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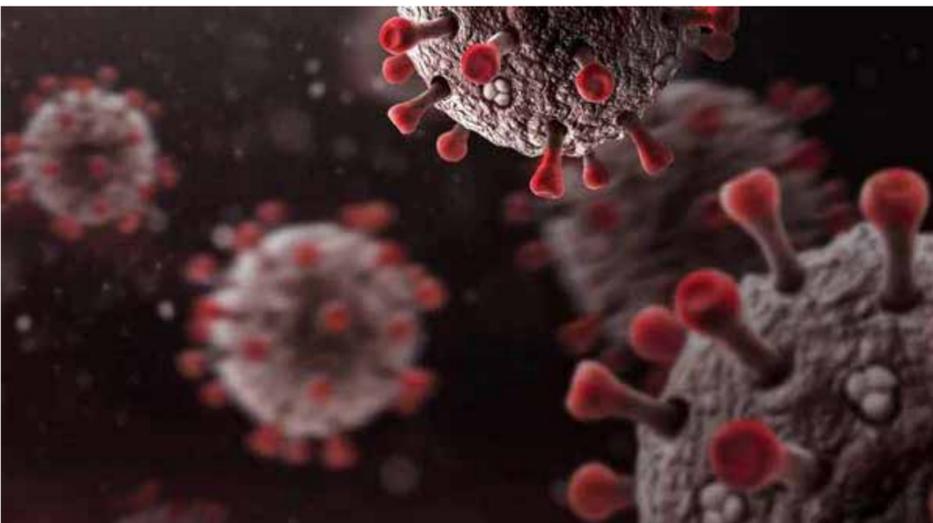
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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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With two more deaths, Sikkim's COVID toll climbs to 59



SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 13 OCT: COVID-related death toll reached 59 in Sikkim with two more persons succumbing to novel coronavirus on Tuesday. It has now been two weeks since Sikkim has recorded at least one

COVID death every day. There was no casualty on 29 September, and on 30th started a continuous series of days when lives were lost to Novel Coronavirus every day. The number of COVID-deaths was 37 on Sept 30 and now stands at 50.

A 68-year-old male from Arithang, Gangtok, and a 35-year-old man from Mamring in South District passed away today here at STNM Hospital. Both has co-morbid conditions which compromised their condition. Health Department

State IEC Officer, Sonam G Bhutia informed that the 68-year-old was admitted to the COVID ward of STNM Hospital on 02 October and passed away at around 3:15 AM Tuesday. The patient had reportedly tested positive for COVID-19 on 30 September

and had the co-morbid condition of diabetes and was diagnosed with pneumonia with acute respiratory distress syndrome while in hospital.

Meanwhile, the 35-year-old, who originally hails from Kolkata, and was working at a company in Mamring passed away at around 11:57 AM today at STNM hospital.

The patient was found positive for COVID-19 in rapid antigen testing on 07 October and admitted to the COVID ward of STNM Hospital the same day. He was moved to the ICU facility when his condition turned critical. He had the co-morbid condition of hypertension and was also diagnosed with acute respiratory distress syndrome.

His family has been informed in Kolkata and the cremation, as per the COVID protocol, is scheduled for Wednesday.

CM launches Reckitt Benckiser's life skills prog for adolescents



GANGTOK, 13 OCT (IPR): 'The Birds and Bees Talk', a unique life skills programme for adolescent children under the Reckitt Benckiser's flagship Dettol 'Banega Swasth India' in partnership with Primus partners was launched at Samman Bhawan in the presence of Chief Minister, Prem Singh Tamang today.

The launching programme was attended by Minister for Education Department, Kunga Nima Lepcha, Minister for Health and Family Welfare Department, Dr MK Sharma, Chief Secretary

(CS), SC Gupta, Additional Chief Secretary (ACS) Education Department, GP Upadhyay, Secretary to HCM, SD Dhakal, Secretary Education Department, Anil Raj Rai, Secretary Social Welfare Department, Tsewang Gyachho, Directors, Joint Directors of Education Department, heads of Educational Institutions, Ravi Bhatnagar, Director External Affairs and Partnerships, Reckitt Benckiser, Asia Middle East and Africa (AMESA) and team, and senior officials. During the programme, a Letter of

Intent (LoI) was also signed between the ACS Education Department, GP Upadhyay and Director External Affairs and Partnerships, Ravi Bhatnagar, Reckitt Benckiser, (AMESA).

The Chief Minister expressed his happiness on being associated with the flagship program 'Dettol Banega Swasth India' and added that the programme is one of its kind life skills training module for adolescent children. The programme will immensely benefit children which will increase

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New COVID-19 cases to below 60k daily, caseload rises to 71.76 lakh

NEW DELHI, OCT 13 (PTI): The number of new coronavirus infections reported daily across the country dropped below 60,000, even as the caseload surged to 71,75,880 and the total recoveries crossed 62 lakh, the Union Health Ministry data stated on Tuesday.

The total cases mounted to 71,75,880, with 55,342 infections being reported in a day, while death toll climbed to 1,09,856 as the virus claimed 706 lives in a span of 24 hours, the data updated at 8 am showed.

For the fifth day in a row, the active cases of COVID-19 remained below 9 lakh.

The country has been recording less than 75,000 new infections daily for the fifth consecutive day and fatalities below 1,000 for 10

straight days India registered a record single-day increase of 97,894 COVID-19 cases on September 17.

There are 8,38,729 active cases of coronavirus infection in the country which comprises 11.69 per cent of the total caseload, the data stated.

The COVID-19 case fatality rate was recorded at 1.53 per cent.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23 and 40 lakh on September 5. It went past 50 lakh on September 16, 60 lakh on September 28 and crossed 70 lakh on October 11.

According to ICMR, a cumulative total of 8,89,45,107 samples have been tested up to October 12 with 10,73,014 samples being tested on Monday.

Dzongri-Goechala trekking to open soon



PRITAM LAMA
GANGTOK, 13 OCT: Sikkim Tourism Development Corporation (STDC), Chairperson Lukendra Rasaily met Forest Department Secretary, YP Gurung on Monday to discuss the reopening of tourist destinations falling under

the Forest department. Mr Rasaily was accompanied by Ramesh Basnett from Travel Agents Association of Sikkim (TAAS), Ganesh Shivakoty, Sikkim United Tourism Organisation (SUTO) and secretary, SKM Tourism Wing, Lallhang Subba.

Mr Rasaily congratulated the Secretary, YP Gurung for his recent promotion as Secretary of Forest Department. They discussed the lifting of the Forest Department's order issued in April for the closure of Dzongri-Goechala

turn to pg 02

50 fresh COVID cases detected, 5 remain untraceable

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 13 OCT: Fifty fresh cases of novel coronavirus were reported in the last 24 hours in Sikkim, taking the State's tally of confirmed COVID-19 cases to 3,417.

In the meantime, the figure for discharged patients climbed to 2,933 with 19 patients released from isolation facilities on Monday. 346 patients are still in hospital or in isolation at Covid Care Centre or home. Five patients are currently admitted in the ICU facility of STNM Hospital.

Of the 141 samples screened via RT-PCR testing at the VRD Lab on Monday, 30 returned positive for COVID-19, while three samples tested positive in TrueNat

testing of 13 samples. Likewise, 17 persons were also found positive for COVID-19 in rapid antigen testing of 82 samples.

Out of the 50 new cases, 42 were reported from East District, six from South District and two from North Sikkim.

While giving the break-up of the new cases found in RT-PCR in the daily health bulletin on Tuesday, Health Department State IEC Officer, Sonam G Bhutia, informed that these include a patient at the Emergency Ward of STNM Hospital, three from Development Area, two from MG Marg, one from Samdur, one from near the helipad at Burtuk, one primary contact from the containment

zone in Arithang, two from Metro Point Tadong and one from above Ruchi Clinic in Gangtok.

He added that two persons from Burtuk, one from below old STNM Hospital in DPH area, one from Ranipool, one from Tibet Road Gangtok, one from Rai Gaon in Sichey, one from DPH, two from near Swasth gate, one from Church Road Gangtok, one from Tadong, one from a quarantine facility and one from Ranka were also tested COVID-19 positive in RT-PCR testing.

Likewise, one person from Yangyang in South District, one from Gyalshing in West District and one from Chujachen in East District

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Belur Math not to allow devotees during Puja

KOLKATA, OCT 13 (PTI): The Belur Math, global headquarters of Rama Krishna Math and Mission, has decided not to allow devotees during the Durga Puja for the first time in its history due to the pandemic situation and will live stream the proceedings instead.

A Belur Math spokesman told PTI on Tuesday "we request our lakhs of devotees, who visit the Belur Math temple compound and pandal on the four days every year, to sit at home and watch the rituals on YouTube from October 21 to 26 (the day of Pancharami to

Dashami). The devotees can watch the rituals by clicking on https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLqEnDmU-uEgTvk5nycRuRyH-HzHaoNkxI link on youtube, he said.

This is for the first time in the 119-year history of Durga Puja in Belur Math that pilgrims will not be allowed to witness the puja started by Swami Vivekananda in the same complex in 1901, the spokesman said.

The puja will be held inside the temple of Ramakrishna unlike in a marquee on an adjacent

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EPFO launches WhatsApp helpline service

NEW DELHI, OCT 13 (PTI): Retirement fund body EPFO has launched a WhatsApp helpline service for speedy redressal of grievances of its subscribers, the labour ministry said on Tuesday.

This facility is in addition to various other means of grievance redressal forums of EPFO which include EPFiGMS portal, CPGRAMS, social media platforms (Facebook & Twitter) and a dedicated 24x7 call centre.

"To further enhance ease of living experience for its members, Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has now launched a WhatsApp based helpline-cum-grievance redressal mechanism, under its series of Nirbadh initiatives aimed at ensuring seamless and un-interrupted service delivery to subscribers during

COVID-19 pandemic," the ministry said in a statement.

With WhatsApp emerging as a huge platform for communication in India, EPFO grabbed the extraordinary opportunity that the app provides to reach and communicate directly with all its stakeholders.

This initiative will allow the PF subscribers to interact directly with EPFO's regional offices at a personalised level adhering to one-to-one guidance principle.

WhatsApp helpline is now functional in all the 138 regional offices of EPFO.

Any stakeholder can simply file grievance or seek guidance on any queries relating to services provided by EPFO, by putting a WhatsApp message on the helpline number

of the concerned regional office where the PF account is maintained.

Dedicated WhatsApp helpline numbers of all regional offices are available at the homepage of EPFO's official website.

The helpline aims to make the subscribers self-reliant by taking digital initiatives of EPFO to the last mile, thereby reducing dependence on intermediaries.

To ensure expeditious resolution of the grievance and reply to the queries raised on WhatsApp, each regional office has been equipped with a dedicated team of experts.

The ease of raising query and grievance on WhatsApp will drastically reduce the need for the subscribers to physically visit EPFO's office. This in

turn will help maintain social distancing in EPFO's workplace during the pandemic.

The helpline has already gained immense popularity among stakeholders.

So far, EPFO has redressed more than 1,64,040 grievances and queries through WhatsApp.

This has led to decline in registration of grievances/queries on Facebook/Twitter by 30 per cent and on EPFiGMS (EPFO's online grievance resolution portal) by 16 per cent.

The helpline is an attempt to further strengthen the direct channel of communication between EPFO and its subscribers amid the pandemic, thereby enhancing EPFO's responsiveness and facilitating timely delivery of services to subscribers.

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Age may not contribute to COVID-19 infection risk: Study

NEW DELHI, OCT 13 (PTI): The age of a person may not decide how likely they are infected by SARS-CoV-2, which causes COVID-19, according to a study which found that development of symptoms, severity of the disease, and mortality are age-dependent.

It has been shown that elderly people disproportionately develop severe symptoms of COVID-19 and show higher mortality.

Scientists, including those from Hokkaido University, modelled available data from Japan, Spain and Italy to show that susceptibility to COVID-19 is independent of age, while occurrence of symptomatic COVID-19, severity and mortality is likely dependent on age.

According to the study, published in the journal Scientific Reports, causes of mortality in elderly individuals may be due to two factors. The first is how likely they are to be infected due to their advanced age, which is reflected in the number of cases, and the second is how likely they will be affected by a severe form of the disease due to their advanced age, which is reflected in the mortality rate.

These factors are not fully understood for COVID-19, the researchers said.

They chose to analyse data from Italy, Spain and Japan to determine any relationship between age, susceptibility and severity as these countries have well recorded, publicly available data.

As of May 2020, the mortality rate -- number of deaths per 100,000 -- was 382.3 for Italy, 507.2 for Spain and 13.2 for Japan, the researchers said.

However, despite the wide disparity in mortality rates, the age distribution of mortality -- the proportional number of deaths per age group -- was similar for these countries, they said. The researchers developed a mathematical model to calculate susceptibility in each age group under different conditions.

50 fresh COVID...

were also found positive for COVID-19 in RT-PCR testing.

Mr Bhutia informed that two children, aged 5 and 15 from Gangtok, whose tests had returned positive in RT-PCR, were not traceable on the phone numbers provided during testing and has urged them to immediately contact the health department.

He further informed that two elderly persons, a 70-year-old female and an 80-year-old man from Tadong, who were also found positive for COVID-19 in TrueNat test-

CM launches...

knowledge and awareness about healthy life skill practices, he added. The Chief Minister also directed the Heads of the Educational Institutions to sensitize the students on holistic curriculum and also on the COVID-19 pandemic. He added that one of the top most priorities of the State Government is Education and is the only way where empowerment of children can be achieved. The Chief Minister hoped that the programme will go a long way in developing key skills in the students.

The Minister Education Department, Kunga Nima Lepcha informed that the 'Birds and Bees Talk' is a unique and comprehen-

PIB Guwahati organises webinar on Covid-19 and Stress Management

GANGTOK, 13 OCT (PIB):

Stress Management among Youth with Constructive Behaviour and Attitude change essential to tackle Covid-19 issues, experts opined in a Webinar organised by Press Information Bureau, Guwahati on the topic here today. Experts from Medical fraternity, Government sector along with academicians deliberated and discussed about the potential way to tackle the Covid-19 situation from medical and policy perspective.

Padma Shri Naresh Chander Lal said that leading a disciplined life is the best way to tackle the issues related to Covid. He said that a healthy diet and hygiene are important aspects when it comes to preventing and protection from Covid issues. Shri Lal emphasised on child's health care and stress management. He said that children should be encouraged to do activities and hobbies they enjoy, so that depression, stress and loneliness could be tackled.

Vice Chancellor, Prof Dr KRS Sambasiva Rao, Mizoram University (A Central University), Aizawl said that a healthy and



constructive behaviour of students, particularly the child's emotional health is vital for cognitive development. He said that technology is changing the perception of learning and it has to be leveraged for development of children. Dr Rao said that Education is development of latent talent of students and in that endeavour, an Attitude change is essential to tackle Covid-19 issues and stress among the youth. He said that emotions and stress are likely to affect children with cognitive disabilities also. He further said that not every child or adult would react in the same way to the stress of COVID-19, but it is likely that everyone would respond in some way and parents have to see that

children do not digress from normal daily routine and lead a constructive life.

Mentioning about nutrition, Principal, Dr Lopamudra Datta, Guru Nanak Institute of Pharmaceutical Science and Technology, said that Stress Management is also about proper diet and healthy food. She said that Yoga and citrus fruits with Vitamin C with healthy diet is essential for growing children. Dr Datta further said that children should be encouraged to talk to their friends and parents so that anxiety and stress is reduced. Dr Datta said Quality family time and proper motivation to children plays a vital role when it comes to stress management among youth.

Assistant Professor,

Prof Arjun Das, Department of Mass Communication, Nagaland University, Lumami and Abdul Rahman Mallick, Advocate, Delhi High Court said that stress among youth could be tackled with patient listening and whereby, parents help their children to tell their problems.

Prof Anumita Mallick, Faculty, Department of Nutrition, Belda College, Paschim Medinipur said most of issues of youth are psychological and child apprehensions are because of lack of communication. Prof Mallick said that stress is leading youth, especially child to become anxious, emotionally demotivated and fear to talk to others, which affect their development and eventually their personality.

Archer Chekrovolu

Swuro, Arjuna Awardee, Kohima, Nagaland said that courage and disciplined life could help tackle most of the issues related to Covid. She urged the youth to do and utilise their time in activities they enjoy doing. She said that social distancing, washing with soap and protective gear are essential aspects for tackling Covid.

The Webinar was managed and coordinated by Joint Director (M&C), Samrat Bandyopadhyay, PIB, Guwahati. Pallav Chakravorty, Deputy Director, PIB welcomed the experts and the interactive Webinar has enthusiastic participation of students, academicians and medical fraternity of Assam and other places as they said that this information cum knowledge Webinar would help them in informed decision making and to be aware about prior precautions to address the Covid situation.

Along with students, eminent journalists and other government senior officials from Doordarshan Guwahati, Regional Outreach Bureau, Guwahati, All India Radio Guwahati were also present on the occasion.

SKM not serious about tribal status for left-out communities: Nawin Kiran

SAGAR CHETTRI GANGTOK, 13 OCT:

Sikkim Subject Committee vice-convenor, Nawin Kiran Pradhan today said that the State government should immediately start working on the issue of providing tribal status to eleven left-out communities of Sikkim. He added that this issue should not remain in the election manifesto of the SKM party but the government should immediately start working on it by providing an appropriate formula.

Addressing a press conference here this afternoon, Mr Pradhan stated that although Nepali speaking people are in minority in Assam but the Assam government has been working seriously for the community. He alleged that SKM has not taken a single step on this issue after forming the government.

"If SKM is not able to do so then it should step down from government and we will fulfill the demand of the people of Sikkim," he said.

Mr Pradhan alleged that around 1700 students of Sikkim have not

been able to get admission in any college in the State. He asked the government to take the matter seriously.

He also demanded that the state government immediately provide appointment letters to all Sanskrit teachers.

He mentioned that he was on a two-day tour of West Sikkim on 10 and 11 October.

"I have met and talked to the youth of Yuksom-Tashiding and Gyalshing-Bermiok and found that the youth are now aware and conscious about issues of the State. I have also noted down various issues of West District," he said.

He urged the government to work on issues of cardamom farmers, bad road connectivity and other issues of the district.

He informed that many contractors in the State want their bills to be cleared by the concerned departments as Dasain is approaching. He demanded that the government clear all bills of contractors and suppliers before the festival.

Jan Andolan Campaign in South Sikkim



NAMCHI, 13 OCT (IPR): Jan Andolan campaign on COVID-19 was observed at South District Information Office, today.

District Information Officer, Deepti Pradhan spoke briefly about the importance of this campaign. She also highlighted the main components of Jan Andolan which is to wear a face mask, wash hands frequently and follow social dis-

tancing rules in order to avoid the virus.

She also added that the virus is a curable one and that one and all should educate themselves regarding corona and follow the guidelines issued by the Sikkim State Government.

The staff also pledged to follow the rules of COVID-19 as per the instructions of this campaign. It may be mentioned

that Prime Minister, Narendra Modi recently launched a campaign on Jan Andolan for COVID-19 Appropriate Behaviour.

The Information and Public Relations Department will also be running the campaign in the State as per the guidelines prescribed by the Government of India pertaining to this campaign through all modes of communication.

ing, were also not traceable on the phone numbers provided to the authorities during testing.

Likewise, he added that a 22-year-old person from Rongneck was also found COVID-19 positive in TrueNat testing but could not be contacted.

He has urged all five to immediately contact the department.

Likewise, samples of a person from Tathangchen, one from Assam Lingzey, one from Jalipool, one from Pakyong, one from Chalamthang Bermiok, one from Ma-

riculum for 10-19 years old children which will provide accurate, fact based and age appropriate information that will help adolescents make informed choices.

He added that the curriculum is in alignment with the National Curriculum Framework and the recently announced New Education Policy 2020 as it follows the guiding principles of the Adolescence Education programme.

Earlier, Secretary Education Department, Anil Raj Rai presented the welcome address and vote of thanks was proposed by State Project Director (Samagra Siksha cum Director Elementary Education), Bhim Thatal.

Dzongri-Gochala...

trekking trail inside the Khangchendzonga National Park due to the pandemic. Mr Gurung assured that the order will be lifted soon.

Mr Rasaily said that due to the order, tourism activities in the Khangchendzonga National Park (KNP) and Khangchendzonga biosphere reserve cannot take off from Uttarey entry point, Yuksom entry point and Nambu entry point and Dzongu entry point in North Sikkim.

He also requested the Secretary to expedite the process of opening a separate office at Uttarey to issue permits to tourists for the convenience of all.

This demand had been earlier placed by area In charge of Maneybong-Dentam Constituency, Purna Hang Subba, informed secretary SKM Tourism Wing, Lallhang Subba.

The STDC Chairman also met Chief Conservator of Forest, Udai Gurung, who is also the Director of Eco-tourism Cell.

"We will be having further coordination meeting on this subject followed by meeting with stake holders of Sikkim," Mr Rasaily.

Belur Math not...

plot of the temple as being done for past 20 years, he said. The famous Kumari puja on the day of Asthami, where a girl of less than eight years of age is worshipped as Durga after being selected by monks, will also be held like in past years but only the child and her parents will be allowed after mandatory COVID-19 tests, he said.

The Belur Math authorities had in August barred entry of visitors to the math complex after opening it in mid-June with several COVID-19 cases reported among the monks and other staff.

Though they have all recovered, the authorities are wary of fresh contamination from the contagion as the pandemic still rages in the country, the spokesman said.

BEFORE THE LEARNED OATH COMMISSIONER, EAST SIKKIM AT GANGTOK

AFFADAVIT

I, Timothy William Basnett s/o Shri Indira Kumar Basnett aged about 43 years, by faith Christian, R/O Daragaon P.O. Tadong & P.S. Gangtok, East Sikkim do hereby solemnly declare that on oath as under:

1. That I am the father of the **Miss Glory Grace Basnett**.
2. That **Miss Glory Grace Basnett** is my natural daughter who is a minor aged about 8 years.
3. That actual and correct name of my daughter is "**Glory Grace Basnett**" and same has been recorded in the Aadhar Card bearing No. 674091419335.
4. That whereas in my daughter's Passport bearing No. H6647021 the name has been recorded as "**Miss Glory Grace Basnett**" issued by the office of the Regional Passport Office of Kolkata.
5. That this affidavit is made to state and declare that I am the father **Miss Glory Grace Basnett** and the person by names "**Glory Grace Basnett**" and "**Grace Basnett**" are the name of the one and same person i.e. my daughter.

Deponent

SummitTIMES CLASSIFIEDS

LAND FOR SALE

Two plots available - 30X40 sq ft and 50X30 sq ft Junkeri Dara, Samlik Marchak Price negotiable Contact : 6296366498, 9641878315, 9593262407

LAND FOR SALE

A land measuring an area for 50x32 1/2 at Roadside just below housing colony is for sale. It is just a one minute walking distance from Namchi bazaar taxi stand. Interested party may contact 959373387 and 9434406761

LAND FOR SALE

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

FOR RENT

Two and half storeyed (1st to 3rd floor) complex is available for rent in the heart of Ranipool Baazar (Opposite UCO Bank). The building area is 35'x60' appx. in each floor and is fit for offices, shopping complexes, guest houses, banks etc. Contact: 8509755220, 8348007688.

GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

General roadside land for sale measuring 30 by 45 square feet near smile land below apica garden. Contact no. 7797885351/9733538899.

Building for sale

A two storey building constructed on plot area 50x40 ft. Situated at Upper Phong near Phong SS, South Sikkim is on sale. Cost Rs 60 Lakhs (Negotiable). Interested may contact : 8145829309, 7864937800, 9749897695.

SHQ(GTK) ITB Police Force, Notice Inviting e-Tenders

On behalf of President of India, Dy. Inspector General, SHQ(GTK), ITBP, Gangtok, PD. Sander, Gangtok, East Sikkim invites e-procurement tenders under two bids system for the works-

- 1- Name of work :- Const. of Stable at BOP Naku (Height: 16010 Ft) of 13th Bn ITB Police, Lingtam, Distt. East Sikkim (Sikkim) (Site of work not motarable)
- 2- Estimated Cost Rs. 90,36,005/- , Earnest Money Rs. 1,80,720/- , Period of completion 36 (thirty six) Months.
- 3- NCT NO :- 1004/ITBP/SHQ(GTK)/Engr./11th, 13th, 15th, 18th Bn NIT/98A/2019-139-40

Bid submission End Date/Time :- 22.10.20/1600 Hrs.
Bid Opening Date/Time :- 13.10.20/1600 Hrs.

All details regarding the subject Tenders are available on our website www.itbp.gov.in and www.eprocure.gov.in/portal/. If any change/modification in the tender enquiry will be intimated through our websites only. Bidders are therefore requested to visit our websites regularly to keep themselves updated.

Sd/-
Dy. Inspector General, SHQ(GTK), ITBP

davp 19112/11/0106/2021

Inaugural meeting of Assembly Committees

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 13 OCT [IPR]:

The inaugural-cum-briefing meeting of all the Assembly Committees 2020-2021 constituted on 23 Mar, 2020, the commencing day of 2nd Budget session of 10th Sikkim Legislative Assembly was held at Banquet Hall of Sikkim Legislative Assembly Secretariat today, the 13 Oct, 2020. The meeting was chaired by Deputy Speaker also the Ex-Officio Chairman of the Library Committee, Sangay Lepcha.

The meeting was attended by following dignitaries:-

1. Chairman (Public Accounts Committee), Aditya Golay (Tamang).
2. Chairman (Estimate Committee), Tashi Thendup Bhutia.
3. Chairman (Govt Assurances Com-

mittee), Sonam Tshering Venchunga.

4. Chairman (House Committee), GT Dhungel.
5. Chairman (Privileges Committee), Bishnu Kumar Sharma.
6. Member (Public Accounts Committee), Yong Tshering Lepcha.
7. Member (Estimate Committee), Farwanti Tamang.
8. Member (Govt Assurances Committee), Sunita Gajmer.
9. Member (House Committee), Em Prasad Sharma.
10. Member (House Committee), Raj Kumari Thapa.
11. Member (Rules Committee), Pintso Namgyal Lepcha.

Speaker LB Das could not attend the

meeting due to unavoidable circumstances.

Secretary, Dr GP Dahal, Sikkim Legislative Assembly Secretariat while delivering his welcome address highlighted the powers, functions and responsibilities of various Committees.

Deputy Speaker, Sangay Lepcha also the Ex-Officio Chairman of the Library Committee while delivering his inaugural speech enlightened the working of the various Committees. He also recorded his best wishes and compliments to the newly elected Chairmen and Members of various Committees for their future endeavor and smooth functioning of the Committees as well.

The vote of thanks was proposed by Deputy Secretary I, Megraj Gurung (Committee) Sikkim Legislative Assembly Secretariat.

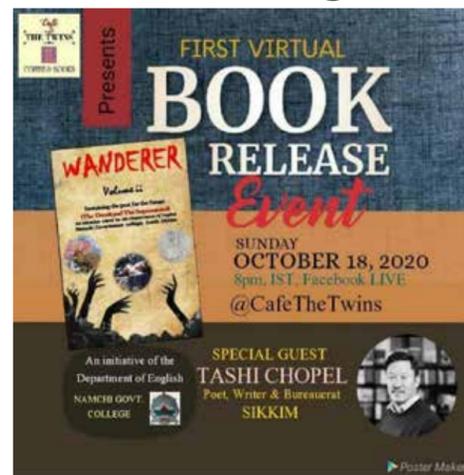
Namchi College to release 2nd edition of "Travelogues"

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 13 OCT:

The Department of English, Namchi Government College is releasing its second edition of Travelogues titled "Wanderer" through Cafe The Twins (A book cafe based in Siliguri) on 18 Oct, 2020. The release will be held live through its Facebook page from 8.00pm onwards, a press release informs.

Wanderer volume 1 is a collection of folktales which consists of short stories penned by students of the department of English. The first volume of the book was released on 31 Aug, 2019 by Chief Minister of Sikkim, Prem Singh Tamang. The second volume of



the book is also a collection of short stories which explores the supernatural and the occult beliefs. These stories collected orally have been retold by

the young writers with a vision of travelling into the past and preserving it. The electronic version of the book will be released on 18 Oct, 2020.

Assam govt will pay midday meal workers Rs 500: Minister

GUWAHATI, OCT 13 (PTI):

The Assam government will give Rs 500 to the midday meal workers in addition to their monthly salary and this will be effective from April one this year, Education Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Tuesday.

The amount will be deposited in the accounts of the workers before the Durga Puja and the state government will incur an expenditure of Rs 59.49 crore annually, the minister said at a press conference here.

The Centre pays Rs 1,000 to the midday meal workers and "to this the state government will add Rs 500", he said.

"The amount will be deposited before the Puja and the total amount to be disbursed from April to October will be Rs 34.20 crore", Sarma said.

The state has 1,18,998 midday meal workers.

Meanwhile, the state cabinet has also decided to provide regular pay-scale to 1,576 school teachers who were appointed between 1991 and 2001 and were getting salary intermittently since 2007 and had done their training also, the minister said.

The appointment of teachers will become effective from November one this year, he added.

The state government will also appoint 2,960 more teachers who were getting their salary but are not trained as tutors with a fixed salary, the minister said.

These two steps taken by the state government will resolve the problems of more than 4,000 teachers, Sarma added.

Program on farmer loans held in Poklok Kamrang



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 13 OCT:

As per the direction of Chief Minister, P.S. Tamang for distribution of farmer loans, a program on scrutiny of documents was organized today at DAC Conference Hall which was chaired by K.B. Rai, SKM In-charge Poklok-Kamrang, an official press release from BDO Poklok Kamrang informs.

It is pertinent to mention here that the loan mela was launched by

the Chief Minister on 29 Aug 2020 with the theme "Development through Credit", the release mentions.

The programme was attended by Dr. Mala Bajgai [Addl. Director, AH&VS], Chiran Rizal [SDM/HQ], Dikendra Bhujel [Jt. Director, Horticulture], Dr. Pratap Subba [Jt. Director, Agriculture], Tenzing Bhutia [BDO/Nandugaon], Babita Rai [BDO/Namchi], Dr. Nevidita Pradhan [VO/Turuk], Dr. Kunzang Pal-

mu Bhutia [VO/Nandugaon] and the borrowers from Poklok-Kamrang Assembly Constituency.

At the outset, Pratap Bhandari [Consultant] urged all the borrowers to utilize the loan amount judiciously as per the project report submitted by them. He also informed the house that at least Rs 2.5 crore covering about 150 borrowers shall be disbursed immediately through concerned banks after due document formalities.

ASSCWA pays tribute to frontline workers who died fighting COVID

AARON RAI

GANGTOK, 13 OCT:

All Sikkim Scheduled Caste Welfare Association organized a tribute programme today for three frontline COVID warriors who have lost their lives in the fight against COVID-19. The program was held at MG Marg in Gangtok.

The front line warriors who have lost their lives are Assistant Nursing Superintendent, Basanti Sundas, health worker, AB Biswakarma, and Dil Bahadur Rai from Sikkim Police.

The event was attended by Sikkim Legislative Assembly Speaker, LB Das, Forest Minister,



Karma Loday Bhutia and Health Minister, MK Sharma.

The family members of the deceased frontline warriors were honored on behalf of the All Sikkim Scheduled Caste Welfare Association.

Shekhar Sewa, presi-

dent of the organization, said that those who lost their lives should be given the title of martyr and their kin should be given a government job.

He also said that a statue should be made in the state of those who lost their lives in the battle against COVID-19.

Bust of Shivaji installed sans permission, removed

PUNE, OCT 13 (PTI):

Unidentified persons allegedly installed a bust of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj at a village in Maharashtra's Kolhapur district without permission from authorities, police said.

The police and local administration later removed it from the spot.

"Some unidentified persons installed the bust of the Maratha warrior king at one of the inter-sections of Bambawade village in Shahuwadi te-

hsil in the wee hours of Monday," assistant police inspector Bhalchandra Deshmukh said.

Members of some local outfits opposed removal of the bust, saying it should remain there, but the police counselled them, the official said.

"Since the bust was installed without permission, it was later removed from the spot with all respect," he said.

A case has been registered under relevant sections, the official said.



GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM
PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT
GANGTOK

Memo No: PHE/1942/SGT/19-2000/10 Dated: 08.10.2020

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Public Health Engineering Department, Government of Sikkim proposes to prepare DPR for water supply to West Pendam Constituency, East Sikkim. The preparation of DPR requires surveying and investigation to arrive at the pre-feasibility report.

Sealed offers are hereby invited by the undersigned on behalf of Governor of Sikkim from the registered firm with capacity for survey, investigation, design and preparation of DPR for the above cited work. The last date for submission of EOI is on 12.11.2020 upto 1600 hours. For further details, visit PHED website <http://www.sikkim-wspshed.gov.in/>.

Sd/-
Chief Engineer
Public Health Engineering Department
Government of Sikkim
Gangtok, East Sikkim- 737101
Email: p hegangoj@gmail.com & chetrajmishra4@yahoo.com

R.O. No. 101/IPR/Pub/Classi./20-21 Dated: 9.10.2020

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OM AH HUNG VAJRA GURU PADMA SIDDHI HUNG
ऊँ आ हूँ वज्र गुरु पद्म सिद्धि हूँ ।

14th VAJRA GURU DHONGDRUB
Announcement

Keeping in mind the Covid-19 Pandemic and in order to safeguard the health of all our diligent devotees, the Vajra Guru Dhongdrub will commence from 12th October to 26th October in the respective Gumpas and homes of the devotees instead of Samdruptse. We would request all the devotees to recite the Vajra Guru Mantra and forward the same to the following Whatapp/ Group chat/contact.
9733359856 / 9593775888 / 9614870717 / 96478773072
9832179232 / 9635430032

On the concluding day the 26th October 2020, there will be TSHOG offering at Samdruptse main Dhukhang and all are most welcome to join.

Maintenance of Social distancing and using mask and Hand Sanitizer will be mandatory.

Thanking you! Tashi Delek!

Vajra Guru Dhongdrub Organising Committee



What is Novel Coronavirus - nCoV?

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

Symptoms of nCoV

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

Precautions to Prevent nCoV

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

Treatment

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




If you seek help, you may call :
-Toll free no. 104
District surveillance Officer
EAST : 7029372100
WEST : 9593297809
NORTH : 9641957468
SOUTH : 7407691463
New STNM
AMS : 9434711402

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

Tackle Corruption with Accountability

Corruption should not be catergorised, it should be removed

The Second Administrative Reforms Commission had tabled its recommendations to the Central Government a decade ago. The report covered 15 topics, of which around eleven have been "considered" by a Group of Ministers thus far, and some, like the Right to Information and the idea of Lokpal, have already been implemented with varying degrees of success. There are several aspects that this document delved into, but it did direct special focus on ways and means to tackle corruption.

As mentioned, the Lokpal initiative was mooted in it, and although that recommendation obviously has an uphill journey to negotiate to be able to deliver with any real consequence, the recommendations had made it obvious that the administration required reforms because it has been too compromised by bureaucratic extortion. The realization was welcome, even if it had come late, because the planners are normally satisfied by the fact that India ranks lower than Pakistan in the list of most corrupt nations. The Panel on Ethics in Governance had suggested that corruption in the administration be split into two categories – coercive and collusive. The former kind covers the corruption that lay people are made to suffer on a daily basis – the need to grease palms to get even routine jobs like processing a request done. Collusive corruption, the Panel had defined as corruption that sees governance join hands with the briber and assist in the subversion of laws, dodging rules and avoiding dues which should accrue to the State exchequer. Interestingly enough, it was the latter kind of "corruption" that the Panel recommends for stricter action. Why, because it bleeds the State exchequer of its dues. But what about the internal hemorrhage that democratic principles bleed when the public is made to dance circles unless they pay up the public servants to do their jobs?

The irony cannot be missed. Penalize short-changing of revenue returns more strongly than the denial of rights! The revenue of course, some will defend, gets pumped back to the people in the form of populist measures. This can be countered with the argument that more populist measures mean even more powerful babus and even more invasive governance which will automatically lead to even more corruption. The nexus of the corrupt figures out loopholes in every new rule even ahead of its implementation since they are invariably drafting these in consultation with the sections they are in collusion with. The suggestion to approach corruption in two categories – coercive and collusive, is flawed because there cannot be kinds or grades of corruption; there is either corruption or honesty. At least in this case, there are blacks and whites. The categories and grades can be used for the purpose of understanding corruption, but not to deal with it.

The rot of corruption has set in too deep and if corruption is to be tackled, amputations are required. Since governments cannot be expected to prune their staff strength, the least they can do is prune powers and then make the powerful more accountable. There are too many desks that every request has to move through before it is decided for there to be accountability clearly defined. These can be reduced and the accountability established by setting a time limit on every process and requiring officials to provide specific explanations every time a deadline is missed or request denied. This gets everyone on record, and because it is the bureaucracy one is dealing with here, taking away anonymity from the process will ensure everyone becomes judicious. Even this experiment might fail, but given the nation's seventy years of continuing failure in containing corruption, it is worth giving a shot.

WRITE US:

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

When COVID-19 superspreaders are talking, where you sit in the room matters

SURESH DHANIYALA
theconversation.com

It doesn't take long for airborne coronavirus particles to make their way through a room. At first, only people sitting near an infected speaker are at high risk, but as the meeting or class goes on, the tiny aerosols can spread.

That doesn't mean everyone faces the same level of risk, however.

As an engineer, I have been conducting experiments tracking how aerosols move, including those in the size range that can carry viruses.

What I've found is important to understand as more people return to universities, offices and restaurants and more meetings move indoors as temperatures fall. It points to the highest-risk areas in rooms and why proper ventilation is crucial.

As we saw this past week with President Donald Trump and others in Washington, the coronavirus can spread quickly in close quarters if precautions aren't taken. University campuses have also been struggling with COVID-19. Cases among 18- to 22-year-olds more than doubled in the Midwest and Northeast after schools reopened in August.

As the case numbers rise, the risk to anyone who spends time in those rooms rises as well.

AN EXPERIMENT SHOWS WHO'S AT GREAT-EST RISK

Most current models describing the role of ventilation on the fate of airborne microbes in a room assume the air is well mixed, with the particle concentration uniform throughout. In a poorly ventilated room or small space, that is likely true. In those scenarios, the entire room is a high-risk region.

However, in larger spaces, such as classrooms, good ventilation reduces risk, but likely not uniformly. My research shows that how high the level of risk gets depends a lot on ventilation.

To understand how the coronavirus can spread, we injected aerosol particles similar in size to those from humans into a room and then monitored them with sensors. We used a 30-foot by 26-foot university classroom designed to accommodate 30 students that had a ventilation system that met the recommended standards.

When we released particles at the front of the classroom, they reached all the way to the back of the room within 10 to 15 minutes. However, because of active ventilation in the room, the concentrations at the back, about 20 feet from the source, were about one-tenth of the concentrations close to the source.

That suggests that with appropriate ventilation, the highest risk for getting COVID-19 could be limited to a small number of people near the infected speaker. As the time spent indoors with an infected speaker increases, however, risk extends to the entire room, even if ventilation is good.

CDC FINALLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE AEROSOL RISK

In the past, the transmission of respiratory diseases has focused on the role of larger particles that are generated when we sneeze and cough. These droplets fall quickly to the ground, and social distancing and mask wearing can largely prevent infection from them.

The bigger concern now is the role of tiny particles known as aerosols that are generated when we talk, sing or even just breathe. These particles, often smaller than 5 micrometers, can escape from cloth face masks and linger in air for up to about 12 hours. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention finally acknowledged that risk on Oct. 5 after Trump was hospitalized and several other people in or close to the administration tested positive for COVID-19.

While these smaller particles, on average, carry less virus than larger particles that people emit when they cough or sneeze, the high infectivity of SARS-CoV-2 combined with the high viral load before symptoms appear makes these particles important for airborne disease transmission.

HOW MUCH VENTILATION IS ENOUGH?

To minimize COVID-19 transmission indoors, the CDC's top recommendation is to eliminate the source of infection. Remote learning has effectively done this on many campuses. For face-to-face teaching, engineering measures such as ventilation, partition shields and filtration units can directly remove particles from the air.

Of all the engineering controls, ventilation is

probably the most effective tool to minimize infection spread.

Understanding how ventilation lowers your risks of getting COVID-19 starts with air exchange rates. An air exchange of one per hour means that the air supplied to the room over one hour equals the volume of air in the room. Air exchange rate ranges from less than one for homes to around 15-25 for hospital operating rooms.

For classrooms, the current regulations of primary air flow correspond to an air exchange of about six per hour. That means that every 10 minutes, the amount of air brought into the room equals that of the volume of the room.

How high the concentration gets depends in part on the number of people in the room, how much they emit and the air exchange rate. With social distancing reducing classroom populations by half and everyone wearing masks, the air in many indoor spaces is actually cleaner now than it was before the pandemic.

PARTS OF THE ROOM TO AVOID

It's important to remember that not all parts of a room are at equal risk.

The corners of the room will likely have a lower air exchange – so particles can linger there longer.

Being close to an air exit vent could mean that airborne particles from the rest of the room could wash over you. A study of ventilation airflow in a restaurant in China traced its role in several COVID-19 illnesses among the patrons there.

About 95% of particles in the room will be removed by a properly functioning ventilation system in 30 minutes, but an infected person in the room means those particles are also continuously emitted. The pace of particle removal can be accelerated by increasing the air exchange rate or adding other engineering controls such as filtration units. Opening windows will also often increase the effective air exchange rate.

As schools, restaurants, malls and other communal spaces start accommodating more people indoors, understanding the risks and following the CDC's recommendations can help minimize infection spread.

[The writer is Bayard D. Clarkson Distinguished Professor of Mechanical and Aeronautical Engineering, Clarkson University]

How to use ventilation to prevent the spread of coronavirus indoors

SHELLY MILLER
theconversation.com

The vast majority of SARS-CoV-2 transmission occurs indoors, most of it from the inhalation of airborne particles that contain the coronavirus. The best way to prevent the virus from spreading in a home or business would be to simply keep infected people away. But this is hard to do when an estimated 40% of cases are asymptomatic and asymptomatic people can still spread the coronavirus to others.

Masks do a decent job at keeping the virus from spreading into the environment, but if an infected person is inside a building, inevitably some virus will escape into the air.

I am a professor of mechanical engineering at the University of Colorado Boulder. Much of my work has focused on how to control the transmission of airborne infectious diseases indoors, and I've been asked by my own university, my kids' schools and even the Alaska State Legislature for advice on how to make indoor spaces safe during this pandemic.

Once the virus escapes into the air inside a building, you have two options: bring in fresh air from outside or remove the virus from the air inside the building.

IT'S ALL ABOUT FRESH, OUTSIDE AIR

The safest indoor space is one that constantly has lots of outside air replacing the stale air inside.

In commercial buildings, outside air is usually pumped in through heating, ventilating and air-conditioning (HVAC) systems. In homes, outside air gets in through open windows and doors, in addition to seeping in through various nooks and crannies.

Simply put, the more fresh, outside air inside a building, the better. Bringing in this air dilutes any contaminant in a building, whether a virus or a something else, and reduces the exposure of anyone inside. Environmental engineers like me quantify how much outside air is getting into a building using a measure called the air exchange rate. This number quantifies the number of times the air inside a building gets replaced with air from outside in an hour.

While the exact rate depends on

the number of people and size of the room, most experts consider roughly six air changes an hour to be good for a 10-foot-by-10-foot room with three to four people in it. In a pandemic this should be higher, with one study from 2016 suggesting that an exchange rate of nine times per hour reduced

A well ventilated room will have around 800 ppm of CO₂. Any higher than that and it is a sign the room might need more ventilation.

Last year, researchers in Taiwan reported on the effect of ventilation on a tuberculosis outbreak at Taipei University. Many of the rooms in the



the spread of SARS, MERS and H1N1 in a Hong Kong hospital.

Many buildings in the U.S., especially schools, do not meet recommended ventilation rates. Thankfully, it can be pretty easy to get more outside air into a building. Keeping windows and doors open is a good start. Putting a box fan in a window blowing out can greatly increase air exchange too. In buildings that don't have operable windows, you can change the mechanical ventilation system to increase how much air it is pumping. But in any room, the more people inside, the faster the air should be replaced.

USING CO₂ TO MEASURE AIR CIRCULATION

So how do you know if the room you're in has enough air exchange? It's actually a pretty hard number to calculate. But there's an easy-to-measure proxy that can help. Every time you exhale, you release CO₂ into the air. Since the coronavirus is most often spread by breathing, coughing or talking, you can use CO₂ levels to see if the room is filling up with potentially infectious exhalations. The CO₂ level lets you estimate if enough fresh outside air is getting in.

Outdoors, CO₂ levels are just above 400 parts per million (ppm).

school were underventilated and had CO₂ levels above 3,000 ppm. When engineers improved air circulation and got CO₂ levels under 600 ppm, the outbreak completely stopped. According to the research, the increase in ventilation was responsible for 97% of the decrease in transmission.

Since the coronavirus is spread through the air, higher CO₂ levels in a room likely mean there is a higher chance of transmission if an infected person is inside. Based on the study above, I recommend trying to keep the CO₂ levels below 600 ppm. You can buy good CO₂ meters for around \$100 online; just make sure that they are accurate to within 50 ppm.

AIR CLEANERS

If you are in a room that can't get enough outside air for dilution, consider an air cleaner, also commonly called air purifiers. These machines remove particles from the air, usually using a filter made of tightly woven fibers. They can capture particles containing bacteria and viruses and can help reduce disease transmission.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency says that air cleaners can do this for the coronavirus, but not all air cleaners are equal. Before you go out and buy one, there are few things to keep in mind.

The first thing to consider is how effective an air cleaner's filter is. Your best option is a cleaner that uses a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter, as these remove more than 99.97% of all particle sizes.

The second thing to consider is how powerful the cleaner is. The bigger the room – or the more people in it – the more air needs to be cleaned. I worked with some colleagues at Harvard to put together a tool to help teachers and schools determine how powerful of an air cleaner you need for different classroom sizes.

The last thing to consider is the validity of the claims made by the company producing the air cleaner.

The Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers certifies air cleaners, so the AHAM Verifide seal is a good place to start. Additionally, the California Air Resources Board has a list of air cleaners that are certified as safe and effective, though not all of them use HEPA filters.

KEEP AIR FRESH OR GET OUTSIDE

Both the World Health Organization and U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention say that poor ventilation increases the risk of transmitting the coronavirus.

If you are in control of your indoor environment, make sure you are getting enough fresh air from outside circulating into the building. A CO₂ monitor can help give you a clue if there is enough ventilation, and if CO₂ levels start going up, open some windows and take a break outside. If you can't get enough fresh air into a room, an air cleaner might be a good idea. If you do get an air cleaner, be aware that they don't remove CO₂, so even though the air might be safer, CO₂ levels could still be high in the room.

If you walk into a building and it feels hot, stuffy and crowded, chances are that there is not enough ventilation. Turn around and leave.

By paying attention to air circulation and filtration, improving them where you can and staying away from places where you can't, you can add another powerful tool to your anti-coronavirus toolkit.

[The writer is Professor of Mechanical Engineering, University of Colorado Boulder]

Assam court holds 25 guilty in lynching of 73-yr-old tea garden doctor last year

GUWAHATI, OCT 12 (PTI): A court in Assam on Monday pronounced 25 people guilty in a case, where a mob had lynched a senior doctor around 13 months ago.

District and sessions judge Robin Phukan held 25 of the accused guilty for the murder of Dr Deben Dutta (73). The victim was the resident doctor of Teok Tea Estate (TE) hospital in Upper Assam's Jorhat district.

The court acquitted six accused in the case, while another accused had died in judicial custody.

The quantum of punishment for the 25 accused will be announced next Monday (October 19).

An irate mob, mostly comprising tea garden workers, had assaulted Dr Dutta on August 31, 2019, holding him responsible for the death of a patient in Teok TE. He was rushed to the Jorhat Medical College, where he was declared brought dead. The pictures of the assault, which soon went viral on social media,



created a sense of terror among doctors posted in tea gardens across Assam. At least seven doctors, who were working in tea gardens, had resigned within a week of Dr Dutta's murder.

Police had arrested 32 people, including three brothers of the deceased patient, following the attack under various sections of Indian Penal

Code (IPC) and the Assam Medicare Service Persons & Medicare Service Institutions (Prevention of Violence and Damage to Property) Act, 2011.

The incident was condemned by Indian Medical Association (IMA) and doctors in Assam also resorted to a one-day token strike in protest. Assam chief minister Sarbanan-

da Sonowal had also ordered an inquiry into the incident.

Investigation into the case was concluded within a record time of 21 days and a voluminous 602-page charge sheet was submitted on September 21, 2019.

Assam Police said this is the first case in the country, where witness identity concealment ap-

proach was used.

A total of 60 people, including tea garden employees, journalists, the slain doctor's family members, police personnel and forensic experts were named as witnesses.

Witness identity concealment approach was applied to seven of the 56, who had deposited during the trial of the case.

Govt to give Rs 12,000 cr interest-free 50-year loan to states for capital projects



New Delhi, Oct 12 (PTI): Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday announced a Rs 12,000 crore interest-free 50-year loan to states for spending on capital projects in a bid to boost economy.

Addressing a press conference, she said, out of the Rs 12,000 crore, Rs 1,600 crore will be given to north-eastern states and Rs 900 crore will be for Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh.

She said Rs 7,500 crore will be for the remaining states. Rs 2,000 crore will be given to states that fulfill pre-stated reforms.

The loan will have to be spent entirely on new or ongoing capital projects,

she said adding that states can settle bills of contractors and suppliers but all the amount has to be paid before March 31, 2021.

The loan is over and above borrowing ceilings of the states and the repayment will be one bullet payment after 50 years, she added.

The Finance Minister also announced additional capital expenditure of Rs 25,000 crore by the central government.

This will be in addition to Rs 4.13 lakh crore budgeted, she said, adding that the additional money will be for spending on roads, defence infrastructure, water supply and urban development.

217 fresh COVID-19 cases, one more fatality in Tripura

AGARTALA, OCT 13 (PTI): Tripura's COVID-19 tally mounted to 28,678 on Tuesday as 217 more people tested positive for the disease, a health department official said.

The death toll rose to 314 after a person succumbed to the infection, he said.

West Tripura district, of which state capital Agartala is a part, has accounted for 170 of the 314 COVID-19 fatalities, the official said.

On Monday, 220 people were discharged from G B Pant Hospital, the main referral facility in the state for COVID-19 patients, taking the total number of recoveries to 24,600, he said.

Tripura currently has 3,741 active coronavirus cases, while 23 patients have migrated to other states. The northeastern state has conducted 41,898 sample tests for COVID-19 so far, he added.

Body of Meghalaya man buried alive exhumed, 8 arrested

SHILLONG, OCT 13 (PTI): The body of the 90-year-old man, who was buried alive allegedly by his relatives in Meghalaya's West Khasi Hills district over the suspicion that he practised witchcraft, was exhumed and sent for post-mortem, police said on Tuesday.

Eight people have so far been arrested in connection with the killing of Moris Marngar, they said.

The body with hands and legs tied and face covered was exhumed on Monday from a 5-feet-deep pit in the Mawliehbah Mawnar village, they added.

"Eight persons have been arrested in connection with the incident that took place on the night of October 7," Superintendent of Police Herbert Lyngdoh said.

Marngar's children had reported to the vil-

lage authorities about him going missing, a day after he was forcibly taken away from his house at Mawliehbah by his relatives, a community leader told PTI.

The matter was reported to the police and the three main accused -- Denial, Jayles and Differwell, all of whom are his nephews, were arrested on Sunday, he said.

Five others were arrested on Monday, the officer said, adding that attempts are on to apprehend the other accused in the case.

Marngar's body was covered with stones and a cross engraved with the word "RIP", Lyngdoh said.

The victim's hands were tied to his back, and his legs were covered in a sack and tied with a rope, an official, who was with the exhumation team, said. His

other nephews, Yesparius and Barslomius, told reporters that their uncle had cast evil spells on one of his nieces and other family members.

The niece was sick for the last three months, and her family blamed Marngar for it. Yesparius claimed that the girl recovered following Marngar's death.

The Mawliehbah Mawnar village council condemned the gruesome murder.

The village mourns the death of an elder like Moris, said BS Nongphud, an executive member of the council.

He urged the people not to take the law into their hands.

Deputy Superintendent of Police B Kharjana said the preliminary investigation has revealed that 18 members of the extended family are involved in the killing.

Govt to give cash vouchers to staff in lieu of LTC this year: FM



NEW DELHI, OCT 12 (PTI): In a bid to stimulate demand in the economy, the government on Monday announced giving out cash vouchers to central government employees this year in lieu of leave travel concession (LTC) fare which could be spent only on buying non-food GST-rated items.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the employees could buy items that attract

12 per cent or more goods and services tax (GST). These purchases will have to be made in digital mode from GST-registered outlets.

Every four years, central government employees get LTC to any destination to their choice plus one to their hometown.

Since travel is difficult to undertake during the pandemic, the government will pay the entitled fare as cash vouchers

which have to be spent by March 31, 2021, she said.

Central government payout on cash-in-lieu-of-LTC will be Rs 5,675 crore, and another Rs 1,900 crore will be payable by central PSUs and public sector banks, Sitharaman said.

The demand infusion because of this would be Rs 19,000 crore, and another Rs 9,000 crore if half of the states follow this guideline, she added.

Vedanta plummets over 24 pc after delisting fails

NEW DELHI, OCT 12 (PTI): Shares of Vedanta on Monday plummeted over 24 per cent after the company's delisting went from almost-a-success to failure on account of a large quantity of unconfirmed orders.

The stock tanked 23 per cent to Rs 94 on BSE. On NSE, it tumbled 24.37 per cent to Rs 92.15.

In a regulatory filing, Vedanta said its buyback offer is deemed to have failed as per the terms of the delisting regulations after promoter Vedanta Resources did not receive the required number of shares to delist

the firm. A large number of unconfirmed bids and some technical glitches in the tender process are likely to have contributed to the failure.

The BSE on October 9 evening showed 137.74 crore shares, out of a total 169.73 crore shares held by the public, to have been offered for sale to promoters, larger than the threshold of 134.12 crore.

Some bids, however, were pending confirmation from custodians.

Reconciliation of data led to the number of shares offered for sale being trimmed to

125.47 crore. This, Vedanta said, was "less than the minimum number of offshore shares required to be accepted by the acquirers in order for the delisting offer to be successful."

"Accordingly, the acquirers will not acquire any equity shares tendered by the public shareholders in the delisting offer and the equity shares of the company will continue to remain listed on the stock exchanges," it said.

All equity shares tendered in the delisting offer shall be returned, it added.

With concert halls shut, NY Philharmonic takes to sidewalk

NEW YORK (AP): With performance halls shut because of the coronavirus pandemic, the best concert venue a violinist could hope for one recent October Friday was a sidewalk in the Bronx.

Fiona Simon tuned her instrument as she prepared for one of her only public performances with the New York Philharmonic in months.

The setting was a far cry from the orchestra's usual home at Manhattan's Lincoln Center. Traffic hummed and sirens wailed as a crew laid cables and unloaded speakers from the back of a double-parked pickup truck.

But Simon said the pop-up concert — one of several the Philharmonic has been playing around the city this fall — filled a need she's had since indoor performances stopped in March, depriving musicians of not just a paycheck, but a sense of purpose.

"You're not a complete musician if you're just playing for yourself," Simon said.

Simon, a native of England who joined the New York Philharmonic in 1985, says she has struggled to cope with not having an audience, sometimes performing for friends virtually over the phone.

"I think it's a fundamental human need," she said.

The Philharmonic came up with the idea for a series of outdoor, pop-up performances over the summer, even as it was forced to lay off or furlough nearly half its staff as it faced a multimillion-dollar budget deficit.

On that Friday, Simon and a few colleagues played three corners of the city as part of the series they're calling the NY Phil Bandwagon. The first show of the day was outside a Bronx school, the second outside a public library in Queens and the final one in a Brooklyn park.

The bandwagon itself — a red Ford pickup truck — rolls up to the curb

carrying a sound system, music stands, lights and orange traffic cones to keep the audience socially distant. The musicians follow in a van.

The Philharmonic plans to hold its final Bandwagon concert of the year this weekend, and then resume the program in the spring.

New York's street life has always been vibrant, but these days, the city's outdoor spaces are more important than ever as many residents are stuck in small apartments working from home.

"There's this whole myth that New York is dying, but it's only dying in the places that were built for people not from New York — the people in New York are thriving," said Curtis Stewart, a Grammy-nominated violinist who joined for a guest performance with the Bandwagon.

As the group began its final performance of the day, countertenor Anthony Roth Costanzo kicked off the show from the bed of the truck.

"We're going to play you a little concert," he said as people began to linger in the warm glow of an early autumn sunset.

The set lasted 20 minutes. A trio of violins preformed well-known tunes from George Gershwin and Charlie Parker, as well as Henry Purcell's "Dido's Lament" — a sorrowful piece that Costanzo said "responds to the moment in a more emotional way."

As the audience swelled to dozens — couples, families, dogs and their owners — it became clear that the concert is as much an emotional outlet for the crowd as it is for the musicians.

"I think as we're closeted up in our homes dealing with the storm that is current events we need an outlet. We need a place to put our feelings, we need a place to feel safe," Stewart said. "You don't know what you've got until it's gone."

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Charlie Moore, 1952 Olympic 400 hurdles champion, dies at 91

WASHINGTON, OCT 13 (AP): Charlie Moore, the 400-meter hurdles champion at the 1952 Helsinki Olympics, has died.

He was 91. Moore died Thursday from pancreatic cancer, according to World Athletics. Cornell University also confirmed the passing of the school's former athletic director and star athlete.

Moore won the 400 hurdles in the rain in 1952 in 50.8 seconds to tie the Olympic record he set in the quarterfinals. Moore also earned a silver medal in Helsinki on the United States' 1,600-meter relay team.

After the Olympics, he set a world record of 51.6 in the 440 hurdles at the British Empire Games in London.

Charles Moore Jr. grew up in Pennsylvania and was a standout at Mercersburg Academy before going on to Cornell. He was inducted into Cornell's Athletic Hall of Fame in 1978 and the USA Track and Field Hall in 1999.

Moore donated his two Olympic medals to Mercersburg Academy.

"I couldn't figure out how you divide two medals among nine children,"

Moore said in a recent interview posted on the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee website.

"Mercersburg gave me my start and they'll be there for everybody to see, including my children."

Moore went on to become a successful business executive, investment fund manager, athletics administrator and later an author and philanthropist.

His father, Charles "Crip" Moore Sr., was an alternate as a hurdler for the U.S. in the 1924 Paris Olympics.

"My father was the one whose idea it was I should make the Olympic team. He was my best friend, also my mentor and also the guy who pushed the hell out of me," Moore told the USOPC website.

"I loved it. He'd say, 'Charlie I want you to do this,' and I would say, 'Yes, sir.'"

Moore helped pioneer a 13-step approach to the hurdles, which is used today. Kevin Young set the longstanding 400-meter hurdles record in 1992 with his time of 46.78 seconds.

Information on services for Moore will be announced later.

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Lewis Hamilton hits back at 'older drivers' after record achievement

GILES RICHARDS

LONDON, 13 OCT [THEGUARDIAN]: Lewis Hamilton has delivered what appears to be a stinging riposte to Sir Jackie Stewart by dismissing negativity surrounding his achievements from former drivers.

Hamilton won the Eifel Grand Prix on Sunday and, in doing so, equalled Michael Schumacher's record of 91 race victories. He stands to also match his record tally of seven championships this season and will almost certainly surpass the legendary German to become the most successful driver in Formula One. Yet for some that is not as impressive as it seems.

Before the race at the Nürburgring Stewart, who with three titles was Britain's most successful driver until being overtaken by Hamilton, said he found it hard to justify including the 35-year-old among the greatest of all time, in large part because he enjoyed an "unfair" advantage with his Mercedes car.

"I don't think you should knock anybody for the way they do things," Hamilton said after Sunday's race and having been presented with one of Schumacher's race helmets by his son, Mick. "I get knocked by many people, particularly older drivers. I don't know why. Maybe one day they will get over it but I have so much



respect for the past legends, even those who continue to talk negatively about me all the time. I still hold them in high regard. It was a different time in history. It was incredibly tough for them.

"There is always talk in sport about who is the greatest, past and present, but it is impossible to compare. It is not important to me."

Hamilton is in his 14th season in

F1. The new breed of drivers such as Max Verstappen, Lando Norris and George Russell are more than a decade younger than him and he insists that, in contrast to the likes of Stewart, he will offer nothing but encouragement to younger competitors after he leaves the sport.

"In 20 years' time when I am looking back, I can promise you this, I will not be talking down any

young driver who is coming through and succeeding," Hamilton said. "Because a responsibility as an older driver is to shine the light as bright as possible and encourage those."

Hamilton has also revealed he is once more enjoying a strong relationship with his father Anthony and praised him for his role in helping him to achieve such incredible levels of success. Hamilton's father dedicat-

ed his career to supporting his son's racing and managed him until 2010, when the pair's relationship broke down and Hamilton sacked him. Earlier this year Hamilton admitted he missed their father-son bond and that he was trying to reconnect with Anthony - that now appears to have happened with Hamilton having called his father and stepmother after the race on Sunday.

"My dad and I have never been so close," Hamilton said. "It is remarkable and makes me so much happier that we talk a lot, which I never thought we would do."

"It has been an emotional rollercoaster and it was so hard, for my dad. I can only try to imagine at his age how it was mentally, how it was to struggle with work, I can only try to comprehend how difficult that was. We talk about it a lot and we were there together through it all. He was proud of me."

Hamilton's teammate, Valtteri Bottas, had to retire at the Nürburgring because of a power unit problem and the failure to score points has all but ended his championship hopes. Hamilton now leads the Finn by 69 points with six races remaining. If the British driver is 78 points ahead in three races' time - after the Turkish GP - he will claim that seventh championship.

Premier League clubs and FA head into meetings amid reform plan row

MANCHESTER, 13 OCT

(REUTERS): Premier League clubs will break their silence over the much criticised proposals for major changes to the structure of England's top flight, when they meet this week amidst talk of a 'civil war' within the game.

The Football Association (FA) will also hold a scheduled council meeting on Thursday when the issue is also expected to be raised. As the governing body for English football, the FA itself holds a 'golden share' which would allow it to block major changes.

The FA has so far declined to comment on the proposals but its council is made up of representatives from all leagues, as well as county FAs, the grassroots and supporters representatives.

While no clubs have made public statements as yet on the plans, which Football League chairman Rick Parry says have been drawn up together with Liverpool and Manchester United, the fact that the league itself quickly issued a critical

statement on Sunday indicates the likely mood of many teams.

Some British media has referred to a "civil war" within the Premier League over the proposals and the UK government has criticised what it termed a "backroom deal". But Parry, who has been the only public face of 'Project Big Picture' so far, has insisted that he will push ahead with the plans in the face of opposition.

It is understood that the leading clubs, often referred to as the 'big six', have been discussing how to approach the upcoming meeting which is likely to be held on Wednesday or Thursday.

The proposals would give more power to the big Premier League clubs, reducing the top division from 20 teams to 18 for the 2022-23 season and scrapping the League Cup and Community Shield.

The plans would also see the Premier League commit to providing 25% of the league's revenue to EFL clubs and a 250 million pound (\$326.55

million) rescue fund to help with the immediate impact of the COVID-19 crisis.

A precise date has not been agreed for this week's meeting of Premier League clubs, which will be online.

Any changes to the Premier League's structure need the support of 14 of the 20 clubs.

The plans, outlined by Parry on Sunday, address the issue of those voting powers within the Premier League and propose giving the nine clubs with the longest consecutive presence in the top flight special voting rights.

However, the proposal states that only six of the nine would need to vote for a given policy meaning the 'big six' clubs would have the power to make changes in a number of key areas, without the support of other clubs.

Manchester United and Liverpool have not issued statements on the issue and other clubs have been keeping their opinions private and declining to comment.

Pulev says Joshua fight is set for London on December 12

LONDON, 13 Oct (Reuters): Kubrat Pulev will fight heavyweight world champion Anthony Joshua in London on December 12, Bulgaria's IBF mandatory challenger said on Monday.

The 39-year-old had been scheduled to meet Joshua on June 20 but the fight was postponed due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

"No turning back, no procrastination! Kubrat Pulev vs Anthony Joshua! The date is December 12th and the place is London!" the Bulgarian, known as "The Cobra", said on his Facebook page.

He added on his website (www.kubratpulev.com) that "the date and



place of the event are now final and not subject to change, and both parties have signed the official contract."

Joshua, 30, defeated Mexican-American Andy Ruiz Jr in a rematch in Saudi Arabia last December to win back his IBF, WBA, WBO and IBO titles.

The Briton was ini-

tially due to fight Pulev at Cardiff's Principality Stadium in October 2017 but the Bulgarian withdrew after suffering a shoulder injury in sparring.

Pulev challenged for the IBF world heavyweight title in 2014, losing to Wladimir Klitschko in Hamburg on a fifth-round knockout.

De Villiers played like a superhuman on a pitch where other batsmen struggled: Kohli



SHARJAH, OCT 13 (PTI): Royal Challengers Bangalore captain Virat Kohli said AB de Villiers' match-winning 73 against Kolkata Knight Riders was a "superhuman" effort as "every other batsmen" struggled on the dry Sharjah pitch.

RCB registered a massive 82-run win on the back of de Villiers' unbeaten 33 ball blitzkrieg and the guile of Yuzvendra Chahal (1/12) and Washington Sundar (2/20), who were instrumental in stifling KKR to 112 for nine chasing 195.

"This pitch was drier. And the day was pleasant so we thought there would be no dew. Barring one superhuman, every batsman struggled on the pitch. The talk was around getting 165, but we got 194 you know exactly why. It was unbelievable," Kohli said at the post-match presentation.

"I thought I had a few balls under my belt, and I might start striking. He (de Villiers) just came in and struck the third ball, and said he felt good. You might see a lot of people do what is done in other games, but only AB can do what

he did. It was a fabulous knock."

Kohli, who remained not out on 33 from 28 balls, said it was only thanks to the genius of de Villiers that his side got to 194 for two.

"I was happy we could string together a partnership (of 100 runs), and mine was the best seat to watch from."

Talking about the win, Kohli said, "It is a tremendous win against a very strong side. Heading into a busy week for us, it was important to start off well. The bowling unit looks that much more potent with Chris Morris coming back."

De Villiers, who was adjudged man of the match, said he surprised himself with a stupendous knock.

"I got a duck last game, that is a terrible feeling. I am very happy that I contributed. I surprised myself today to be honest. We were headed towards 140-150, and I thought I might try for 160-165, but I was surprised we reached 194," said the star South African batsman.

"The margins are very small when Cummins and Russell are running in, and you need to use every bit of energy in you to keep the momentum going. I felt that energy in the bus already."

Asked about keeping wickets, he said, "Keeping is a different skill. I am working really really hard so that I am up to the mark. I want to be the best that there is."

KKR skipper Dinesh Karthik admitted that de Villiers' knock made all the difference in the match.

"AB is a world-class player. He is hard to stop. He was the difference between the two teams. We tried everything. The only ball was the perfect inswinging yorker. Anything else was going."

"We need to sit down. There are a few things we need to do better. Even if we had restricted them to 175, there are a few things we need to do better. Let's be honest."

"Every captain has a day when things don't go right. But there are a lot of good days I can remember as well, and I will stick on to them."

Tokyo to host international gymnastics event in November

TOKYO, 13 OCT (REUTERS): Tokyo will host an international gymnastics tournament on Nov. 8, the Japan Gymnastics Association (JGA) has said, an event which could serve as a trial run for next year's rearranged Olympic Games.

The event is sanctioned by the International Gymnastics Federation and will feature 32 athletes from

Japan, China, Russia and the United States.

A maximum of 2,000 fans would be allowed to attend the one-day event at Yoyogi National Gymnasium, the venue for the handball tournament at the Games, which were postponed to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The JGA said during an online media briefing on Monday that all

gymnasts arriving from overseas would have to take a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test within 72 hours prior to their departure for Japan.

Japan's 14-day quarantine period would be waived but they would be tested each day they are in Japan, it added.

Other international sporting events scheduled to be held in Japan

in the coming months, including the Judo Tokyo Grand Slam and the Tokyo Marathon, have been cancelled or postponed due to restrictions on travel.

International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach said organisers expected to welcome spectators from around the world at next year's Games.

Asia Today: China city says it's tested 3 million for virus

BEIJING (AP) — Authorities in the eastern Chinese port city of Qingdao said Tuesday that they have completed coronavirus tests on more than 3 million people following the country's first reported local outbreak of the virus in nearly two months.

The city's health department said no new positive cases had been found among the more than 1.1 million test results returned thus far. The city said it had a total of 12 cases, six with symptoms and six without, since the new outbreak was first spotted over the weekend at a hospital.

The National Health Commission, however, said Tuesday that at least six new cases of the virus were found in Qingdao in the past 24 hours.

The reason for the discrepancy was not immediately clear. China's methods for logging and reporting of virus numbers has been questioned since the pandemic first began late last year in its city of Wuhan.

The National Health Commission numbers re-



leased Tuesday reported a total of 30 new virus cases in the previous 24 hours nationwide. It broke down those numbers into 13 cases in which people had symptoms and 17 cases in which they had no symptoms. The total number of locally transmitted cases, both with and without symptoms, was 11, while the rest were listed as imported.

China has reported

a total of 4,634 deaths from coronavirus among 85,591 cases it has reported. It has not provided a running total of asymptomatic cases, believed to number in the thousands.

Authorities in Qingdao have said they plan to test all 9 million people in the city by the end of the week, similar to previous mass testing campaigns in other cities where outbreaks have

been detected. Testing began with "close contacts, close contacts of those close contacts and more casual contacts," gradually expanding to all districts of the city, the health department said.

Qingdao is a major commercial harbor and industrial center known for electronics and the country's most famous brewery, as well as the home of the Chinese navy's northern fleet.

China's last reported local outbreak was in the northwestern city of Urumqi in the far western Xinjiang region, with all cases since then found among those arriving from outside China.

China has relaxed masking and social distancing requirements in the wake of falling case numbers, but has maintained robust testing as it seeks to return the economy to full functioning.

Europe eyes new restrictions as virus cases hit record high

GENEVA (AP): Governments across Europe ratcheted up restrictions Tuesday in an effort to contain the spread of the coronavirus as the continent recorded its highest weekly number of new infections since the start of the pandemic.

The World Health Organization said there were more than 700,000 new COVID-19 cases reported in Europe last week, a jump of 34% compared to the previous week, with Britain, France, Russia and Spain accounting for more than half of new infections recorded in the region.

The increasing case numbers in Europe are partly the result of more testing, but the U.N. health agency noted that deaths were also up 16% in the region last week compared to the previous week. Doctors are also warning that while many new cases currently affect younger people, who tend to have milder symptoms, the median age could rise again, resulting in more serious illnesses in elderly populations.

Italian Premier Giuseppe Conte ordered bans on pickup sports and parties in closed

spaces. Private gatherings at homes with more than six people who don't live together are also discouraged.

Like other European countries, Italy is also limiting nightlife, with bars and restaurants having to close at midnight, and drinking while standing at a bar banned after 9 p.m.

Italy made wearing masks mandatory outdoors last week, a requirement already in place in Spain, Turkey, India and a handful of other Asian countries. Elsewhere in Europe, such mandates are in effect in hot spot cities like Paris, Brussels and Pristina, Kosovo, and are being introduced in several German cities.

Even with virus infections rising again, governments are eager to avoid the total lockdowns they imposed back then that caused huge economic damage and job losses. Wary of hurting already fragile economies, European governments have instead relied on a patchwork of regional restrictions that have sometimes caused confusion and frustration by those affected.

Still, the U.N. health agency cautioned Tues-

day against a one-size-fits-all mindset when it comes to restrictive measures. WHO spokesman Tarik Jasarevic told reporters in Geneva that lockdowns should be a "last resort."

Chancellor Angela Merkel has summoned the governors of Germany's 16 states to meet in person Wednesday for the first time since mid-June. Bavarian governor Markus Soeder called for "a really clear set of rules for everyone in the coming weeks" to prevent the situation spinning out of control.

In an effort to avoid to keep people and goods moving throughout the European Union, member countries approved a traffic light system Tuesday.

The countries agreed to not restrict people traveling between so-called green areas — where virus infection numbers are low — but EU governments will continue to set their own restrictions, such as quarantines or mandatory testing upon arrival, for people coming from orange or red zones.

Under the criteria adopted Tuesday, most of EU regions would be either red or orange.

UK unemployment ascent accelerates amid winter job fears

LONDON (AP): Unemployment across the U.K. spiked sharply in August, a clear signal that the jobless rate is heading towards levels not seen in nearly 30 years when a British government salary-support scheme ends this month and new local restrictions are imposed to suppress a resurgence of the coronavirus.

The Office for National Statistics said Tuesday that unemployment rose by 138,000 in the three months to August from the previous three-month period. The unemployment rate jumped to 4.5%, its highest rate since early 2017, from 4.1% in the previous quarter.

So far, Britain has been spared the sharp rises in unemployment seen in the United States because of the government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, which has paid most of the salaries of workers who have not been fired. Some 1.2 million employers have taken advantage of the program to furlough 9.6 million people at a cost to the government of nearly 40 billion pounds (\$52 billion). At one stage, around 30% of the U.K.'s working population was on furlough. Although they weren't working over the past few months, they were not counted as unemployed.

Since the program ends at the end of October, many of those still on furlough are expected to be made redundant and unemployment to rise further.

And with many parts of the U.K. seeing large increases in coronavirus infections and the government imposing local restrictions, there are concerns that unemployment could soar towards 3 million, levels not seen since the early 1990s.

China's trade growth accelerates in Sept; exports up 9.9%

BEIJING (AP): China's trade picked up in September as global demand for masks and medical supplies boosted exports and the economy's early reopening gave producers an edge over foreign competitors.

Exports rose 9.9% over a year earlier to \$239.8 billion, up from August's 9.5%, the fourth straight month of growth, customs data showed Tuesday. Imports gained 13.2% to \$202.8 billion, up from the previous month's 2.1% contraction as the world's second-largest economy regained momentum.

Exports had a "comprehensive recovery" in the three months ending in September, said a spokesman for the customs agency, Li Kuiwen. He said China has exported masks and other medical supplies worth 1 trillion yuan (\$150 billion).

China has "successfully filled the global supply shortage," Li said at a news conference.

Chinese exporters have benefited from relative early end of travel and trade curbs after the ruling Communist Party



declared victory over the outbreak in March. They are taking market share from foreign competitors that are hampered by anti-disease controls.

"Renewed virus outbreaks in trading partners will be a challenge, but shipments of products benefiting from virus-related demand should continue to hold up," Louis Kuijs of Oxford Economics said in a report.

China's global trade surplus swelled 6.6% over a year earlier to \$37 billion but was down sharply from August's \$58.9 billion gap,

thanks to higher exports. Exports to the United States rose 20.5% over a year ago to \$44 billion despite higher U.S. tariffs in a fight with the Trump administration over Beijing's technology ambitions and trade surplus. Imports of American goods rose 24.5% to \$13.2 billion.

China became the first major economy to rebound to pre-virus growth levels in the second quarter of the year, when the government reported 3.2% economic growth over a year earlier. Forecasters expect that to accelerate in the

three months that ended in September. Automakers and other large manufacturers are back to normal activity, helping to drive demand for imported iron ore, copper and other industrial materials.

Importers are meanwhile benefitting from a slump in prices of oil and other commodities due to weak demand.

Retail sales remain subdued as consumers who are uneasy about possible job losses put off major purchases. Consumer spending returned to pre-virus levels in August but was only 0.5% above a year earlier.

Malaysia's Anwar meets king in bid to form new government

KUALA LUMPUR (AP): Malaysian opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim said he presented the nation's king Tuesday with evidence that he has enough support among lawmakers to topple the prime minister and form a new government, an assertion the palace denied.

Anwar said he presented the monarch with evidence of the support he has from over 120 lawmakers, which would allow him to unseat Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin.

Anwar said the monarch pledged to abide by the constitution, and would consult leaders from other parties before making a decision. He declined to give details, urging Malaysians to be patient and give the king space to review the evidence.

"These documents made it abundantly clear that we have registered a formidable and convincing majority among parliamentarians," Anwar told a news conference after the royal meeting. "Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin has lost his majority and therefore, it would be appropriate for him to resign."

After that news conference, however, the palace released a statement denying that Anwar provided evidence of support. It said Anwar only told Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah how many lawmakers supported him but didn't reveal their identities.

It said the king advised Anwar "to abide by and respect the legal process" based on the constitution.

Muhyiddin, who took power in March after securing enough support in Parliament to unseat Anwar's reformist alliance, has previously dismissed Anwar's claim to a majority. Muhyiddin currently boasts a slim two-seat majority in the 222-seat Parliament and has been grappling to maintain support amid infighting in his coalition.

Allies in Muhyiddin's Malay-centric ruling coalition also denied supporting Anwar, and branded Anwar a "desperado" for seeking to wrest power as the country struggles with the coronavirus.

The audience with the king was slated three weeks ago, but postponed as the king was hospitalized.

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Bollywood's powerful file suit against Indian news channels

NEW DELHI (AP): Top Bollywood filmmakers and industry unions have filed a lawsuit against two popular TV news channels, asking them to refrain from "irresponsible, derogatory and defamatory remarks against Bollywood and its members." The lawsuit, filed Monday, comes months after India's freewheeling television news channels took on Bollywood, India's Hindi-language film industry based in Mumbai, with a spree of allegations following the suspected suicide of actor Sushant Singh Rajput in June.

The case fueled months of speculation from news channels who held filmmakers who had rejected Rajput for roles partly responsible for his suicide and accused many Bollywood celebrities of being part of a drug cartel that drove the actor to take his life. An investigation that is looking into alleged drug trafficking in Bollywood is being carried out by India's federal narcotics agency.

Rajput, 34, was found dead in his Mumbai apartment on June 4 in what police said appeared to be a case of suicide. The case is still being investigated.

Monday's lawsuit saw some of Bollywood's biggest names, including superstar actors Aamir Khan, Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan and Akshay Kumar, come together against news channels Republic TV and Times Now.

"These Defendants are conducting and publishing parallel private 'investigations' and effectively acting as 'courts' to condemn persons connected with

Bollywood as guilty based on what they claim is 'evidence' found by them," the plaintiffs said in a statement, referring to the two news channels.

The plaintiffs said they sought "redress against the irresponsible, derogatory and defamatory reporting" by the

and his right-leaning administration, often indulge in rancorous and chaotic debates in which shouting, screaming and name-calling have become staples.

The media hysteria reached its zenith in Rajput's case. Stories about the actor's death sidelined other critical issues, such as India's stalling economy, the government's coronavirus response and growing hostilities with China over a border dispute. The result was a surge in ratings for some TV channels.

The tables, however, turned considerably last week when police in Mumbai accused Republic TV of rigging the rating scores system, a significant component in television channels' advertising income.

The allegations were denied by Republic TV but led to some Indian advertisers taking never-before-seen measures. Automobile giant Bajaj Auto and Parle Products, India's biggest biscuit maker, said they were pulling advertising from news channels that endorsed toxicity and hate-mongering. The companies did not name the channels, but the move was widely cheered on Indian social media.

Abhinandan Sekhri, the co-founder of media critiquing website NewsLaundry, said most of India's TV channels had morphed into "reality shows."

"There will be repercussions if you do demonstrably false reporting," Sekhri said. "It's about time advertisers took a stand and withdrew their brands from TV channels that thrive on false information and toxic content."



two television news channels and their leading anchors. Neither channel immediately responded to a request for comment, but Navika Kumar, a senior editor at Times Now, tweeted Monday, "If fighting for justice invites court cases, bring it on."

Experts say television news in India is facing a serious crisis, with debates among commentators becoming increasingly strident and shrill.

India has one of the world's most vibrant and competitive media environments, with more than 850 news channels broadcast in multiple languages. But over the years, the industry has faced a crisis of credibility. Many powerful television news anchors, known to support Prime Minister Narendra Modi

Divyanka Tripathi thrashes troll who asked her to not take drugs, stay away from Karan Johar

The war of words between the two started on Twitter when Divyanka tweeted about the massive power cut that brought Mumbai to a standstill on Monday.

Television actor Divyanka Tripathi recently lashed out at a troll who passed comment on her standard of living, asking her to not work with filmmaker Karan Johar and not consume drugs.

Divyanka in turn replied asking the troll to mind his own business and focus on his own work.

The war of words between the two started on Twitter when Divyanka tweeted about the massive power cut that brought Mumbai to a standstill on Monday. She wrote, "Kam se nikle, ab bekar aur berozgar se fir rahe hai. Bhai koi bataega aaj Mumbai me bijli kyu nahi hai (Had stepped out for work and am now sitting idle. Will someone tell me why there's no power supply in Mumbai today?)"

The Twitter user replied to her tweet saying, "Ek din bina make-up, bina AC ke bhi rehna seekho madam (Try living without make-up and AC for a day madam)." To this,

Divyanka schooled the user and wrote, "Bewajah hero mat baniye uncle. Kaam to sarkaar ka tha jisme make-up ki zarurat nahi. Par vishesh tippania is prakar karte hai aap log jaise jagah jagah Bigg Boss ka camera lagaya ho. Kuch acha likhe, ashirward de, anyatha kaam se kaam rakhe (You don't need to be a hero uncle, this was government's job and it didn't require any make-up. But the way you comment, it looks like Bigg Boss cameras have been installed everywhere. Write something good, give your blessings, else mind your own business)."

In this back and forth, the user then wrote, "Mera ashirward tumhare saath hai. Achi achi film karo aur drugs ke chakkar me mat padhna. Karan Johar ke paas toh bhool ke bhi mat jana (My blessings are always with you, do good films and don't do drugs. Don't even think of going to Karan Johar)." Divyanka finally praised him for mending his ways and said, "Yeh baat bhaut achi lagi. Dil se dhanyewaad. Aajkal sab amoon tor pe doosro ke bina wajah galat ki maan le chalte hai.

Joshua Jackson to headline Peacock series 'Dr Death'



LOS ANGELES, OCT 13 (PTI): Actor Joshua Jackson is set to play the lead role in the Peacock series "Dr Death", based on the Wondery podcast of the same name.

According to Variety, the "Dawson's Creek" alum is stepping in for previously announced lead Jamie Dornan, who exited the project due to production delays caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Alec Baldwin and Christian Slater remain part of the cast.

"Dr Death" follows the true story of Dr Christopher Dunsch (Jackson), a neurosurgeon, whose malpractice resulted in the death and maiming of multiple patients in Dallas.

As victims piled up, two fellow physicians, neurosurgeon Robert Henderson (Baldwin) and vascular surgeon Randall Kirby (Slater),

set out to stop him. Dunsch was accused of maiming four patients and killing two more, and was found guilty of maiming one and sentenced to life in prison in 2017.

The show comes from Universal Content Productions.

Patrick Macmanus will executive produce alongside Todd Black, Jason Blumenthal and Steve Tisch as well as Hernan Lopez and Marshall Lewy.

Maggie Kiley will direct and executive produce the first two episodes. Jennifer Morrison and So Yong Kim will also direct episodes of the series.

Jackson was most recently seen on the Showtime series "The Affair", the Hulu limited series "Little Fires Everywhere", and the Netflix miniseries "When They See Us".



DONATING! The actress, Scout Willis stops by a shelter to donate some clothing.

Disney reorg to further bolster company's focus on streaming

Disney said Monday that it is reorganizing its business units to focus even more on streaming. The company said in August that its Disney Plus service has more than 60 million subscribers, and subscribers to its main combination of streaming services — Disney Plus, ESPN Plus and Hulu — top 100 million. It still plans to launch another international streaming service called Star.

The coronavirus pandemic has hit box-office revenue by closing many theaters. Disney has released several major titles on streaming services that would traditionally have appeared at cinemas, like a live-action remake of "Mulan" and the upcoming Pixar film "Soul" that will hit Disney Plus at Christmas. Americans continue to drop their cable subscriptions, affecting the company's TV networks.

So the company is creating three content arms, one each for sports, general entertainment and its studios, which have famous brands including Star Wars and Marvel. Their primary focus will be on making shows and

movies for streaming services, Disney CEO Bob Chapek said in a statement. Meanwhile, a new distribution group will centralize how the content is sold and oversee streaming operations.

Disney's are among a slew of new streaming services from tech and entertainment



companies — like NBCUniversal's Peacock and WarnerMedia's HBO Max — that are challenging Netflix for consumers' attention and money. Disney Plus is considered one of the most successful so far.

Disney shares rose 5.6% in after-market trading on the news.

THE DAY AHEAD

ARIES:

Change is the only constant, and you no longer feel the need to resist the flow of existence. Be cognisant of what you're being led towards, and know that many miracles await you on this sacred journey. What you need to keep in mind when you feel lost or confused: your higher self is guiding you at every step along the way and orchestrating big things for you. Let go of the 'how' and the 'why' and commit to showing up for yourself each and every day, Aries.

Tip: Good things are coming your way.

TAURUS:

Reassessment is an important theme for you right now. You're understanding the relationships that are supporting your growth and the relationships that have served their purpose in your existence. If somebody is causing you "this" much pain, are they even worth your time and energy, Taurus? Word for the wise: separate the wheat from the chaff. Give yourself the respect you deserve.

Tip: Reassess your relationships.

GEMINI:

You may find that you are faced with many choices today. Don't be quick to make a decision, though. The most alluring option may not necessarily be the one that's best for you. Word for the wise: trust your inner wisdom. Your higher self already knows the way forward. Expanding your empire is also a big theme for you right now. Trust what you're being led towards, and know that the gates that were once shut are now about to open for you.

Tip: It's time to expand your empire.

CANCER:

This phase of your life isn't so much about the new as it is about doing the same things differently. Think out of the box, Cancer. While you're at it, let go of the need to colour within the lines. Trust that you will discover newer aspects of yourself as you go along. A new romantic adventure may also be on the cards for some of you—an adventure that requires you to let go of past baggage and embrace the unknown. Learning to be vulnerable in the presence of your partner will change the game for you.

Tip: Your ability to think out of the box will be rewarded.

LEO:

Property-related matters are taking centre stage. Some of you may be engaged in mundane affairs such as repair and renovation. Others may be thinking about investing in a new home or giving their existing space a one-of-a-kind makeover. Creating a vision board will help you up your aesthetic game. Lions who've been together for a while could be thinking about commitment like never before. When you find somebody who looks at you the way you look at cake, never let them go.

Tip: Matters related to home and property are likely to take centre stage today.

VIRGO:

Sometimes, it seems as if everything is coming up roses. At other times, life throws us off our game with a series of curve balls. What's empowering about this phase is that it's helping you look at the past through the lens of wisdom and take both the good and the bad in your stride. You understand that everything transpired for a reason and made you the person you are today. If that isn't a good enough reason to send out a prayer of gratitude, what is?

Tip: You're looking at your past through the lens of wisdom.

LIBRA:

This is a time of embracing your inner child and making peace with the parts of you that you had previously rejected. You're basking in the glow that comes from embracing yourself fully and letting go of societal expectations. Breathe out the inhibitions, Libra, as you breathe in freedom and love. This is also a time of realigning with your passion, remembering who you are and what you came here to do. Creating from a space of authenticity will help you transform base metal into gold.

Tip: Breathe in freedom and love.

SCORPIO:

Plutonians who have been afraid of their own power will undergo a major shift over the next few days, one that inspires them to step into bigger shoes. Scorpio, it's time to lead by example and know that you were sent here to set the stage for change. Remember, having the right people walking by your side will make all the difference. Word for the wise: sync your forces with those you believe share your vision for change.

Tip: Lead by example.

SAGITTARIUS:

Sometimes, things work out seamlessly. At other times, they tear you apart leaving scars in places you didn't know existed. It's all a part and parcel of life—the intimate dance of shadow and light. Embrace what's unfolding right now, even if you don't fully understand the higher reason behind your circumstances. The good thing is, these challenges are making you a stronger, more resilient version of yourself and helping you

realise who isn't worth your time.

Tip: Everything that's taking place right now is for your highest good.

CAPRICORN:

Truth and freedom are important themes in the Capricorn HQ. You are growing weary of the costumes that you've been wearing for some time now—costumes that provide you with a false sense of security. You're in the mood to meet your true self and bring the gifts of authenticity and integrity into all of your relationships. Remember, unlearning the old way of life will free you in a way that nothing ever has.

Tip: It's time to meet your true self.

AQUARIUS:

It doesn't matter how old you are. It doesn't matter what position you hold in Society. There's always room to learn and grow. There's always room to discover hidden talents and newer aspects of your personality. So, commit to the inner work, Aquarius, and know your patience and persistence will set the stage for inner alchemy.

Tip: You're in the mood to discover newer aspects of yourself.

PISCES:

It's not that you're doing too much, it's that you're doing so little of what makes you happy. No wonder you're "this" exhausted, Pisces! Inner alignment is the need of the hour. That, and a much-needed reality check about who you are not. Remember, you don't have to continue walking down this path because it's familiar. Embrace the possibility of the unknown and trust that the Universe will catch you if you fall.

Tip: Find what brings you joy and commit to it with a newfound fervour.