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40 YEARS**  
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# SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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## Sikkim records one more death and 64 new COVID cases

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 24 SEPT:**

COVID-19 claimed one more life in Sikkim today, when an 82-year-old resident of Daragaon, Jorethang, passed away Thursday morning, eight days after having tested positive for the virus on 16 September.

The patient was reportedly discharge on his own request on 21 September and was under home isolation when he passed away.

With this, Novel Coronavirus has claimed 31 lives in Sikkim even as 64 new cases were detected from samples collected and tested on Wednesday.

day. The number of active cases in Sikkim has now increased to 607 and the state's total COVID-19 caseload has bulked up to 2,611.

Among the new cases, 59 have been reported from East district, one from West Sikkim, one from North District and three from South District.

Also on Wednesday, 31 more patients were discharged from covid care centres taking the number of COVID patients discharged thus far in Sikkim to 1,973.

While giving details of testing conducted on Wednesday, Health Department State IEC Officer, Sonam G Bhutia,

informed that 41 of the 270 samples returned positive for COVID-19 in the RT-PCR testing here at the VRD Lab, while 10 returned positive in TrueNat testing of 65 samples.

He added that 13 persons were also tested positive in the rapid antigen testing of 63 samples.

In the break-up of new cases, Mr Bhutia mentioned that one person from the containment zone in Sisa Golai, one from near Tadong College, three from Greendale School Road, one from the containment zone in Metro Point, Tadong, one from

Upper Basilakha, Namcheyong, one from the containment zone in Tadong, one from Rumtek, one from below Royal Plaza in Shyari and one from near government primary school in Middle Shyari were tested positive for COVID-19 in RT-PCR testing. He added that two persons from GREF camp, Phengla, one from a paid quarantine facility, one from CS Rai SS in Arithang, one from Upper Sichey, one from Manbir Colony, one from near car wash in Rai Gaon, Burtuk, one from the containment zone in Metro Point, Tadong, one from Ray Khola Road, one from old opposite Sadar

Thana in Tibet Road and one from Yangyang Bazaar were also reported COVID-19 positive.

Likewise, one from near SBI bank Daragaon, Tadong, five from VIP colony, three from Singtam, two health staffs posted at Rangpo screening centre, four from Rangpo Bazaar, one from the District Administrative Centre [North], Mangan and one from Jorethang were also tested positive for COVID-19 in RT-PCR testing.

While giving details of new cases detected in TrueNat testing, Mr Bhutia informed that one from below Arnold Gym in Amdo Golai, nine

from Lumsey including an MLA were reported COVID-19 positive.

Similarly, one from Rhenock but currently residing near Bhanu Path in Singtam, one from North Regu, one from Rey Khola area, two from Daragaon in Tadong, two Nandok, one from near STNM hospital, one from near Agriculture College, Ranipool, one from Mahjitar, one from opposite Union Bank in Namchi, South District and one Reshi Bazaar in West District were found positive for COVID-19 in the rapid antigen testing, Mr Bhutia added.



### COVID-19 tally in India crosses 57-lakh mark

**NEW DELHI, SEP 24 (PTI):** India's COVID-19 caseload breached the 57-lakh mark, while over 46 lakh people have recovered from the disease, pushing the national recovery rate to 81.55 per cent, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Thursday.

The total coronavirus cases mounted to 57,32,518 with 86,508 people testing positive in a day. The death toll climbed to 91,149 with 1,129 people succumbing to the disease in a span of 24 hours, the data updated at 8 am showed.

The total recoveries surged to 46,74,987 in the country so far.

The COVID-19 case fatality rate due to the coronavirus infection was recorded at 1.59 per cent.

There are 9,66,382 active cases of coronavirus infection in the country which comprises 16.86 per cent of the total caseload, the data stated.

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

According to the ICMR, a cumulative total of 6,74,36,031 sam-

ples have been tested up to September 23 with 11,56,569 samples being tested on Wednesday.

The 1,129 new deaths include 479 from Maharashtra, 87 from Uttar Pradesh, 64 from Punjab, 63 from Tamil Nadu, 61 from West Bengal, 45 from Andhra Pradesh, 42 from Madhya Pradesh, 38 from Karnataka and 36 from Delhi.

A total of 91,149 deaths have been reported so far in the country including 33,886 from Maharashtra followed by 9,010 from Tamil Nadu, 8,266 from Karnataka, 5,506 from Andhra Pradesh, 5,299 from Uttar Pradesh, 5,087 from Delhi, 4,544 from West Bengal, 3,367 from Gujarat, 2,990 from Punjab and 2,077 from Madhya Pradesh.

The health ministry stressed that more than 70 per cent of the deaths occurred due to comorbidities.

"Our figures are being reconciled with the Indian Council of Medical Research," the ministry said on its website, adding that state-wise distribution of figures is subject to further verification and reconciliation.

## Rangpo-Rorathang road blocked

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 24 SEPT:**

Rangpo-Rorathang Road has been blocked after 110 meters of road was washed away at 4th Mile Bhasmey. The road connects Rhenock, Rongli, Pakyong, along with more than 50 villages in the area.

Heavy and continuous rainfall in the past few days led to the incident on Wednesday. The road sees a lot of traffic

due to the several pharma companies and two hydel power projects being located on the route.

In case of emergencies, commuters are now crossing the area on foot.

SDM Rangpo, Himmat Rai, Sikkim Krantikari Morcha Drivers Front, East District president, Roshan Mangar, and Local Panchayat Members visited the spot today.

SDM, Mr Rai mentioned that a survey re-

port will be sent to the concerned authorities and action will accordingly be taken. He also said that movement of trucks with heavy loads together with incessant rain could have caused the landslide which washed away the road formation.

Local residents have said that a bailey bridge should be constructed as an immediate solution.

[from Sanjay Agarwal]



## Dept issues instructions for Tourism Unlock 1.0

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 24 SEPT:**

The Tourism Department has issued a notice today on Tourism Unlock 1.0 providing instructions for the reopening of tourism in the state from 10 Oct 2020 onwards.

The notice asks all tourism units, accommodation units, travel operators and service providers to register in a crowd sourcing portal following which they will be considered for empanelment. Only empanelled stake-

holders will be allowed to carry out tourism activities in the state.

Tourists visiting Sikkim will have to have a COVID negative certificate issued by ICMR registered Testing Centre, not older than 72 hours prior to entry in the

state. They will also have to get a Travel card after entering details in the tourism portal - sikkimtourism.gov.in - which they will have to carry at all times.

Various other instructions are also provided in the notice.

### DC North tests positive for COVID-19

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 24 SEPT:**

DC North, TT Kaleon, has tested positive for covid-19 following which the DAC North was contained for 48 hrs.

The DC made the announcement on his Facebook page wherein he said that this RTPCR test

results arrived on Thursday and he has isolated himself in his official quarters in Mangan. He also informed that all primary contacts have been asked to isolate themselves as well.

The DC has asked the public to contact ADC North in case of any work.

## Where the Sikkim Government failed and where it passed in its Covid-19 Exam

**ViewPoint  
JIWAN RAI**

Sikkim enjoyed a rare national spotlight for its zero Covid-19 status until May 23 this year when the first case was detected. Fleeting as it might have been, Sikkim's Covid-19 story was worthy of a 'hurried mention' in the national media. We watched our Chief Minister, PS Tamang and others giving interviews to various TV channels with pride. The joy and pride soon passed, giving way to fear, frustration and even mourning. In four months, Covid-19 positive cases have crossed 2500. And now the state is all set to open its borders for interstate transportation. It would be worthwhile to revisit the six months of our Covid-19 battle for a rapid evaluation. Here are three major areas where the state government did well.

Implementing a complete ban on the entry of domestic tourists



on 16 March by the state government was the smartest of all moves. Many of us applauded the government, terming it a 'partial decision'. I feel ashamed to quote myself as though my opinions mattered but I couldn't help rummaging back through my Facebook timelines. At that time, I had an inkling of doubt, thinking that the government was too late. I had written, "The state administration, in a delayed reaction to the spread of the coronavirus threat and rising public frustration and fear, announced a partial lockdown. I

hope it is not too little too late." I was wrong. It was not too late. PM Modi announced a nation-wide complete lockdown a week later - Sikkim was leading the way.

Secondly, we can see that the priority of the government was spot on. Chief Minister Goley said that the lives and health of the people of Sikkim come above all else. This was a time for a cardinal choice between economy and life. Sikkim chose life.

The third area of exemplary performance was the way contract tracing was conducted initially af-

ter positive cases were detected. Every single person was tracked down and brought under quarantine.

The saying - 'well begun is half done' is not a propositional statement. It is merely a cheer leader's shout. Sikkim's good beginning probably instilled unnecessary overconfidence in us. Very soon, lapses began to increase both in number and proportion. Now let me talk about three areas where the government's performance was not up to scratch.

Failure to facilitate a composite

Sikkimese force against Covid-19 was unfortunate. What the BJP government did at the centre, SKM did in the state. They isolated the opposition parties. The government should have brought all the political parties on board. The government's energy was diverted to answering oppositional criticism and questions resulting in an overall distracted focus on the real enemy - namely Covid-19. An all-party approach could have benefited Sikkim by way of collective wisdom. This was not a time for politicking - it was a time for a united, determined battle of life and death.

The second biggest failure was the administrative failures at various levels. The premature celebration and over-confidence during the zero Covid-19 days were symptoms of systemic lapses. The government had made all the right decisions at the right time. However, what went unnoticed by

the governmental radar was the utter negligence on the part of a few. The Melli in-in-out-out fiasco, the Rongli GREF camp debacle and the IT department's disaster will remain as indelible stains on the administration for years to come.

To me, personally, the third major lapse was the delay in fashioning Sikkim specific Covid-19 protocols. We have depended on centrally designed protocols and guidelines for far too long. They are highly significant ones but tailoring certain guidelines to meet our local nuanced situation is equally important. Some notifications released by the Sikkim government seem emotionally driven and devoid of scientific rationale.

Finally, I will always maintain that our initial success zero covid-19 status was overhyped. We were merely enjoying the temporary bliss of locational advantage. Along with us, many Northeastern states like

turn to pg03



# Landslide in Saurini leaves 81 families in danger

SMITA KHAWAS

MIRIK, 24 SEPT:

Landslides in Saurini area under Mirik sub-division of West Bengal due to continuous rainfall of the past few days have forced the evacuation of 27 houses at Ramite Dara following orders of Mirik SDO Ashwini Kumar Roy.

81 families in four villages have been affected due to this landslide.

A connecting bridge has been washed away due to which 21 families of Bamrang village have not been able to leave the village. The affected villages are Upper Saureni, Dhad village, Bamrang village and Deurali.

GTA chairperson Anit

Thapa said, "I went to inspect the site. Mr. LB Rai, Chairman of Mirik Municipality, Mr. Arun Sinji, Liaison Officer of GTA was also present during the inspection. Due to the positive initiative of the Disaster Management Committee, 27 families have been able to move to safer places. I will soon send an engineer to the area for the reconstruction of the destroyed bridge which connects the villages or will seek any other option which will be helpful to connect the villages. I request to all the Disaster Management Committees under GTA area to be active at this time. No one was killed in the natural disaster so far".

Kumar Pradhan of the Saureni Pani Golai Relief Committee said that "A sudden landslide was heard on the nearby Ramite Danda last night. We went to inspect some member sites. Large boulders began to fall due. We immediately called SDO of the sub-division Mr. Ashwini Kumar Roy and informed him about the incident. He came at night. As per his order, we evacuated the members of 27 houses under Ramite Danda to a safe place.

Kamal Rai of Upper Saureni village added that five bridges over the river have been destroyed due to the rising waters of Kashi Jhora.



## Sports Deptt organizes webinar on NSS Day



SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 24 SEPT:

On the occasion of National Service Scheme Day, NSS Cell, Department of Sports and Youth Affairs conducted online webinar with the theme 'Youth Empowerment', a press release informs.

The programme was attended by Minister

for Sports and Youth Affairs Department, Kunga Nima Lepcha and attended by Secretary, Sports and Youth Affairs, Kuber Bhandari, Additional Director, Doma Tshering, State Nodal Officer, NSS Cell, Suchitra Rasaily, District NSS Nodal Officers, Programme Coordinators, Programme Officers and the NSS volunteers from Universities, Colleges and Senior Secondary Schools.

The programme began with the welcome address by State Nodal Officer wherein she laid emphasis on the importance of NSS Day, the contributions made by NSS Cell, POs, PCs and Volunteers especially during the pandemic and the importance of youths as change makers in achieving the sustainable development goals and nation building.

Thereafter, Programme Coordinator, Dr Nidhi Saxena and Programme Officer, Namgyal Sherpa shared their experiences regarding the activities carried out during the pandemic. The programme also saw two volunteers namely NSS volunteer of Nar Bahadur Bhandari Degree College, Reema Gurung and NSS volunteer of Sikkim University, Iksha Rai shared their messages regarding the contribution of youth in various sectors in eradicating poverty, raising education standards,

acquiring knowledge and skills, maintaining proper mindset, having the determination to set goals and to achieve it.

Secretary, Sports and Youth Affairs Department congratulated the NSS volunteers for working relentlessly during pandemic and marching ahead instead of all the obstacles. In his address he also suggested that the NSS Cell to hold webinar for NSS volunteers to disseminate the information regarding the New Education Policy 2020.

He also advised the training and involvement of volunteers in disaster management, to increase the strength of volunteers from schools and colleges and provide an opportunity to them for community services, to participate in the Fit India Movement Freedom Run and upload maximum virtual runs in the website [www.fitindia.gov.in](http://www.fitindia.gov.in) to showcase the fitness of the state.

Minister Kunga Nima Lepcha in his address

highlighted the various works carried out by the NSS volunteers amidst pandemic. He also congratulated the young volunteers for their involvement in various activities even in the prevailing pandemic situation. He also stated that NSS with the aid of Education Department will enable to add more youths as volunteers to work towards the development and upliftment of the state and the country.

He urged the existing NSS members to motivate the volunteers by conducting trips to all institutions. He also highlighted the importance of agriculture and animal husbandry in increasing the GDP of the country. He congratulated the volunteers and also motivated to strive for excellence and to bring laurels for the state and country, by carrying out community service.

The programme concluded with the vote of thanks delivered by State NSS Coordinator, Babita Chettri.

## MP has given us hope: Sikkim Limboo-Tamang Tribal JAC



SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 24 SEPT:

Sikkim Limboo-Tamang Tribal Joint Action Committee (JAC) has welcomed Lok Sabha MP, Indra Hang Limboo, raising the issue of seat reservation of Limboo and Tamang communities in the Sikkim Legislative Assembly, in the Parliament on 21 Sept, a press release informs.

Mentioning that the

Limboo-Tamang communities have been deprived of their constitutional rights for over 18 years now, the organization has said that MP's initiative has given them hope.

It has requested the state government to follow up on the MP's initiative and take action on the issue as early as possible.

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**What is Novel Coronavirus - nCoV?**

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

**Symptoms of nCoV**

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

**Precautions to Prevent nCoV**

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

**Treatment**

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

If you seek help, you may call :

Toll free no. 104  
District surveillance Officer  
EAST : 7029372100  
WEST : 9593297809  
NORTH : 9641957468  
SOUTH : 7407691463  
New STNM  
AMS : 9434711402

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

## ~ 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 9593373387 and 9434406761

### LAND FOR SALE

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

### 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.

## 3rd Rashtriya Poshan Maah celebrated

**GANGTOK, 24 SEPT (PIB):** Anaemia is a major form of under-nutrition that pervades all life stages and Assam is facing an enormous challenge of prevalence of Anaemia among the adolescents. This was opined by the Nutrition experts during the webinar organised by Press Information Bureau, Guwahati on 'Adolescent Nutrition' while exhorting the necessity to strengthen anaemia control programming in the state based on knowledge.

Government of India has launched POSHAN (Prime Minister Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nourishment) Abhiyaan, to address malnutrition challenges in India by engaging all the important stakeholders in a convergent approach. Poshan Abhiyaan has special focus on reducing under-nutrition and low birth weight in children, and anaemia in adolescent girls, pregnant women, lactating mothers as well as children. The 3rd Rashtriya Poshan Maah is being celebrated this month across the country. During this pandemic situation to

create awareness about health and nutrition PIB Guwahati organised a webinar on Adolescent nutrition today.

Taking part as a speaker in the webinar today, Prof Department of Food Science and Nutrition, Dr Mridula Saikia Baruah, College of Community Science, Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat said, "India is home to 253 million adolescents (10 to 19 years) and we stand with them at a crossroad between losing out on the potential of a generation or nurturing them to transform society". In her deliberation she said that under nutrition is a major and common problem among adolescents. In India 40 percent of girls and 18 percent of boys are anaemic, so there is a need to have balanced diet which includes fresh fruits and vegetables she added.

Consultant Nutrition, Dr Priyakshi Borkotoky, National Health Mission, Assam gave a detailed briefing on the on-going campaign of the Poshan Abhiyan in Assam. She discussed about the nutrition intervention

for adolescents through National Health Mission. She said that there is higher prevalence of Anaemia in Assam than the national average in the adolescent age group and the government of Assam is taking all steps to decrease the anaemia rate. She further added that Friendly Health Clinics are being established in all district hospital, CHCs and SDHs in selected districts.

Joint Director, Samrat Bandopadhyay, PIB Guwahati in his welcome address said that the objective of the webinar is to create awareness among people about the importance of nutrition and the health schemes of the government. Deputy Director, Pallab Chakraborty, PIB Guwahati delivered the closing address in the webinar. Field Exhibition Officer, Hiramani Das moderated the webinar.

The webinar was attended by around 60 participants including the officials of PIB and FOB, North East Zone, Students of AAU and journalists across NE zone.



# Former Sikkim MP attends launch of 'Talking Trash' report

**SUMMIT REPORT**  
**Thiruvananthapuram/Gangtok, 24 Sept:** Indian government must enforce stringent Extended Producer responsibility (EPR) rules to ensure that plastic producers and brand owners take back their plastic waste instead of shifting the blame to the consumers and costs to the local authorities.

The call was made by speakers at the India launch of ‘Talking Trash: The corporate playbook of false solutions to the plastic crisis’ a new report from The Changing Markets Foundation that reveals how, behind a veil of nice-sounding initiatives and commitments to address the plastics crisis – the plastics industry, consumer brands, and retailers have obstructed and undermined proven legislative solutions to the crisis for decades.

The report reveals how plastic producers and brand owners like Coca-Cola, Colgate-Palmolive, Danone, Mars Incorporated, Mondelez International, Nestlé, PepsiCo, Perfetti Van Melle, Procter & Gamble, and Unilever who have a joint plastic footprint of almost 10 million tonnes per year, lobby at every level to fight against proven solutions to solve the plastics crisis, which would require them to fully step up their responsibility and take on the true costs of plastic pollution. Instead, they use distraction tactics, which are designed to make people think real change is happening or that responsibility for the problem lies elsewhere.

Nusa Urbancic, Campaigns Director at the Changing Markets Foundation, said, “This report exposes the two-faced hypocrisy of plastic polluters, which claim to be committed to solutions, but at the same time use a host of dirty tricks to ensure that they can continue pumping out cheap, disposable plastic, polluting the planet at a devastating rate. Real solutions, such as mandatory collection of packaging, policies to increase reuse and phase out certain problematic plastic types or products, rarely feature in the voluntary approach and are fiercely fought against if proposed by policy-makers.”

Plastic is pouring out into the natural world at a rate of 8 million tonnes a year, or one garbage truck per minute, and production has skyrocketed, with half of all plastics ever made having been produced since 2005. Production is expected to double again in the next 10–15 years.

Former Member of Parliament from Sikkim, PD Rai, said, “In the Himalayas, the plastic crisis is all-pervading despite the best efforts of the state governments and local Panchayats to ban all plastics. Extended Producer Responsibility, by which companies take back their packaging is the ultimate solution but there must be disincentives and penalties to successfully enforce such laws.”

Joint Secretary of Integrated Mountain Initiative, Priyadarshinee Shreshta said, “The existing and proposed waste management rules are one size fits all, they do

not recognise the fragility of mountains or the ecosystem services they provide. We urgently need to change the narrative from consumer behaviour to producer responsibility. Efforts taken by the corporations to reach their problematic products to remote corners should be matched by efforts to take them back or not make it at all.”

India Coordinator of GAIA- Asia Pacific, Shibu KN said, “In India, the proposed Uniform Framework for Extended Producer Responsibility (under Plastic waste management rules, 2016) have been formulated with inputs from industry associations to protect their business interests and profits, there was no consultation whatsoever either from State governments or local governments. It is unfortunate to see there is no concrete measure to reduce the use of plastics or safe recovery of plastics.”

Talking Trash report has shown that voluntary initiatives and commitments by the industry rarely work and are in fact used across the world to undermine legislation.

For this reason, policymakers should adopt progressive legislation, built on the following key elements:

1. The Plastic Waste Rules 2016 has clear and time bound commitments on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) which have still not been met despite the lapse of the prescribed deadlines and directions by the National Green Tribunal.

The government needs to ensure that producers/brand owners meet their obligations under the rules at the earliest.

2. Develop a binding national packaging policy with timelines and targets.

3. Pass legislations aimed at phasing out of harmful chemicals used in packaging plastics such as BFRs, BPAs, Phthalates, Lead etc.

4. Reverse the 2018 amendment to the plastic waste management rules and reintroduce the 2-year phase out deadline on multi-layered plastics.

5. Add EPR cess to plastic packaged products to promote non plastic alternatives and reduce tax tariff for plastic products maintaining stipulated percentage of recycled content.

6. The 2018 amendment to the plastic waste rules is a regressive step as it promotes false solutions such as mass incineration, cement kiln co-incineration and plastic roads in the guise of recycling. The government should remove these practices from the scope of recycling.

7. Implement minimum recycled-content targets in the production of packaging and containers of at least 50% for beverage containers and at least 30% for other items, as a starting point. This creates a market for effective plastic recycling and maintains plastic in a closed loop without downcycling the material.

8. Central or state governments should consider a tax on virgin plastic, which ensures the use of recycled plastic is incen-

tivized over virgin plastic. This should be accompanied with a clear position on the use of alternative materials, such as bio-based, biodegradable and compostable plastic, with justifications for what is – and what is not – a good use of these materials.

9. Introduce bans on unnecessary or harmful plastic materials, such as PVC and polystyrene.

10. Prioritise reusable alternatives and act to avoid regrettable substitutions – for example, replacing single-use plastic with other single-use materials, such as bio-based, biodegradable or compostable plastic – which do not fix pollution problems and may also lead to other environmental problems.

11. Indian urban local bodies should support the Zero Waste Cities approach by creating and implementing systems that continuously intend to phase out waste – not by incinerating, landfilling or exporting it, but instead by not generating waste in the first place.

12. India could spearhead the establishment of an intergovernmental negotiating committee at the United Nations Environment Assembly to negotiate a dedicated global agreement – a Convention on Plastic Pollution – that eliminates plastic discharges into the environment while also promoting a safe circular economy for plastics; one that addresses the full life cycle of plastics, from production and design to prevention and waste management.

**SUMMIT REPORT**  
**GANGTOK, 24 SEPT:**

Sikkim Manipal University (SMU) has awarded the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Biochemistry to Takhelmayum Paras Singh for his thesis titled “Generation of Is-

let-Like Cell Cluster from Human Mesenchymal Stem Cells Derived from Umbilical Cord Wharton’s Jelly and Cord Blood for Therapeutic Potential in Mice with Type-1 Diabetes Mellitus”, a press release informs.

The Degree has been

awarded on the recommendation of the Board of Examination of Sikkim Manipal University in the open defence Viva-Voice Examination conducted on 19 Sept, 2020 through online video conferencing mode (Microsoft Teams) with an expert

External Examiner from a prestigious institute in Mumbai.

“The state-of-the-art IT infrastructure at Sikkim Manipal University facilitated the defence of Thesis during the challenging Covid-19 pandemic,” the release men-

tions.

Mr Singh is a faculty in Department of Biochemistry, Sikkim Manipal Institute of Medical Sciences (SMIMS), 5th Mile Tadong, Gangtok, Sikkim. He pursued his research work under the Supervision of Professor

of Biochemistry, Dr ML Sherpa, SMIMS, Professor & Head of Pathology, Dr Amlan Gupta, SMIMS and Professor & Head of OBG, Dr Anup Pradhan, SMIMS.

Part of this study was funded by Indian Council of Medical Research and

also supported by the state of the art Institutional Level Biotech Hub NER-BPMC in Department of Biochemistry, funded by DBT India. He has published his landmark study findings in reputed National and International Journals and

also presented his scientific papers in National and International Conferences.

The Doctor of philosophy will be awarded to him during the next Convocation of Sikkim Manipal University.

## Sikkim Govt Law College completes 40 years

**SUMMIT REPORT**  
**GANGTOK, 24 SEPT:**

Sikkim Government Law College situated at Lower Burtuk, East Sikkim celebrated its 41st foundation day today. Sikkim Government Law College, the first professional college and the second oldest college of Sikkim, is the only government Law College in the State of Sikkim which was established on 24 Sept, 1980.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the foundation day was organized virtually via the Google Meet platform in which the welcome address was given by general secretary of Moot Court Society Sikkim Government Law College, Neha Gupta.

Dean of Students Affairs Sikkim Government Law College, Dr Dilip Pandey talked on the history of Sikkim Government Law College. Former SRC Member of Sikkim Government Law College, Dew Kumar Chettri highlighted the contributions of the college to the society at large.

To add a musical touch to the event student, Joylin Issac Chettri, 3rd year student, sang a melodious song, followed by self-composed poem recitation by 5th year student, Rupesh Rizal, and 3rd year student, An-



ish Sharma.

Dean, Dr KKV Rao, IUS, former Principal In-Charge cum former faculty member of Sikkim Government Law College was also present in the programme as a special guest and in his address he stated that it is a proud moment for the SGLC family and people of Sikkim that the first and only law college has completed 40 years.

Principal In-Charge, Dr TD Lama in his address extended

best wishes to everyone on the occasion and talked about the achievements of the institution and congratulated the organisers of the event.

Principal of Indian Institute of Legal Studies (IILs) and former Principal of Sikkim Government Law College, Dr Ganeshji Tiwari was the chief guest of the event. In his address, he stated that he was happy to be part of this historic occasion of Sikkim Government Law Col-

lege and spoke in brief about the history of Sikkim, Government Law College and contribution of some personalities whose contribution led to the establishment of the Law College. Dr Tiwari also congratulated the organisers and the entire SGLC family and extended his best wishes to all.

The virtual event witnessed the participation of all the teaching faculty members and students.

## Where the Sikkim Government failed and where it passed in its Covid-19 Exam

**Contd from pg01**

Nagaland, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh had zero Covid-19 cases for quite some time. Then they had one positive case for a long time until their numbers peaked gradually. In our euphoria, we ignored the germ theory to our own peril.

Now Sikkim is on the

verge of making the cardinal decision to start a massive unlocking process. The decision itself is not uncalled for as we cannot remain isolated endlessly. The biggest question, however, is how prepared, alert, smart and capable the state administrative will be to execute this mo-

mentous decision. The advanced world has resumed normal activities. I was amazed to read how Canada is leading the way. Their preparation is massively grand. Their administration is highly sensitive and responsive. Their manpower is ably trained. Their public is adequately educated and

informed. What about ours?

### \* LOST \*

I Anmol Baraily have Lost my ICSE Xth marksheet, Pass certificate, Migration, transfer certificate and character certificate while travelling to Chennai from Njp' If found please contact 8370923108 or submit it to your nearest police station.



**DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION**  
**GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM**  
**PARYATAN BHAWAN, TADONG**  
**Phone No: 03592-232218, Fax No: 232216**

No. ACS/DOT&CAV/05 Dated: 24.09.2020

**NOTICE**

In view of the decision of the State government for re-opening of Tourism activities in the State, the Department of Tourism and Civil Aviation provides the following information/ instructions with regard to **Tourism Unlock 1.0**, to all concerned:

1. Tourism industry to resumes its activity from 10th of October, 2020.

2. **Empanelment of Accommodation Units, Tour Operators & Service Providers.**

2.1 All Tourism units accommodation units travel operators and service providers are requested to compulsorily register their basic profile details in the crowd sourcing Portal: **164.100.238.98/public/stakeholdersregistration/home**. Following verification by back end team, user Id & Password would be sent for login in to web portal of the Department, <https://sikkimtourism.gov.in>. for completing other entries required for consideration for empanelment

2.2 photographic evidence of the following areas required to be uploaded

**a. For Hotels**

a) Reception area with markings for social distancing

b) Baggage sanitization/disinfection area

c) Lobby near reception

d) Rooms with sanitizers, soaps etc.

e) Dining area with social distancing seating.

**b. For vehicles/ Travel Agency/ Tour Operators.**

a) Social distancing & seating arrangement

b) Sanitizers for use by passengers

c) Portable cleaning/sanitizing equipments

d) Display of emergency numbers, Driver ID & License in the vehicle

2.3 Date of training given on SOP/Protocol to the employees/staff is also to be entered.

2.4 A stakeholder group representing all associations who underwent Training of Trainers workshop organized by Department of Tourism & CAV, would then recommend empanelment of those accommodations units, travel/tour operators and service providers.

2.5 based on such recommendations, State task Force for Tourism would approve empanelment

3. **Information for Tourists**

3.1 Tourists are required to book accommodation units and avail transport and other services from empanelled tour operators and service providers.

3.2 Tourist visiting Sikkim are required to fill requisite details in the forms available under the tab for Tourism Portal <https://sikkimtourism.gov.in>. A Travel card can be downloaded after filling all the sections and entering relevant details. The Travel Card is required to be updated by the tourist themselves or the Hotels or Tour operators or TICs on a day to day basis thereafter during their stay in Sikkim.

3.3 The Travel Card is required to be carried by the tourist at all times, and they may be asked to produce it for verification and checking by designated Enforcement officers deputed for such purpose.

3.4 Tourist may be fined by the Enforcement Officers if observed to violate the requirements for social distancing, wearing of mask, non-updation of travel card or availing services of non-empanelled accommodation units, tour operators/service providers.

3.5 All Tourists are advised to carry a Covid-negative Certificate issued by ICMR registered Testing Centre, not older than 72 hours prior to entry into the State of Sikkim.

4. **Identification of empanelled Hotels and Vehicles**

4.1 A customized sticker for vehicle and flags/standees or banners for Hotels and accommodations units and for office of Tour operators and service providers shall be displayed/hoisted in the vehicles/accommodation units and office as the case may be.

**Sd/-**  
**(Dr K Jayakumar). IAS**  
**Additional Chief Secretary**  
**Tourism & Civil Aviation Department**

**R.O. No : 86/IPR/PUB/Classi/20-21**  
**Date : 24/09/2020**



## Hold Us Accountable, Please

*News requires reader-engagement to stay the course*

Journalists live a charmed life. Those outside the clique have an inflated perception of our effectiveness and readers in general believe media persons to be much better informed than they actually are. This fiction, when it circulates too widely and for too long, can start convincing those who wield the pen [hammer keyboards nowadays] that they are indispensable, and with that comes the arrogance which, at least in our country, has also caused substantial damage to politics and administration. There is a fine line dividing standing up for something and becoming overbearing, but it is an important marker still, and over-stepping it can compromise the best of intentions. If the news-media is indeed seen as the fourth estate/ pillar in a democracy, then hollowing it out weakens the overall structure, so, as much as it needs to be supported and backed, it also needs to be held accountable. A free press, after all, is a necessity to ensure real progress.

It goes without saying that the right environment needs to be created for press to be free, and this is provided by institutional and civil-society support systems. It is also obvious that such an environment is always under constant pollutions by agencies which are threatened if journalists are allowed genuine freedoms. But new-media cannot be shackled only by a repressive systems, it can also be compromised by unethical practitioners. It is always a bad idea to pass the correctional cane into the hands of the powers-that-be, because they will definitely misuse it, so, it becomes important for every person with a stake in world affairs or national developments and also Sikkim to start reading newspapers [because more readers will mean more power, more independence for newspapers] and more importantly, start sending in more letters. At present, most letter writers are inspired by personal reasons to write. What is required for a more accountable media is to have a wider response base. Not eulogies, please write in hate mail, letters that point out errors, letters that demand clarifications, letters that complain of half-truths and incomplete reportage, letters that mention that readers notice the personal agendas of editors, publishers and reporters being packaged as news. The media needs feedback to stay on course, battle somnolence, remain relevant, and most importantly, remain accurate. The willingness to admit mistakes is an important part of being accurate. This has become even more significant in the age of online archives, although it has always been the case that mistakes in old newspaper cuttings could be repeated and result in an inaccurate report being circulated again years later. Accuracy, it needs no further stressing, is essential if journalism is to inform the public debate. And if public wishes to be served well with accurate information, significant perspectives and intelligent opinions, they need to engage, maintain a pressure which inspire excellence. Do that often enough, and even if newspapers do not publish them, the editors will be forced to read them and soon, the guilt will lead to more responsible, more accountable journalism.

This, in case you have forgotten how media peddled outright lies in how the Kanhaiya episode at JNU was reported, or how a Hindi news channel dredged the bottom of the ignorance barrel to claim and explain the nano-microchips they believed to be embedded in the new currency notes, or the comatose disinterest with which the northeast continues to be reported, or how when a certain national party wins state elections it becomes about local issues but when another national party wins in states it is credited to the charisma of The Leader... all of these should convince any consumer of “news” of how the sector requires more professionalism. In Sikkim’s case, the news-media admittedly needs to evolve beyond the incident-based reportage and press release/ press conference-driven political reporting that currently pack our pages, in colour. These happen because the readers remain aloof consumers. Much more and much better will arrive if readers became more engaged and started demanding better.

### 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](mailto:news@summittimes.com)

# Cash transfers can help refugees, but they also carry risks. Insights from Kenya

CORY RODGERS, JADE SIU & OLIVIER STERCK  
*theconversation.com*

Humanitarian organisations – such as the World Food Programme (WFP) – are increasingly using cash transfers as a way of assisting vulnerable people. Conventionally, humanitarian organisations procure food or other goods and distribute it directly to recipients. But cash transfers allow people to choose and purchase what they need for themselves.

They are widely praised for enhancing autonomy, reducing costs, and boosting local markets. And this has encouraged their use. For instance, in 2019, the WFP distributed US\$2.1 billion transfers to 27.9 million people.

Cash transfers come in many forms, such as mobile money or transfers into bank accounts. They generally provide recipients with greater choice, but sometimes come with restrictions on the kinds of goods that can be purchased.

These options raise important questions that organisations must consider during programme design. For instance, the degree of autonomy recipients have in their use of assistance and how the transfer should be made.

In an effort to shed some light on this we studied the impact of WFP’s cash transfers in the Kalobeyei refugee settlement in Kenya.

Established in 2016, a few kilometres away from the 28-year-old Kakuma refugee camp, Kalobeyei was envisioned as a new model for aid provision to refugees. The idea was to promote self-reliance for refugees, while also providing benefits to the local host population.

For the first three years, all households in Kalobeyei received restricted cash assistance from the WFP of KSh1,400 per person (about US\$14) per month. The cash was distributed as mobile currency via SIM cards and could only be spent on food items at particular retailers. The idea was to have better accountability in how it was used and to reduce spending on temptation goods, such as alcohol and tobacco.

In June 2019, the WFP began to roll out a new cash transfer programme – for about 1,000 households – which had a different approach: it removed the restrictions on purchases, transfers were paid directly into bank accounts and the cash could be spent on any item at any shop.

We studied both of these approaches and two key lessons emerged from our research:

First, there are some pros and some cons to removing restrictions on cash. So whether the cash is restricted or not matters.

Second, the cash transfer programmes encouraged the extension of credit to refugee beneficiaries. This in turn created a problem of indebtedness among vulnerable cash recipients. This happened regardless of whether the cash was restricted or not.

It’s important that agencies are aware of this as many people will not realise the benefits of unrestricted cash transfers due to high levels of indebtedness.

### MODES OF TRANSFER

To measure the differences between cash transfer programmes, we conducted focus groups, interviews, and a survey of 896 refugee households from two groups: those who received restricted cash under the old programme and those receiving



unrestricted cash under the new one.

Our analysis reveals that the switch to unrestricted cash transfers had robust positive effects on household asset accumulation and subjective well-being.

Unrestricted cash gave recipients the option to use their assistance on non-food necessities like clothing, cooking fuel, and school equipment for their children. Moreover, refugees could negotiate for more favourable prices with shopkeepers.

Under the restricted programme, refugees could only purchase non-food items by first selling their food for cash, forcing them to sell at below-market prices.

Unrestricted transfers also offered recipients a broader market of retailers from whom to purchase goods. Whereas restricted cash can only be used at a limited number of retailers who have been selected by WFP, the unrestricted cash can be used in any shop.

Finally, recipients of unrestricted cash benefited from a ‘cash-in-hand’ discount: goods purchased with hard cash tend to be cheaper than those purchased with restricted cash.

There is some evidence that unrestricted transfers lead to higher expenditure on alcohol and tobacco, but this was only reported by a low percentage of households (14%) and a small proportion of

their budgets (3.7%).

The overall results of the pilot experiment of unrestricted cash transfers are therefore mostly positive. But importantly, our study also shows that many people do not realise the benefits of unrestricted cash due to high levels of indebtedness.

### PROBLEM OF DEBT

In Kalobeyei, a staggering 89% of sampled households were indebted to retailers. Shopkeepers provided food on credit as a form of social support to assist food insecure refugees. But cash transfers contributed to higher levels of debt than conventional food aid.

This is because the technologies required for receipt of cash assistance – mobile SIM cards for the restricted programme and ATM cards for the unrestricted programme – can be retained by shopkeepers as a form of collateral.

Debt affected people in both the restricted and unrestricted cash programmes. And the debt undermined the effectiveness of the cash transfer programmes.

For one, refugees indebted to their shopkeepers are forced to turn over their cash transfer technologies as a form of collateral. Shopkeepers therefore withdraw their money on their behalf, and so these customers are unable to access hard cash as intended.

Indebted households are more likely to be food insecure, more likely to be dissatisfied with their circumstances, and less likely to have savings. This leaves them with anxiety, helplessness and fear.

In addition, interviewees revealed that debt subjected women to the coercive strategies of some male shop owners, putting them at risk of sexual harassment and abuse.

### MOVING FORWARD

Credit is a form of informal community support, and completely eliminating it is both undesirable and infeasible. However, agencies should take steps to prevent highly vulnerable refugee households from falling into high levels of debt.

Potential strategies include supporting community safety nets, facilitating schemes for debt repayment, and adjusting the value of transfers to ensure they provide sufficient purchasing power as prices fluctuate. However, this requires humanitarian organisations to recognise indebtedness as an important facet of vulnerability, and donors to provide the required level of support.

[Cory Rodgers is Pedro Arrupe Research Fellow in Forced Migration Studies, University of Oxford; Jade Siu is Research Assistant, Refugee Economies Programme, University of Oxford; Olivier Sterck is Senior Research Officer, University of Oxford]

# Coronavirus: the road to vaccine roll-out is always bumpy, as 20th-century pandemics show

SAMANTHA VANDERSLOTT  
*theconversation.com*

If you have been following the media coverage of the new vaccines in development for COVID-19, it will be clear that the stakes are high. Very few vaccine trials in history have attracted so much attention, perhaps since polio in the mid-20th century.

A now largely forgotten chapter, summer polio outbreaks invoked terror in parents. Today, restrictions on gatherings and movement in the efforts to control COVID-19 have been a huge strain on society, but in the 1950s, parents locked their children in stifling hot buildings during the summer with windows sealed shut because they were terrified polio would somehow seep through the cracks in the wall.

The development of the polio vaccine in the US in 1955 was a moment of global celebration. Reaching that point involved millions of citizens raising funds to develop the vaccine, political goodwill by the bucket-load and a driven public-private scientific collaboration, with scientist Jonas Salk at the helm. Children across the US were enlisted in one of the largest clinical trials in history.

Clearly, setbacks and challenges occurred along the

way, even once the vaccine was being rolled out. In a shocking episode called the “Cutter incident”, a failure in making and inspecting the vaccine by a California-based firm called the Cutter Laboratories led to children getting polio from the vaccine, which contained viable poliovirus.

The incident led to a major tightening of federal regulations to ensure production safety. It also resulted in new laws being passed that prevented vaccine manufacturers from being sued. (The fear was that drug manufacturers would not want to develop vaccines without being protected by the law.)

A lack of urgency for vaccine up-

take quickly set in. It is taken for granted that children are vaccinated routinely, but this acceptance took time. In the early era of vaccination, it was a tool against epidemics and people expected to be vaccinated during an outbreak. Through health education and communication, funding of immunisation services, and political support across party lines, vaccination was promoted as a central pillar of a public health globally.

### PROMISE OF AN AIDS VACCINE

When the next big plague of the 20th century hit – Aids – naturally it was vaccination that would be looked to. Within a short time of scientists confirming HIV was the cause of Aids in

1984, the US health and human services secretary, Margaret Heckler, announced that a vaccine would be ready in two years. The high expectations and hope instilled in vaccination were not surprising, particularly following the eradication of smallpox from the planet in 1980. However, an Aids vaccine proved to be unattainable.

Unfortunately, many aspects of HIV infection make it very difficult to develop a vaccine. Instead, it has been antiretrovirals – a group of drugs that inhibit various steps in the HIV replication process – that have proved to be the most effective strategy for treating Aids.

The stigma of Aids was also an inhibitor for controlling the disease. Health officials at the beginning of the Aids crisis coyly referred to the transmission being through “bodily fluids”, instead of specifying

blood and semen. This led to misunderstandings about the disease being spread through touch.

### NEW PANDEMIC, SAME PROBLEMS

Today, COVID-19 is the latest public health crisis that cannot be separated from politics and society. Fear of this disease, and whether it is taken seriously and seen as important to protect against, will play a major role in the support and uptake of a vaccine.

Most people want to return to a “normal life”, and a vaccine is the most reliable way to achieve this. However, the public’s desire for a vaccine is balanced against concerns about the speed of vaccine development, wariness about new types of vaccines, and mistrust of pharmaceutical companies, governments and the “health establishment”.

Public action in communities has been evident throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, in neighbours supporting the elderly and those unable to leave their homes by delivering groceries and medication, as well as compliance with government health messaging, and willingness to take part in medical trials. But national political stakes for a vaccine remain high with politicians using “vaccine deals” to bolster popular support and win elections.

The acceptance of vaccines is fragile, so when leaders promote their country’s vaccine with clear political motivations, it can knock the public’s confidence and draw intense scrutiny. As with the polio vaccine of the past, the world is watching.

[the writer is University Research Lecturer, University of Oxford]





# Nagaland in deep financial crisis; 2020-21 expected to close with Rs 2358.81 cr deficit

**DIMAPUR, SEPT 24 [NAGALANDPAGE]:** Nagaland is facing deep financial crisis despite austerity measures as a result of shortfall in receipts of share of Central taxes and duties as well as poor revenue collection due to imposition of lockdown following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The financial issue confronting the State and the likely impact these will have on the activities of the Government was discussed in a State Cabinet meeting today, said a press release issued by the State Finance Department.

The Finance Department said out of an estimated monthly receipt of Rs 320.96 crores per installment as share of



Central taxes and duties, the figure as reflected in the Union Budget of 2020-21, the actual receipts is only Rs Rs 263.80 crores, resulting in a monthly deficit of Rs 57.16 crores.

This amount was again reduced to Rs 240.47 crores since June 2020, and accordingly the monthly deficit has

now risen to Rs 80.49 crores, it said.

The total deficit during 2020-21 on account of shortfall in receipts of share of Central taxes and duties alone comes to Rs 1080.13 crores. The negative impact is not confined to Central receipts only. Our own revenues have fallen by about Rs 38 crores a

month below the budgeted amount during the period April-August 2020, the department said in a press release.

Given the present trends, the revenue receipts of the State are likely to witness a decline of Rs 1650 crores during 2020-21 against what has been budgeted, it said.

The FD said when the present Chief Minister had handed over the reins of the Government in 2013-14 the deficit stood at Rs 950.09 crores. However, it said by the time the present Government returned in 2018 the deficit had grown to Rs 1607.73 crores.

The Finance Department estimated that the current year 2020-21 is

expected to close with a deficit of Rs 2358.81 crores as per budget estimates and this includes an increase of Rs 939 crore since 2014-15. This, the release said, is mainly due to various factors such as implementation of the last pay revision for State Government employees and payment of pending dues and liabilities to contractors following various Court judgments in their favour, leaving the Government with no alternative but to pay.

However, in view of the unforeseen developments caused by the pandemic, the year is expected to close with a much higher deficit than estimated, it feared.

Stating that the neg-

ative impact of the pandemic has been so widespread and pervasive that the Government has been compelled to adopt drastic measures to mitigate the negative effects of the fall in receipts to avoid a potential collapse, the release said some of the measures adopted include prorata cuts in the budgets of the departments, imposition of various austerity measures and mobilization of additional resources through imposition of COVID-19 cess.

The release also appealed to all responsible citizens to refrain from making "sweeping statements based on hearsay without ascertaining facts."

## COVID-19 tally breaches 8K-mark in Arunachal with highest one-day spike of 289 cases

**ITANAGAR, SEPT 24 [PTI]:** Arunachal Pradesh on Thursday reported its highest single-day spike of 289 COVID-19 cases, which took the tally in the northeastern state to 8,133, a senior health department official said.

Barring 21, all new patients are asymptomatic and have been shifted to COVID-19 care centres, State Surveillance Officer (SSO) Dr L Jampa said.

"Ten security personnel — six from the Assam Rifles, two from the Indo Tibetan Border Police, one each from the Army and the Indian Reserve Battalion — are among the new patients," the SSO said.

Of the 289 fresh cases, 173 were reported from the Capital Complex region, 17 from Changlang, 13 from East Siang, nine each from Papumpare and Pakke Kessang, eight each from Namsai, Lohit, and West Siang, seven from Upper Subansiri and six each from Anjaw, Longding, Upper Siang and West Kameng.

Five cases were recorded in Lower Dibang Valley, two each in Lower Siang and Kra Daadi and one each in Tawang, Tirap, East Kameng and Siang districts, Dr Jampa said.

Altogether 125 people were discharged from various hospitals in the state on Wednesday, he said, adding that the recovery rate stands at 72.58 per cent.

Arunachal Pradesh currently has 2,216 active cases, while 5,903 people have been cured of the disease. Fourteen patients have succumbed to the infection.

The state's Capital Complex region — comprising Itanagar, Naharlagun, Nirjuli and Banderdewa areas — has reported the maximum number of active cases at 1077, followed by West Siang at 172, Papumpare at 150 and Changlang at 137.

As many as 2,31,045 samples have been tested for the infection so far, including 2,803 on Wednesday, the SSO added.

## BSF seizes 100kg of Hilsa fish being smuggled into India

**KOLKATA, SEPT 24 (PTI):** Border Security Force has seized 100 kg of 'Hilsa' fish while the consignment was allegedly being smuggled from Bangladesh into India through Petrapole integrated checkpoint in West Bengal, a BSF officer said on Thursday.

During routine checking at the integrated checkpoint in North 24 Parganas district on Wednesday, BSF personnel found six bags containing the prized fish hidden inside the upper hood of a truck, the BSF spokesman said.

The truck driver, the vehicle, and the fish were handed over to the Customs authorities at Petrapole, he said.

The value of the seized fish was around Rs 9 lakh in the Indian market.

The apprehended driver was identified as a resident of Kalianai village of Duttapukur area in North 24 Parganas district, the officer said.

The driver claimed that he had gone to Bangladesh with his truck containing motor parts and when he was returning after unloading the goods he was offered Rs 6,000 by a man in the neighbouring country, for delivering the bags to a person at Bongaon in North 24 Parganas district, he said.

'Hilsa', often described as the 'queen of fish' is liked for its taste and smell. It can be savoured when fried or cooked in mustard sauce.

Although, it is a tropical saltwater fish (scientific name: *Tenualosa ilisha*), it thrives in rivers and estuaries.

# 46 new COVID-19 cases in Mizoram; tally rises to 1,759; no fatalities

**AIZAWL, SEP 24 (PTI):** Forty-six more people, including 14 BSF jawans have tested positive for COVID-19 in Mizoram, taking the state's coronavirus tally to 1,759 on Thursday, an official said.

Thirty-three cases were reported from Aizawl district, 11 from Lunglei and one case each was reported from Serchhip and Mamit districts, according to an official statement by the state Information and Public Relations department.

Of the 14 BSF jawans, 11 are posted at Lunglei, two in Aizawl and one in Serchhip district. The 14

BSF jawans and a state resident have come from other states, it said.

All the patients are asymptomatic, the statement said.

There are 664 active COVID-19 cases in the state while 1,095 people have recovered from the virus and the recovery rate is 62.26 per cent.

Mizoram has not reported any fatality due to COVID-19 till date.

The first COVID-19 case was reported in the state on March 24.

A total of 66,320 samples have been tested till Wednesday evening, the health department said.



# NEHU innovators develop book sanitisation machine

**SHILLONG, SEP 24 (PTI):** A team of innovators of the North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU) here has developed a book sanitisation machine to deal with COVID-19 infections through books, officials said on Thursday.

The book sanitising machine was invented by a team of innovators of the Department of Biomedical Engineering and the Department of Basic Sciences and Social Sciences of NEHU, a Central university.

Dr Aseem Sinha, one of the members of the product development team said, "This sanitising machine functions in an auto-controlled mode to sanitise all kinds of reading materials without causing any kind of

damage to the material."

Sinha said it is a composite machine using ultraviolet (uv) rays and heat technology to sanitise books.

He said the machine can sanitise up to 150 books in one cycle of about 45 minutes at a cost of 20 paise per book.

NEHU Vice-Chancellor Prof SK Srivastava inaugurated the book sanitising machine at the central library of the university on Wednesday.

Prof Srivastava said, "The development of such a sanitising machine was a fantastic fusion of library, a place to provide knowledge and the School of Technology, the place to convert that knowledge into the means for so-



cial benefit."

He also came out with the acronym 'ABSCoM' for the machine.

Training has been imparted to the library staff to operate the machine, officials said.

NEHU Librarian In-charge Dr FR Sumer said the device was felt necessary, about two months

ago to manage the handling of the books and other reading materials, while in circulation among the students and other users, especially in the post lockdown situation.

The idea behind inventing this machine is to ensure a corona-free environment in the University library for safe

use of the books under circulation, he said.

## Manipur CM drops three ministers from cabinet

**IMPHAL, SEP 24 (PTI):** Amid speculation of a cabinet reshuffle in Manipur, Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Thursday dropped three ministers from the council of ministers.

Governor Najma Heptulla has accepted the recommendation, according to her letter to the chief minister.

The three cabinet members dropped are minister for agriculture and animal husbandry, V Hangkhalian, minister for social welfare and cooperation, Nemcha Kipgen, and minister for education, labour and employ-

ment, Radheshyam Singh.

Notably, the CM and state BJP chief S Tikendra Singh had recently visited Delhi, where they met several central leaders, including the party's national president J P Nadda.

Sources in the party said they discussed various issues, including the modalities of effecting a cabinet rejig and matters related to impending assembly bypolls.

Five seats recently fell vacant in the 60-member House in Manipur following resignation and disqualification of MLAs.

# Nagaland revokes COVID-19 cess

**Kohima, Sept 23 [NagalandPage]:** The Government of Nagaland on Wednesday revoked the unpopular COVID-19 cess on petroleum products as demanded by various organizations.

From the midnight April 28, Nagaland was charging 'COVID-19 Cess' on diesel, petrol and other motor spirits, in addition to the existing rate of tax and cess.

The cess was Rs 5 per litre on diesel and Rs 6 per litre on petrol and motor spirits.

The Government took

the decision during a cabinet meeting held at Choumukedima in Dimapur district while listening to the cries of the people and also considering the opening up of economic activities amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, said Minister for Planning and Coordination, Land Revenue and Parliamentary Affairs, Neiba Kro-nu, who is also Government spokesperson on COVID-19.

Following the imposition of COVID-19 cess, opposition parties, tribal bodies, civil societies and student bodies had been

demanding rollback of the cess, while a 4-day ultimatum was served by the Dimapur Naga Students' Union on September 19 to close down all the petrol pumps in the State and also restricting entry of petroleum supply if the COVID cess was not withdrawn. It had gained the support from around the State.

The official notification to rollback the COVID-19 cess, however, would be out only on Thursday and is likely to come into effect from Thursday midnight, said the Government

spokesperson.

According to the State Finance Department, the total amount received from Gol for COVID-19 is Rs 27.84 crore, whereas the total amount spent from State's resources for COVID-19 till date is Rs 115.80 crore.

The total COVID-19 cess collected from April to August 2020 is Rs 13.14 crore, it said.

Calling upon all responsible citizens to refrain from making "sweeping statements based on hearsay without ascertaining facts," the

Government said efforts should be made to ascertain correct facts through proper means about the total amount given to the Government of Nagaland for COVID-19 purposes from the Central Government before raising the issue in public domain.

Stating that the Government believes that the fight against the pandemic is far from over, it requested all responsible citizens to avoid resorting to activities that will restrict the Government's ability to respond effectively.

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# Luis Suarez joins Atletico Madrid from Barcelona



**BARCELONA, 24 Sept [Reuters]:** Atletico Madrid have signed striker Luis Suarez from Barcelona, the Spanish clubs said on Wednesday, bringing to an end his six-year stint at the Camp Nou.

Barca's statement said Atletico will pay the Catalans six million euros (\$7 million) in bonus payments to sign the 33-year-old.

The Uruguay striker, who is Barca's third all-time top scorer with 198 goals in all competitions, had a year left on his contract with the club.

"Atletico Madrid and Barcelona have reached an agreement for the

transfer of Luis Suarez, subject to a medical and the formal agreement of a new contract for the Uruguayan striker with our club," Atletico said in their statement.

Suarez will give a farewell news conference on Thursday.

Barca added: "Barcelona would like to publicly express its gratitude to the player for his commitment and wishes him all the success in the future."

Suarez will replace Alvaro Morata in Atletico's front line after the Spanish striker was loaned to Juventus for a season with an option to buy.

Suarez, who joined Barcelona from Liverpool in 2014, leaves the club having won the Champions League, four La Liga titles and four Copa del Rey trophies.

The Uruguayan was deemed surplus to requirements by new manager Ronald Koeman, who is keen on changing the old guard and rebuilding the squad, with 33-year-old midfielder Arturo Vidal also completing a permanent move to Inter Milan.

Despite a turbulent season with Barca dogged by injuries, Suarez still hit 16 goals in 22 La Liga starts to finish

as the fourth top scorer in Spain's top flight. Atletico's top scorer was Morata with 12.

Suarez becomes the third striker in recent years to switch between the two La Liga clubs after David Villa was sold to Atletico in 2013 while Antoine Griezmann moved to Barca last year.

While Villa became an instant hit, scoring 13 goals in Atletico's 2013-14 league title-winning campaign, Griezmann has yet to hit the same heights at Barca following his 120 million euros (\$140.86 million) move.

Atletico struggled for much of last season

without Griezmann and will hope the capture of Suarez will significantly improve their chances of challenging Real Madrid and Barca for the title.

Suarez had also been linked with Serie A side Juventus and took an Italian exam in an attempt to get an EU passport to be eligible to play as a European player as the Turin side's non-EU player slots were already filled.

However, Italian prosecutors said on Tuesday they had evidence the language exam taken by Suarez to obtain Italian citizenship was rigged.

## Eddie Nketiah's poaching instinct smooths Arsenal's route past Leicester

**PAUL DOYLE LEICESTER, 24 SEPT [THEGUARDIAN]:** This was essentially a meeting between shadow sides and its turning point was a slapstick Leicester own goal by Christian Fuchs but it provided further evidence, nonetheless, that Arsenal are growing into a serious unit under Mikel Arteta.

Following success in the FA Cup and Community Shield, Arteta oversaw progress in the Carabao Cup with a now familiar performance of rigour and hunger, with a dollop of good fortune. Eddie Nketiah's scrappy late goal from close range put a cherry on top for Arsenal.

The contest was not exactly decorated with flamboyant play but the basic ingredients Arteta demands, and that Arsenal often lacked before his arrival, were apparent. Arsenal are a team who know their jobs and are fully committed to the mission; and the display from young players on the fringes, such as Nketiah, Bukayo Saka, and Reiss Nelson, gave the club's outlook a brighter glow.

Arteta gave an indication of how he sees Mesut Ozil and Matteo Guendouzi's futures by leaving both out of the squad at the King Power while fielding a starting lineup with seven changes from their last Premier League outing.

When asked about Ozil's absence, the manager tried to deflect the question. "I'm really happy with the performance



of the players here," he said. Pressed, he added: "The team is evolving. You can see the level they are achieving ... We are picking the players we believe are the best for each game.

"You can see the players we are changing and using. It is very difficult for some players, not just Mesut, to make the squad. It's difficult for others who haven't been involved.

"We have a squad of 26 or 27 players at the moment. I have to do my job as fair as possible and I have to try to select the players who in my opinion are in better condition."

Leicester fielded an entirely different lineup to the one who started Sunday's league victory over Burnley, with Daniel Amartey impressing on his first appearance since break-

ing a leg against West Ham nearly two years ago.

That happy development was offset by Brendan Rodgers' revelation after the match that Leicester's influential midfielder Wilfred Ndidi will be out for at least six weeks with a groin injury suffered against Burnley. "It will be at least 12 if he needs an operation," Rodgers said.

Leicester started brightly, with Kelechi Iheanacho going close twice in the first five minutes. On the second of those occasions Bernd Leno denied him, rushing off the line to make a good save with his feet. In between those efforts Nelson, who has been linked with a loan move away from Arsenal, showed his promise by cutting in from the left and

firing just over the bar.

Arsenal gained control, advancing with moves of impressive fluidity and geometry, and in Saka they had a player apt to glide past several opponents at any moment.

When he did so in the 20th minute, starting from his left wing-back position, he sent a pass across the face of goal that a teammate should have anticipated.

But Leicester came closest to scoring in the first half when James Maddison, making his first start of the season, curled an exquisite shot over Leno from the edge of the box. The goalkeeper's luck was in, as the ball bounced back off the post and into his arms.

Maddison should have threatened again just after the

break but ballooned a shot from 20 yards after clever service by Demarai Gray. Both sides were popping the ball around pretty well but neither looked sharp in the box.

It took a blunder and good fortune to bring a breakthrough. First, Fuchs misjudged a bouncing ball, allowing it to run to Nketiah, who fed Nicolas Pépé. Danny Ward dived in to cut out the Ivorian's pass across the face of goal but inadvertently sent it back to Pépé, whose instant shot from an acute angle struck the near post and ricocheted into the net off the dumbfounded Fuchs.

Nketiah nearly doubled Arsenal's lead with a nifty lob over Ward but Wes Morgan recovered to clear off the line. Ayoze Pérez, on as a substitute, should have drawn Leicester level in the 81st minute but headed wide from close range after a lovely free-kick by Marc Albrighton.

Then another substitute, Héctor Bellerin, helped Arsenal seal victory by dancing into the box and flashing the ball across goal to Nketiah. The striker, summing up the qualities Arteta has instilled, showed greater alertness and determination to poke the ball over the line as Ward seemed to dawdle.

"I'm really happy with the performance, first of all with the attitude," Arteta said. "I could see the players came here to win the game."



## Neglected Di Maria vows to keep fighting for Argentina place

**BUENOS AIRES, 24 Sept [Reuters]:** Angel Di Maria has expressed dismay at being left out the Argentina squad for next month's World Cup qualifiers against Ecuador and Bolivia but he vowed on Wednesday to keep giving his all in the hope of a swift return.

Coach Lionel Scaloni gave no reason for omitting the Paris St-Germain midfielder and Di Maria, who helped take his side to the Champions League final last month, said he could find "no explanation" for his omission.

"If I do everything I do at club level, trying to get in the team to play a World Cup or Copa America, it is difficult to understand why I'm not selected," Di Maria told AM 590, an Argentine radio station.

"Every time I play well or get a Man of the Match award the only

thing I can think of is getting called up."

Argentina have not lifted a major trophy since winning the Copa America in 1993 and local pundits have suggested Scaloni left the 32-year old out because he wants to phase in a new crop of players.

Di Maria, though, vowed to keep on giving his all in the hope he can rejoin Lionel Messi and company.

"I love playing for the national team and I hope with all my heart and soul to wear the Argentina shirt again," the former Manchester United and Real Madrid player said. "I am going to give 100%."

Argentina kick off their quest to reach Qatar 2022 with a home game against Ecuador on Oct 8, followed by a visit to Bolivia five days later.

## Kai Havertz hits hat-trick to ease Chelsea through against Barnsley

**JACOB STEINBERG FULHAM, 24 SEPT [THEGUARDIAN]:** It turns out that writing off Kai Havertz two games into his Chelsea career was somewhat misguided. After the sniping that greeted the German's rusty displays against Brighton and Liverpool, he burst into a life with a hat-trick as Chelsea reached the fourth round of the Carabao Cup with a thumping win over Barnsley.

This was a reminder everybody deserves to be given time to settle after a big move, even when they happen to be one of the best young talents in the world. After all Havertz was playing in the quarter-finals of the Europa League a little over a month ago. The 21-year-old has barely had a break since the end of last season and has been thrown straight in after his move from Bayer Leverkusen.

Yet Havertz's class was obvious. He combined brilliantly with Tammy Abraham and although he needs to do more than destroy Barnsley to jus-



tify the hype, Frank Lampard was delighted with the former Leverkusen attacker. "It was everything I wanted," the Chelsea manager said. "He's had no pre-season. It was a great night for Kai and the first of many."

It was a satisfying night for Lampard. Thiago Silva had an authoritative debut in central defence and Abra-

ham shone up front, although Callum Hudson-Odoi looked a little tentative after a week of speculation over his future. Hudson-Odoi's attitude was good, though, and there were flashes of the winger's ability. "I thought he did well," Lampard said. "He looked sharp."

Lampard's selection demonstrated why he wants to trim his squad before the

window shuts on 5 October. Ruben Loftus-Cheek's absence summed up the competition for places and Antonio Rüdiger looks certain to leave after being left out of the squad for the second successive game. "Nothing is concrete," Lampard said. "Don't read too much into those selections at the minute."

While Rüdiger was off

nursing a bruised ego, there was an opportunity for Hudson-Odoi, who has been out in the cold of late. The winger had an opening to make his point to Lampard in the first minute, only to shoot too close to Brad Collins.

At times Hudson-Odoi seemed too eager to please. While the 19-year-old worked hard on the right, he needed to relax and follow the example of Abraham, who was keen to show that he can compete with Timo Werner. The striker gave Chelsea the lead in the 18th minute, finishing well after a mix-up at the back.

But the stage belonged to Havertz. He was inventive in the No10 role and he scored his first goal in blue when Abraham dummied a pass from Mason Mount through to him. Havertz strode clear and finished calmly.

At the other end Chelsea were shaky, even with Silva alongside Fikayo Tomori. Emerson Palmieri struggled at left-back and Barnsley forced Willy Caballero to

make far too many saves for Lampard's liking.

It should have been harder for a Championship side to carve Chelsea open. Yet it is hard to see Rüdiger working his way back. Lampard has five centre-backs and he will not stand in Rüdiger's way if Chelsea receive offers for the German.

Lampard wants more leadership at the back and Silva was vocal. The 36-year-old Brazilian had a good workout before making way for Kurt Zouma in the 61st minute.

Ross Barkley added a third with a firm shot and Havertz scored again in the 55th minute, clipping past Collins after a lovely flick from Abraham.

Havertz completed his hat-trick just after the hour, rounding Collins before tapping into the empty net, and then he made way for another debutant. Ben Chilwell came on and Chelsea, who will face Leyton Orient or Tottenham next, added a sixth when Olivier Giroud headed in after coming off the bench.

## West Brom boss Bilic fined for improper conduct in loss to Everton

**LONDON, 24 Sept [Reuters]:** The Football Association (FA) has fined West Bromwich Albion manager Slaven Bilic 8,000 pounds (\$10,171.20) after he admitted to a charge of improper conduct during Saturday's 5-2 Premier League defeat at Everton.

Bilic, 52, was shown a red card by referee Mike Dean for his complaints at halftime after defender Kieran Gibbs was sent off for pushing Everton's James Rodriguez in the face.

"Slaven Bilic has been fined 8,000 pounds after admitting a charge for a breach of FA Rule E3 and accepting the standard penalty," the FA said in a statement.

"The West Bromwich Albion manager's behaviour on the field of play at halftime of the Premier League fixture against Everton on Sept. 19, 2020 amounted to improper conduct."



## ‘Are people to be left to die?’ Vaccine pleas fill UN summit

**JOHANNESBURG (AP):** If the United Nations was created from the ashes of World War II, what will be born from the global crisis of COVID-19?

Many world leaders at this week’s virtual U.N. summit hope it will be a vaccine made available and affordable to all countries, rich and poor. But with the U.S., China and Russia opting out of a collaborative effort to develop and distribute a vaccine, and some rich nations striking deals with pharmaceutical companies to secure millions of potential doses, the U.N. pleas are plentiful but likely in vain.

“Are people to be left to die?” Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández, a COVID-19 survivor, said of the uncertain way forward.

More than 150 countries have joined COVAX, in which richer countries agree to buy into potential vaccines and help finance access for poorer ones. But the absence of Washington, Beijing and Moscow means the response to a health crisis unlike any other in the U.N.’s 75 years is short of truly being global. Instead, the three powers have made vague pledges of sharing any vaccine they develop, likely after help-

ing their own citizens first.

This week’s U.N. gathering could serve as a wake-up call, said Gayle Smith, president of the ONE Campaign, a nonprofit fighting preventable disease that’s developing scorecards to measure how the world’s most powerful nations are contributing to vaccine equity.

“It’s not enough for only some G20 countries to realize that an equitable vaccine is the key to ending this virus and re-opening the global economy,” she said.

With weeks remaining before a deadline for countries to join COVAX, which is co-led by the U.N.’s World Health Organization, many heads of state are using the U.N. meeting as a high-profile chance to wheedle, persuade and even shame. Ghana’s president, Nana Akufo-Addo, pointed out the illusory nature of borders and wealth: “The virus has taught us that we are all at risk, and there is no special protection for the rich or a particular class.”

The president of the COVID-free Pacific island nation of Palau, Tommy Remengesau Jr., warned against selfishness: “Vaccine hoarding will harm us all.”

And Rwanda’s president,

Paul Kagame, appealed to the universal desire for a return to normal: “Ensuring equitable access to vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics will speed up the end of the pandemic for everyone.”

Just two days into nearly 200 speeches by world leaders, it was clear the urgent need for a vaccine would be mentioned by almost everyone. Considering the mind-popping challenges ahead, that’s no surprise.

“We’ve never dealt with a situation where 7.8 billion people in the world are needing a vaccine at almost the same time,” John Nkengasong, head of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said this month.

That has led to difficult questions: Who will get vaccine doses first? Who is making private deals to get them? This week’s speeches make clear that such questions have existential meaning.

The vaccine quest must not be a “purely mercantile act,” Iraq said. Nor “an issue of competition,” Turkey said.

“We must take the politics out of the vaccine,” Kazakhstan said. “We need true globalization of compassion,” Slovakia said.

The Dominican Republic

deployed all-caps in a statement: “WE DEMAND this vaccine be available to all human beings on the planet.” More gently, Mozambique warned that “nationalism and isolationism in the face of a pandemic are, as far as we are concerned, a prescription for failure.”

No matter their reputation at home or on the global stage, leaders are finding a shred of common ground as the world nears a staggering 1 million confirmed deaths from the pandemic.

“The COVID-19 vaccine must be considered a global public good. Let us be clear on this,” said Rodrigo Duterte, president of the Philippines.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres kicked off the General Assembly by declaring in an interview with the U.N.’s media arm: “To think that we can preserve the rich people, and let the poor people suffer, is a stupid mistake.”

It’s not clear if the world leaders’ remarks, delivered not in a diplomatic scrum at U.N. headquarters but in videos recorded from national capitals, will make a difference. Health experts, activists and others anxiously watching the issue

## Kenyan leader asks what UN brings to world today

**UNITED NATIONS, SEP 23**

**(AP):** Kenya’s president has given a generational jolt to the 75-year-old United Nations, pointing out that the world body is older than 96% of the global population.

In a prerecorded speech on Wednesday at the UN General Assembly, Uhuru Kenyatta said the UN was created to bring hope to a world in ruins after World War II, but what does it bring to the world today?

The statement is fitting coming from an African nation. The continent has the world’s youngest

population, with a median age of 19. And that booming population is increasingly impatient with leaders multiple times their age.

African leaders also want to shake up the UN system that keeps the global powers of 75 years ago in charge, while Africa’s 1.3 billion people are without a permanent seat on the UN’s most powerful body, the Security Council.

This week at the UN gathering of world leaders, African nations again have made it clear it’s time that changed.

## Quarantine ordered for 2,500 students at elite Swiss school

**LAUSANNE, Switzerland**

**(AP):** Swiss health authorities have ordered a quarantine for a staggering 2,500 students at a prestigious hospitality management school in the city of Lausanne after “significant outbreaks” of the coronavirus that are a suspected byproduct of off-campus partying.

Authorities in Switzerland’s Vaud canton, or region, said all undergraduates at the Ecole Hoteliere de Lausanne, known as the Lausanne Hospitality Management University in English, have been ordered to quarantine both on- and off-campus because the number of COVID-19 outbreaks because targeted closures were not possible.

The World Health Organization, national health authorities and others have cautioned that young people, who tend to have milder COVID-19 symptoms than older demographic groups, have been a key driver for the continued spread of the coronavirus in recent weeks, particularly in Europe.

“Significant outbreaks of infection have appeared at several levels of training, making a more targeted closure impossible that that involving the 2,500 students affected,” the Vaud regional office said in a statement. “Until Sept.

28, the students must stay home. For some, that means not leaving their housing on the hospitality school site.”

It noted that an early investigation showed that “one or more parties was at the origin of these many outbreaks of infection,” and reiterated authorities’ previous call for a “responsible attitude” among party-goers such as by wearing masks, tracing their contacts, keeping alert for symptoms, and “social distancing.”

School administrators were taking “all necessary measures” to ensure that classes were continuing online, the statement said.

University spokesman Sherif Mamdouh said Thursday that the situation was “not ideal” but that the university took precautions in recent months. He said that 11 students had tested positive for the coronavirus and none required hospitalization.

Mamdouh said the quarantine affects 2,500 undergraduates. The university has a total student body of about 3,500, including people pursuing advanced degrees. He said hundreds of students living in on-campus dormitories on campus will be subject to the quarantine.

## China’s military flew surveillance planes on 3 days

**TAIPEI, Taiwan**

**(AP):** Taiwan on Thursday condemned recent Chinese military activity after Beijing sent two military surveillance planes toward the island for three straight days, calling it a “deliberate provocation.”

Tensions have risen in the Taiwan Strait as the U.S. has stepped up its official engagement with the self-ruled island that China considers part of its national territory.

On Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, China sent two planes into Taiwan’s air defense identification zone, according to Taiwan’s Ministry of National Defense. In response, the Taiwanese side dispatched air patrols, the ministry said.

“We oppose China using military force against Taiwan, deliberately violating Taiwan’s



naval and airspace safety and damaging the status quo,” added Chiu Chui-Cheng, deputy minister at Taiwan’s Mainland Affairs Council. “Our government will continue to cooperate with countries with similar values.”

Last week, China sent a total of 37 warplanes, including bombers and fighter jets, across the

Taiwan Strait in a warning as a high-level U.S. State Department official visited the island. The Taiwanese defense ministry said the planes crossed the midline of the Taiwan Strait.

The midline has acted as an unofficial buffer zone between China and Taiwan for decades, in what Taiwan’s Mainland

Affairs Council on Thursday called “a tacit agreement that has kept the peace.”

Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin on Monday denied the existence of any midline, saying that Taiwan is part of China. He also warned that China would retaliate for the U.S. visit. “We will take

countermeasures, including against relevant individuals,” he said.

Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen has remained defiant, visiting a military base on Tuesday and encouraging the personnel, in particular pilots and crew.

Taiwanese foreign minister Joseph Wu said in July that Chinese mil-

itary exercises have increased in frequency and become “virtually a daily occurrence.”

China has increased diplomatic and military pressure on Tsai’s government over her refusal to agree to China’s insistence that the island be considered part of Chinese territory. The vast majority of Taiwanese reject the prospect of political union with China under the “one country, two systems” framework used for Hong Kong.

Following Tsai’s election in 2016, China cut off contact with the Taiwanese government and has sought to isolate it, siphoning off the island’s diplomatic allies while ratcheting up political, military and economic pressure.

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## Drug companies work jointly to boost vaccine confidence

**LONDON (AP):** Two firms

developing COVID-19 vaccines say pharmaceutical companies are trying to give the public as much information as possible about their testing regimes as drugmakers and public health officials seek to boost confidence that any approved vaccine will be safe.

AstraZeneca CEO Pascal Soriot and Paul Stoffels, chief scientific officer of Johnson & Johnson, said Thursday that they recognize the coronavirus emergency demands increased transparency from vaccine developers to ensure the public has faith in the end product. They stressed however that there are limits to the information they can release because they must protect patient confidentiality and the integrity of their scientific research.

Ultimately, the public will have to trust regulators around the world and the independent experts that oversee drug trials, Soriot said during a panel discussion sponsored by the World Economic Forum.



“You’ve got to trust that the experts whose job it is to monitor these trials and these developments are doing a good job,” Soriot said. “Medicine should not be practiced for the media, it should be practiced by experts.”

The comments come as scientists scramble to develop a vaccine that would protect the public from a pandemic that has killed nearly 1 million people worldwide and as numerous countries battle against a surge in cases. The United States and other countries have invested billions of dollars to develop a vaccine that would allow them to ease restrictions on social interactions that have devastated the global economy.

But public health experts have expressed concern that political pressure on regulators to

quickly approve vaccines will undermine public confidence in their safety and effectiveness. U.S. President Donald Trump has repeatedly touted his belief that a vaccine will be approved before the presidential election on Nov. 3, calling scientists’ estimation of a longer timeline “confused.”

Public concern about a vaccine could be disastrous to its widespread acceptance and undermine efforts to vaccinate enough people to stop transmission of COVID-19.

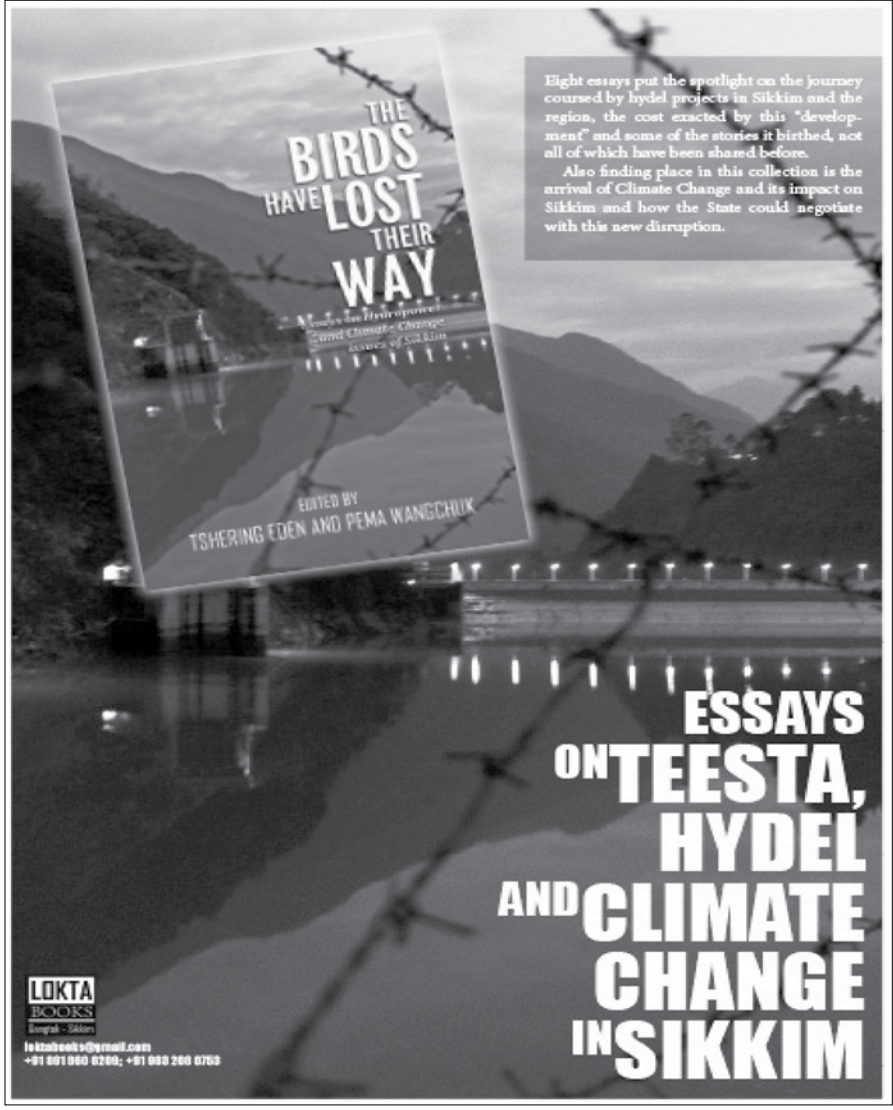
Soriot pointed out that the vaccines being developed by his company and others must be approved by regulators around the world, not just the U.S.

“You really would have to love conspiracy theories to believe that all regulators around the

world will all agree to approve a vaccine that is not safe and effective,” he said. “It’s hard to believe that every country would do that, so you’re going to have several sets of eyes from different countries looking at this data.”

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has said it would not approve any vaccine unless it meets a 50% efficacy threshold, while the European Medicines Agency said they do not have a minimum criteria and that potential coronavirus vaccines would be considered on a case-by-case basis. The World Health Organization said it hopes experimental vaccines will prove at least 70% effective, but acknowledged that first-generation shots may not reach that target.

Against this backdrop, drugmakers have come under pressure to release more incremental information on the progress of their vaccine trials - information that they normally wouldn’t release until the trials are complete.







**VOTE! The top model, Kendall Jenner picks up a couple of healthy drinks with her pup while rocking a mask that says "Vote".**

## Parisa Fitz-Henley to lead medical drama pilot 'Triage'



Actor Parisa Fitz-Henley, best known for starring in NBC drama series "Midnight, Texas", is set to headline ABC Studios's upcoming pilot "Triage".

The medical drama comes from longtime "Criminal Minds" showrunner Erica Messer, "Crazy Rich Asians" director Jon M Chu and writer David Cornue, reported Deadline.

Chu will direct and executive produce the show created by Cornue.

"Triage" is a character-driven medical drama that follows pioneering surgeon Fin-

ley Briar (Fitz-Henley) over three distinct decades at the same hospital.

Fitz-Henley, who also starred in the series "The Sinner" and the feature film "I Spy", will play the character in all three time frames.

Messer is executive producer and showrunner via her banner Erica Messer Productions.

Cornue will also serve as executive producer alongside Steven Marrs and Courtney Hazlett of OutEast Entertainment as well as Caitlin Foito.

## Neena Gupta to come out with memoir next year

Award-winning actor Neena Gupta is slated to come out with a no-holds-barred account of her personal and professional life in 2021, announced publishing house Penguin Random House India on Thursday.

The memoir, "Sach Kahun Toh", will chronicle her life -- from her childhood in Delhi's Karol Bagh, and her time at the National School of Drama, to her move to Bombay in the 1980s, as well as her struggles to find work.

It will be published under Penguin 'Ebury Press' imprint, they added.

A National Award winner with a career spanning more than 35 years, Gupta made her mark in films like "Trikal", "Mandi" and "Utsav" in the 80s. She rose to further acclaim with the 1998 TV shows "Saans" and "Siski" but work eventually slowed down in the 2000s, before she bounced back with hits like Anubhav Sinha's "Mulk" and Amit Sharma's "Badhaai Ho" in 2018.

Gupta, 61, said it was her time spent in Mukteshwar in Uttarakhand recently during the coronavirus-induced lockdown that made her "reflect" and "relive" her life's journey.

"Taking long, winding walks every day, appreciating the sounds of the birds



and basking in the chill of the mountain air, I asked myself, 'Why should I write a book? What do I have to say that could help and inspire someone?'

"With so many incidents that have made me and also broken me, and I needed to free myself by getting them out. Reflecting about my life, my journey and the things I've had to overcome will make me feel better and lighter," said the actor.

She added that through her book she wanted her readers to know that if despite her flaws, her broken relationships and circumstances in

her life, "she can get up, get going and look really good while doing so", so can they.

According to the publishers, the book promises to be "a candid, self-deprecating portrait of the person behind the persona", while talking about "her unconventional pregnancy and single parenthood", as well as her "successful second innings in Bollywood".

Gupta and West Indian cricketer Vivian Richards, who were in a brief relationship in the 80s, are parents to celebrated fashion designer Masaba Gupta. Gupta raised Masaba as a single mother for a long time before mar-

rying Delhi-based chartered accountant Vivek Mehra in 2008.

Neena Gupta is a treasure and I've been a huge fan of her work, her wit and repartee over the years. On social media, she drops truth bombs with perfect poise whether it be her views on motherhood, the norms of 'unladylike' behaviour, or an out-of-work actor seeking roles!

The best memoirs are as unsparingly honest as this and I'm so happy that Penguin will be publishing," said Gurveen Chadha, senior commissioning editor, Penguin Random House India.

## 'Scream 5' fits perfectly in the franchise, says Jenna Ortega

Actor Jenna Ortega, who is set to star in the upcoming reboot of "Scream", says the fifth chapter fits "perfectly" in the horror film franchise.

The 17-year-old actor has been cast in an unconfirmed role for the new film, which will see original stars Neve Campbell, David Arquette and Courtney Cox reprise their roles as Sidney Prescott, Dewey Riley, and Gale Weathers, respectively.

"It fits perfectly (in the franchise). Also how incredible that we have the main cast coming back.

"That is insane to me... Throughout the years, the franchise has done really well at calling back and bringing some sort of nostalgic aspects to the script. I'll definitely say that there are some here," Ortega told Entertainment Tonight.

The "You" star also said that landing the part in the film was a "dream come true".

"It's crazy! It's weird too, because when I first started, I said I always wanted to do horror, so this is a huge dream come true.

"I don't even think there are words in the English language to correctly express how



happy, excited and nervous I am for this journey. It's just so amazing to me," she added.

The film also stars French-Arab actor Sonia Ammar.

"Ready or Not" helmers Matthew Bettinelli-Olpin and Tyler Gillett, also known as Radio Silence, are directing "Scream 5" from a script

written by James Vanderbilt and Guy Busick.

The first "Scream" movie was released in 1996, with Campbell starring as Sidney, the target of the Ghostface killer, whose look was inspired by the Edvard Munch painting 'The Scream'.

Wes Craven directed the

first four movies in the franchise. The filmmaker died of brain tumour in 2015.

Kevin Williamson, who penned the previous films, is serving as the executive producer on the upcoming movie.

"Scream 5" is scheduled for a January 2022 release.

### ARIES:

After a period of lull, you're ready to get back into action mode. Be present to the ideas that are coming through. They're helping you form a bridge between where you are and where you need to be. It's time to get in alignment, Aries! Some of you may be getting in touch with your sporty side like never before, or reconnecting with the games you enjoyed as a child. Finding the right guide/community will prove to be instrumental in your journey. Tip: Carpe diem.

### TAURUS:

We all are born with a Destiny that plays out in the most unexpected of ways, bringing people and circumstances into our lives. But you are not limited by this Destiny, Taurus. There's a lot of room for improvisation available to you within this pre-written play, which is something you're being asked to awaken to today. How will you exercise your free will over the next few days? Tip: Exercise the power of free will. You are being given the opportunity to redirect the course of your life.

### GEMINI:

Learning to manage your expectations is a big theme for you today. Not everybody is going to live by your rules, and that's okay. Understanding that everybody has their own path will prove to be a game-changer for you, Gemini. Remember, we are under the influence of 'Amavasya' or the dark moon. It's but natural for things to get volatile around here. Word for the wise: lay low for as long as you can.

Tip: Things could get volatile around here.

### CANCER:

You're in the mood to conquer the world and no force can come in your way, Cancer. A heady combination of focus and discipline

will help you hit the bull's eye. What you need to keep in mind, though, is that no man is an island. Consciously make your way back to that space of humility every time your ego takes you down the road of self-destruction. This will help you become one with the team, who will in turn provide you with the support you need to transcend.

Tip: A heady combination of focus and discipline will prove to be the secret to your success.

### LEO:

It's true that we're all born with a certain Destiny—a map of our lives that's charted in the stars. But, don't let this Destiny limit you in any way, Leo. The Universe is reminding you that you have the space to negotiate and co-author this manuscript. In the words of Victor E Frankl, "Between stimulus and response, there is a space. And in that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and freedom." PS: We hope that you will make your story a bestseller.

Tip: You have the power to co-author the script of your life.

### VIRGO:

Wednesday sees you prepping for the new moon in your sign by being the most radiant version of yourself. This is going to be your personal renaissance—a truth you're aware of on a very deep level. Both spiritual and creative endeavours are blessed under the influence of this cosmic climate. So, follow your heart and trust that you are being led in the right direction. Some of you may be drawn towards the path of selfless service as well. What the cards want you to know:

Tip: Follow your heart and trust that you are being led in the right direction.

### LIBRA:

Not everything is coming up roses, Libra, but it's the dance of shadow and light that makes the human experience rewarding. Some of you may find that your partner (or loved one) is experiencing turbulence. There's a fine line between holding space for them and getting caught up in their drama. Understanding this will help you be present to those around you in a more conscious manner. On the upside, partnerships of all kinds are blessed under this cosmic climate.

Tip: You're learning to hold space for others without getting caught up in their drama.

### SCORPIO:

The dark moon brings with itself the reminder that change must not be feared, Scorpio. Consider this as an opportune time to delve into your shadows and have a chat with your demons. It's true that they provided you with a false sense of security in the past, but this security is not something you need right now. So, cut the cords. Rip the bandage. Break past a limiting pattern. Exercise faith in your own power and potential. You are getting ready to turn your life around for the better.

Tip: Work with the winds of change.

### SAGITTARIUS:

This could be a time of upheaval, especially on the financial front. It's easy to blame your circumstances for the things that are not working out. Challenge yourself to stay in your centre and observe your circumstances from a higher perspective. This will help you gather your resources and take action in the right direction. For some of you, the sudden changes could lead to an ego death. Consider this as an opportunity to look beyond the illusion you have created for yourself and redirect the sails.

Tip: Observe your circumstances from a higher perspective.

### CAPRICORN:

Today, you're being asked to reflect upon Maya Angelou's immortal words: "I have learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." Use the power of words with discretion, Capricorn. Why leave scars when you can leave stars behind? On the upside, you will find the perfect opportunity for conflict resolution. Act conscientiously and remember to leave your ego aside.

Tip: You will be given an opportunity to resolve the situation.

### AQUARIUS:

It's a 'beauty on a budget' kind of day in the Aquarius HQ, and you're in the mood to experiment with age-old ingredients like aloe, turmeric and tulsi. Do we see an apothecary in the making here? As such, you are experiencing a major renaissance on the health and wellness front, which is bringing with it the awareness that food is medicine. Instead of planning your diet around 'losing weight', consider adding the right nutrients to your plate.

Tip: You're experiencing a major renaissance on the health and wellness front.

### PISCES:

Joy and celebration promise to be a constant in the Pisces HQ. This is a time of connecting with both your partner and your soul tribe on a whole new level. If you haven't had the chance to introduce your SO to the circle, now is the time! Lay your worries to rest. Everybody will get along just fine. Connecting with your spiritual community could also be a significant theme for some of you. Consider hosting/joining a new moon circle centred around the idea of establishing a deeper connection with yourself and the divine.

Tip: Joy and celebration promise to be a constant.