned.

As the planet warms and glaciers recede, melt-water accumulates and forms lakes, often as a result of ice or moraine acting as a dam. Since 1990, the volume, area and number of these glacial lakes has increased by 50% globally. When these lakes become too full there is a risk that they may breach or overflow, releasing huge volumes of water and causing catastrophic flooding.

Some lakes are more dangerous than others, and more likely to result in what are known as glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs). Stephan Harrison, a professor of climate and environmental change at Exeter University, said: "The ones we're concerned about are the very steep mountain valleys in the Andes and in the Himalayas, where you have glaciers retreating up into their steep valleys with lots of opportunity for bits of mountainside to fall off into lakes."

The correlation between rising temperatures and glacial lake outburst floods is complicated. While glacial lake formation and growth can be attributed to anthropogenic climate change, the triggers that can cause disastrous flooding are often down to non-climatic factors such as moraine dam geometry, earthquakes, ice or rock avalanches into



the lake or extreme rainfall.

Adam Emmer, a geographer at the University of Graz in Austria, said: "You need two conditions to generate a disaster – high magnitude GLOF, and exposed population as well as assets in its path. Population expansion along the potential GLOF paths and lack of building development regulations may be even more important driver of GLOF risk, especially in developing countries."

One of the parameters that makes a glacial lake potentially dangerous is the size of downstream population that could be exposed to flooding, and that number can range from few hundreds to hundreds of thousands, as in the case of Huaraz city located downstream of Lake Palcacocha in Peru. However, the many factors at play in an outburst flood make it impossible to estimate how many people might be at risk globally.

A 2016 study found there have been at least 1,348 recorded glacial lake outburst floods so far worldwide, of which

24% had some societal impact.

More than 12,000 deaths have been attributed to such floods. Central Asia was the most affected region, followed by South America, then the European Alps, Iceland, Scandinavia, north-west America and Greenland. The authors identify South America and central Asia as the regions most likely to experience large numbers of deaths, extreme damage to infrastructure, flooding of farmlands and the destruction of homes and roads.

Of the world's tropical glaciers, 70% are situated in Peruvian Andes, and they are melting rapidly, which has led to several glacial disasters over recent decades. The worst so far was the 1941 glacial lake outburst flood from Lake Palcacocha, which claimed at least 1,800 lives.

Subsequently, Peru started working on lake monitoring and implementation of hazard mitigation measures such as draining lakes, strengthening unstable moraine dams with concrete

structures and artificial spillways, and installing early warning systems as early as the 1950s.

"Peruvian Cordillera Blanca [part of the Andes mountain range] is, in fact, the world's pioneer region of GLOF mitigation works," said Emmer. Despite this, "the biggest challenge is yet to come – communicating the risk and risk reduction measures to local communities and making them trust and accept it," he added.

Nepal, which is also highly vulnerable to glacial floods, started taking interest in GLOFs after two serious floods in the 1980s. In 1999, Nepal drained a rapidly expanding lake called Tsho Rolpa near Mount Everest to lower the lake levels, a first in the region.

"GLOF has been recognised as a big challenge for Nepal. In the past, there also have been efforts made to reduce the risk from individual lakes and two lakes have already been intervened in [around] the Everest region," said Arun Shrestha, a climate

change specialist at the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development.

According to Shrestha, Nepal has documented records of up to 35 GLOF events, but the true number is probably higher. International communication and cooperation is also critical to preventing deadly floods; a study published last year identified 47 potentially dangerous glacial lakes that could affect Nepal if breached, but only 21 were in Nepal itself. Twenty-five were also identified in China and one in India.

"It's very important that Nepal talks with China and tries to address those issues," said Shrestha. "Those lakes cannot be ignored, but for that, a bilateral diplomatic effort is required. With climate change, and infrastructure and settlements changing quite rapidly, I think the risk is growing every day."

Despite the rapid recession of glaciers worldwide, the frequency of GLOFs has actually declined globally. Scientists attribute this trend to a lag between climate change and the occurrence of GLOFs.

Scientists predict an increase in GLOFs starting in the coming decades and extending well into the early 22nd century. Vulnerable countries with populations and infrastructure at risk of floods are now in a race against time to invest in disaster preparedness to avoid catastrophic outcomes in the event of an outburst flood.

South Asians in UK at greater risk in second Covid wave: Study

LONDON, 02 MAY [PTI]: Minority ethnic groups in general and South Asians, in particular, had a higher risk of testing positive for SARS-CoV-2 and of COVID-19 related hospitalisations, intensive care (ICU) admissions and deaths during the second wave of the pandemic in the UK compared to the first, according to a new observational study of 17 million people.

Led by the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), the study published in the medical journal *Lancet* on Friday accounted for a large number of explanatory variables such as household size, social factors and health conditions across all ethnic groups and at different stages of COVID-19, from testing to mortality.

"South Asian groups remained at higher risk for testing positive, with relative risks for hospitalisation, ICU admission, and death greater in magnitude in the second wave compared to the first wave," the study finds.

It found that compared with the first wave last year, the relative risk for testing positive, hospitalisation, ICU admission, and death were smaller in the pandemic second wave earlier this year for all minority ethnic communities compared to white people, with the exception of South Asian groups -- covering Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis.

"Despite the improvements seen in most minority ethnic groups in the second wave compared to the first, it's concerning to see that the disparity widened among South Asian groups," said Dr Rohini Mathur from LSHTM and the study's lead author.

"This highlights an urgent need to find effective prevention mea-

asures that fit with the needs of the UK's ethnically diverse population," she said.

After accounting for age and sex, social deprivation was the biggest potential explanatory factor for disparities in all minority ethnic groups except South Asian.

In South Asian groups, health factors such as BMI, blood pressure, underlying health conditions played the biggest role in explaining excess risks for all outcomes. Household size was an important explanatory factor for the disparity for COVID-19 mortality in South Asian groups only.

Dr Mathur said, "While multigenerational living may increase risk of exposure and transmission (from children or working age adults to older or vulnerable family members), such households and extended communities also offer valuable informal care networks and facilitate engagement with health and community services.

"In light of emerging evidence that minority ethnic groups are less likely to take up the COVID-19 vaccine, co-designing culturally competent and non-stigmatising engagement strategies with these communities is increasingly important."

On behalf of NHS England, the research team used the new secure OpenSAFELY data analytics platform to analyse partially anonymised electronic health data collected by general practitioners (GPs) covering 40 per cent of England.

These GP records were linked to other national coronavirus-related data sets for the first and second waves of the pandemic -- including testing, hospital data and mortality records. Ethnicity was self-re-

ported by participants in GP records and grouped into five census categories (white, South Asian, Black, other, mixed) and then a further 16 sub-groups.

"Minority ethnic groups in the UK are disproportionately affected by factors that also increase the risk for poor COVID-19 outcomes, such as living in deprived areas, working in frontline jobs, and having poorer access to health-care," notes Dr Mathur.

"Our study indicates that even after accounting for many of these factors, the risk for testing positive, hospitalisation, ICU admission and death was still higher in minority ethnic groups compared with white people in England."

"To improve COVID-19 outcomes, we urgently need to tackle the wider disadvantage and structural racism faced by these communities, as well as improving access to care and reducing transmission," she said.

The authors caution that there are some limitations to the study including an inability to capture all potential explanatory variables, including occupation, health-related behaviours, and experiences of racism or structural discrimination.

They call for improving the completeness of ethnicity recording in health data to further support the conduct of high-quality research into addressing health inequalities for COVID-19 and beyond.

The study, believed to be the largest of its type, was funded by the UK's Medical Research Council and conducted by scientists from a group of universities including LSHTM and the University of Oxford, along with the National Institute of Health Research.

Stand up to China and Putin? Foreign policy at heart of Germany vote

PHILIP OLTERRMANN

BERLIN, 02 MAY [THEGUARDIAN]: After German federal elections in September, Europe's largest economy is likely to be led either by a human rights champion sending steely messages to Russia and China, or a dovish politician who wants Vladimir Putin to be given more respect.

Surprisingly, the former hails from a Green party founded by peace activists during the cold war arms race, and the latter chairs a conservative party that traditionally sees itself as America's most loyal ally in German politics.

With a coalition between Annalena Baerbock's Greens and Armin Laschet's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) one of the likelier electoral outcomes in the autumn, a foreign policy clash could define Germany's early days in the post-Merkel era.

Under the outgoing chancellor, Germany has mostly trodden a middle path, speaking up about human rights violations and democratic ideals, while also heeding its ravenous industry's appetite for Chinese export markets and Russian energy supplies.

"With Joe Biden in the White House, a geopolitical strategy of having your cake and eating it is becoming harder to justify," said Ulrich Speck, a foreign policy analyst.

"In a paradigm of strategic competition between America and China, there's now pressure on Germany to position itself."

Baerbock, a 40-year-old with a background in international law, has been one of the Greens' most vocal advocates of tying German foreign policy more firmly to values rather than economic needs.

If she were to become chancellor, she has vowed to withdraw government support for the almost complete Nord Stream 2 pipeline between Germany and Russia, which critics say will boost Putin's geopolitical influence.

Echoing rhetoric from within the White House, she recently said that Germany's relationship with China should be marked by a "competition of systems: authoritarian powers versus liberal democracy".

"The clarity with which the Greens now talk about sanctions against Russia – including a stop of Nord Stream 2 – and position themselves on China is remarkable," said Ralf Fücks, a former Green politician who heads the Centre for Liberal Modernity thinktank.

Laschet's foreign policy instincts, by contrast, are harder to pin down. In Germany, the 60-year-old's jovial Rhineland persona has created

an image of a politician whose interests do not extend far beyond the borders of North-Rhine Westphalia, where he has been state premier since 2017.

In fact Laschet's interest in foreign policy precedes his career in politics: as editor of the Catholic newspaper *KirchenZeitung Aachen* the then 30-year-old wrote a weekly editorial on international affairs, dedicating his first column in July 1991 to why the European community was wrong to offer financial aid to Yugoslavia and discourage independence movements in Croatia and Slovenia.

He further fed his passion after being elected in 1999 to the European parliament, where he became rapporteur to the European neighbourhood policy, designed to tie eastern and southern states more closely to the EU.

Laschet was a politician looking for partners rather than enemies, former colleagues recall: a transatlanticist, a European, a friend of Israel. His attitudes to Russia were dovish, they say, but not unduly: the idea that the EU's eastward expansion needed to be balanced with respect for Russian interests was CDU orthodoxy at the time.

"Armin Laschet was never a maverick," said Charles Tannock, a for-

mer British Conservative MEP who shared a seat on the European parliament's foreign affairs committee with the Christian Democrat. "He was grounded, affable and prudent: a safe pair of hands. To call him pro-Putin would be an exaggeration."

Some contemporaries concede the CDU chancellor candidate's foreign policy instincts may have been formed in a period that lacked the geopolitical tensions of today, however.

"Armin arrived in Brussels the same year Putin became prime minister of Russia, when people were investing a lot of hope in this new leader," remembers one former colleague from his party bloc.

"He left the European parliament a year after the EU's eastern enlargement, and wasn't there to see how former eastern bloc states changed western European's perception of Putin's Russia. Maybe he's still a little bit stuck in the honeymoon years."

It would offer an explanation for some missteps that have made even party colleagues shake their heads in bewilderment. In 2014 he criticised America for "trying to weaken" Syrian president Bashar al-Assad in his fight against Isis, in a tweet reply to US secretary of state John Kerry.



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Pose star Janet Mock Gives Impassioned Speech About Salary, Infidelity and More

Janet Mock is speaking up and speaking out.

The executive producer and director of FX's hit drama, *Pose*, had a message to share at the season three premiere party in New York City on Thursday, April 29.

According to multiple outlets, including Page Six and The Daily Beast, Janet went off-script during her speech and detailed her salary on the television series, as well as admitting to cheating on partner and *Pose* star Angel Bismark Curiel.

"I'm hurting, y'all. I see injustice and it hurts me inside," the 38-year-old star shared at the event, per The Daily Beast.

While Janet praised fellow *Pose* stars—including, Hailie Sahar, Dominique Jackson, Angelica Ross and Mj Rodriguez—she criticized Hollywood and demanded more pay that's in line with other producers on the show. However, she didn't disclose who she was referring to as the series has several executive producers.

"Why am I making \$40,000 a motherf--king episode? Huh?" she questioned. "I am angry! This is truth. This is motherf--king truth."

Per Page Six, the New York Times bestselling author continued, "F--k Hollywood...Does this make you uncomfortable? It should. It should make you f--king shake in your motherf--king boots. This is speaking truth. This is what *Pose* is."

Janet also expressed disdain about the quality of storytelling from the male writers in the series' first two episodes and even addressed co-creator and executive producer Ryan Murphy, the outlet reported. Brad Falchuk and Steven Canals are also co-creators and executive producers of *Pose*. However, it's unclear if she also called them out directly as well.

Speaking to Murphy about adding more writers, Janet allegedly said, "you brought girls in to help you."

"Who brought the girls in?" she asked him, to which he replied. "I did. I wanted the girls to be there."

E! News has reached out to FX, as well as Ryan for comment. However, we have yet to receive a response.

Additionally, multiple outlets report Janet discussed her romance with actor Angel, telling him to "stand up...right now!"

"Let me tell you something about love," the transgender rights activist said. "Today, I was gonna let [Angel] go. I was gonna let you go, right, but what did I do? I f--ked someone on



the crew, right?"

"Angel, Angel," she went on. "I'm not losing you. You hear me? You are f--king important to me. I don't want to live in a house alone. I want you. You motherf--ker. Right there. That's who I want. I'm getting what's mine."

According to reports, Janet also apologized to writer and producer Our Lady J, saying, "I tried to shrink you to make myself bigger. Why couldn't I just love you?"

Before closing her speech, Janet expressed, "I f--ked up, y'all. I forgot who the f--k I was. They want me to come up here and pretend. I don't need Hollywood, honey. You know why? Cuz I'm f--king free."

At this time, Janet hasn't publicly commented on her speech earlier this week. Moreover, Angel and Ryan haven't publicly addressed Janet's speech either.

In response to Janet's apology, Our Lady J shared a message on Instagram, writing on Saturday, May 1, "I'm grateful for all of the work that went into allowing us to have a Covid-safe live premiere for *Pose* this week. Of course, I can't ignore the events of the evening, but going into details wouldn't be appropriate at this time. I appreciate and accept Janet's amends, and I respect the bravery of her acknowledging it in public."



COUPLE GOALS! The *Game of Thrones* stars and new parents, Kit Harington & Rose Leslie, hold hands while out shopping in New York City.

"She Will Remain an Inspiration Forever": Aamir Khan's Tribute to Chandro Tomar

Chandro Tomar, a sharpshooter from Uttar Pradesh popularly known as "shooter daadi," died on Friday. The 89-year-old shooter was infected by the coronavirus and was admitted to a hospital after she complained of breathing trouble.

Chandro Tomar and her sister-in-law Prakashi Tomar picked up guns in their 60s and participated in over 30 national championships.

The duo even appeared as guests on Aamir Khan's talk show *Satyamev Jayate*. Condoling her death, Aamir Khan's production company issued a statement on his behalf on their Instagram profile.

"We are deeply saddened to hear of the de-

mise of our beloved Shooter Daadi, Chandro Tomar. Our heartfelt condolences to everyone in her family. Daadi lit up the *Satyamev Jayate* stage with her wisdom, humor and amazing life journey. She chose to retire at the age most choose to retire. She will remain an inspiration forever, an in our hearts forever," read the statement.

Aamir Khan invited Chandro and Prakashi Tomar to his television show *Satyamev Jayate* in 2012, when the first season of his show aired on Star Plus. The actor used to address societal issues with his guests on the show.

Nicknamed "Shooter Dadi" and "Revolver Dadi" in Uttar Pradesh, Chandro

Tomar and Prakashi Tomar started practicing shooting in their 60s with a hope to change their granddaughters' lives. The duo quickly mastered the art of shooting and participated in many national and international shooting competitions, winning over 350 medals each in the course of their veteran professional lives as shooters.

On Friday, Prakashi Tomar announced the death of her sister-in-law in a tweet.

A film titled *Saand Ki Aankh*, based on the lives of Chandro and Prakashi Tomar, released in 2019. Directed by Tushar Hiranandani, it featured Taapsee Pannu and Bhumi Pednekar in the lead roles.

Akshay Kumar's upcoming film *Bell Bottom* will not release on OTT, the makers clarified in a statement on Saturday.

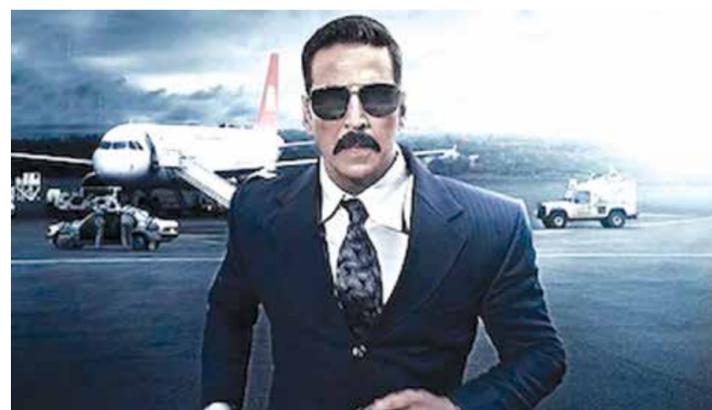
The makers have slammed the reports which claim that the movie will be re-released on OTT as theatres remained shut due to the coronavirus pandemic.

On Saturday, trade analyst Taran Adarsh shared the official statement of Vashu Bhagnani's Pooja Entertainment and tweeted, "Official statement...#BellBottom... producers issue clarification... #AkshayKumar #VaaniKapoor #HumayQureshi #LaraDutta." The statement read, "Pooja Entertainment would like to quash all speculation in some sections of the media regarding the release of our upcoming film *Bellbottom*..."

The statement added, "Any announcement regarding the impending release of the film will be made by Pooja Entertainment at the opportune time."

An excerpt from the statement read, "Nobody other than Pooja Entertainment has the mandate to make any statements with regards to any development with the film. We would like to request the media to support us as you always have and refrain from publishing any information that is not officially communicated by us. Stay safe and mask up. Our prayers with one and all."

A report of Pinkvilla published on May 1 claims that the makers of *Bell*



Bottom are in talks with Disney + Hotstar for its digital premiere. The report suggests that it is "unlikely for any film to arrive in cinema halls at least till July" as the Covid-19 cases are rising every day.

"The makers were all set for a theatrical release on May 28, but in current times, it's unlikely for any film to arrive in the cinema halls at least till the month of July. The cases are on the rise every day and is showing no signs of slowing down. After multiple rounds of internal discussions, *Bell Bottom* team has initiated conversation with the digital giant, Disney+ Hotstar for a digital premiere,"

a source close to the development told the website.

The makers of *Bell Bottom* announced the film in November 2019. Akshay Kumar flew to the UK for the shooting in August 2020 and completed it in two months amid the coronavirus pandemic.

In October last year, Akshay had shared the news on social media stating that he has wrapped up the shoot of *Bell Bottom*. Sharing the new poster of the film, he wrote, "Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much. Its teamwork and I am grateful to each and every member of the cast and crew. #BellBottomCompleted. Here's the poster."

ARIES:

There are periods of doing and periods of being, and they're both just as important, Aries. What you're experiencing right now is the latter. So, slow down. Come back to the present instead of oscillating between the past and the future. Trust that you will have some of the most profound revelations in moments of silence.

Taurus:

It's now or never, Taurus. If you don't break away at this point, you may be stuck in the given situation for a long time. So, take a stance—for yourself more than anything. You have what it takes to break the pattern. Remember, it's not going to be easy. There will be withdrawal symptoms. But, once you get past the initial phase, it's going to be an upward spiral.

GEMINI:

Everybody is entitled to their opinion, just like you're entitled to yours. Do you really want to go on an ego trip trying to prove your point, though? Word for the wise: take a step back from the drama. Retreat into that space of silence within yourself. You will soon be able to understand why your peace of mind is more important than winning any argument.

CANCER:

At any point of time, you have two options: to stay

where you are, or to choose the path of expansion. Growth is on the cards, Cancer, and it requires you to say yes to the unknown. Don't shy away from taking that first step. There are many, many adventures that await you on this journey. Remember, the mysterious forces have your back.

LEO:

Who says your dreams are too big or that what you're trying to achieve is way out of your reach? Beware of buying into the illusion created by your three dimensional reality. Now is not the time to repeat that old story. The cards are reminding you that there is a parallel reality available to you, where you can create the life you desire for yourself. Be mindful of the choices you make today and ensure they're in line with that big vision.

VIRGO:

This decision is yours and yours alone. Nobody on the outside can put themselves in your shoes and decide what needs to be done here. So, go into that space of silence. Tune into your inner Oracle. Trust what's coming through from the unseen realms without letting your logical mind get in the way. Those who practice divination may feel inspired to turn to their tools for guidance.

LIBRA:

We all have an idea of what love should look and feel

like. We all have an idea of what our ideal partner should be like. But what you're inviting into your reality is far better than all of your wildest dreams put together. So breathe out your inhibitions and breathe in the love. It's time to make space for magic, Libra. It's time to make space for what you truly deserve.

SCORPIO:

That the past year has been hard for those who have their own businesses is not news to you, Scorpio. But, that doesn't mean it's all downhill from here. There is a new and exciting opportunity on the cards for you this week, and it requires you to play your cards strategically. Word for the wise: do what it takes to make it yours.

SAGITTARIUS:

You've got love knocking on your door, Sagittarius, and it is not in any way being discreet. Open your heart and allow. Allow, allow, allow. Allow yourself to receive what has always been yours. Trust that connection is just as magical as you imagine it is. Yes, we know it's not always easy for you to let your vulnerable side show. Challenge yourself to embrace the virtue of openness nonetheless, and know that it will change your life forever.

CAPRICORN:

They call you when they need something, pretend to be close to you when it serves their fancy, and disappear as soon as you call upon them for help. This friendship had the word 'toxic' written all over it from the get-go. The cards are urging you to stop playing nice and recognise the relationships that are not serving you. It's time to protect your space fiercely and prioritise the most important person in your life—aaka you!

AQUARIUS:

Service is coming up as a big theme for you right now, and requires you to adopt selflessness as a virtue. That does not mean you have to change the course of your life or give up on what you have created. It simply means that it's time to expand your work in a way that includes and uplifts other people. Remember your soul's mission, Aquarius. You were sent here to inspire a major change in the collective.

PISCES:

Reality check, Pisces: you are only living a percentage of your potential. There is so much you're yet to explore within yourself. The cards are urging you to stop playing small, take a deep dive and own the gifts that were given to you at birth. For some of you, this may be a time of stepping into a bigger role. Let 'lead by example' become your mantra, wild one.