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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Pages 8 | ₹ 5

*India reports
lowest
daily rise in
coronavirus
cases since
July 10*

MUMBAI, 08 DEC (REUTERS): India reported 26,567 new coronavirus infections, data from the health ministry showed on Tuesday, the lowest daily increase since July 10, according to a Reuters tally.

Daily cases have been falling in India since hitting a peak in September. The country has 97 lakh cases, second-highest caseload in the world after the United States.

Deaths rose by 385, the health ministry said, with the total now at 140,958.

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India Today adjudges Sikkim “Most Improved Small State in Governance”

GANGTOK, 08 DEC [IPR]: Sikkim has been adjudged the “Best Performing Small State in Cleanliness and the Most Improved Small State in Governance” by the India Today in its e-State of the States Conclave 2020 which was held virtually on 05 December.

The annual India Today “State of the States” survey is an attempt to find out which states offer citizens the best opportunities, both at work and outside.

The study tracks each state’s performance over time and in particular, records changes over the

last five years. It takes into account both the business environment and quality of life. The categories in which the states are judged include economy, agriculture, education, healthcare, infrastructure, inclusive development, law & order, governance, entrepreneurship, environment and cleanliness.

Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang, in his acceptance speech, stated that the award wouldn’t have been possible without the involvement, participation, sense of ownership and efforts by the

Sikkimese gentry.

He also mentioned that the organs of the state government like Urban Affairs, Rural Development Department (RDD), Health and Sanitation, Municipal Corporations and other such departments have a very active role and effort in making the state where it is. Their single-minded effort has made the state a pinnacle in cleanliness and tourism.

He also expressed the inspirational initiatives of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s namely ‘Swacha Bharat’ and ‘Mini-

mum Government and Maximum Governance’ which the state of Sikkim follows dedicatedly.

He also informed that the state is transparent in its schemes and initiatives which are wholeheartedly dedicated to the citizens of Sikkim. He also applauded the acknowledgement of the India Today Group for the state’s effort towards progressive growth and good governance.

The Conclave was held virtually due to the current situation of the COVID-19 pandemic on 05 December, 2020.



13 new cases take Sikkim’s COVID tally to 5215

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 08 DEC:**

The number of active COVID-19 cases in Sikkim rose by a slim 13 new cases to now stand at 363 on Tuesday.

Of the 13 new cases, 11 were reported from East Sikkim and one each from West and South districts.

Meanwhile, the number of discharged COVID-19 patients in the State further improved to 4,642 with the release of 21 more patients – one from hospital and 20 from home isolation on Monday.

That said, there are six patients currently in the ICU facility at the COVID-dedicated STNM Hospital.

Sikkim’s tally of the confirmed cases of COVID-19 detected so far has now reached 5,215.

In the daily health bulletin on Tuesday, Health Department State IEC Officer, Sonam Gyaltsen Bhutia, informed that the 13 new cases were picked up from the testing of 251 samples yesterday.

The screening of 184 samples by RT-PCR at the VRD Lab returned 10 positive cases, while three new cases were detected in rapid antigen testing of 57 samples. All ten samples tested by TrueNat returned negative for COVID-19 yesterday.

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Sustainable Mountain Dev Summit begins with Himalayan Youth Summit

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 08 DEC:**

The 9th Sustainable Mountain Development Summit kicked off in Dehradun on Tuesday with the Inaugural Session of the 3rd Indian Himalayan Youth Summit.

The event is an annual feature of the Integrated Mountain Initiative and is being hosted this year by Sustainable Development Forum of Uttarakhand. Given the ongoing pandemic, the programme has gone digital this year with participants connecting virtually and the event playing live on so-

cial media platforms like Hubilo and Facebook.

Today’s pre-summit event was attended by many delegates and participants from all the Himalayan states and Union territories and from different walks of life.

SDFU chairperson, Dr Rajendra Dobhal, delivered the welcome speech following which, former IMI president, Sushil Ramola, and IMI vice president Amba Jamir set the context for IYHS in a session moderated by Roshan Rai from DLR-Prerna of Darjeeling.

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BIODIVERSITY OF DARJEELING-SIKKIM HIMALAYA

Pathways to resilience

Online kura-kani on International Mountain Day

With Panelists

Sunita Pradhan
Conservation Biologist
ATREE

Pema W Dorjee
Consulting Editor
SummitTimes

Rinzi Lama
Anthropologist
NBU

Priyadarshinee Shrestha
Team Leader
WWF-India, KCL

Moderator
Roshan P Rai
DLR Prerna

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Lead, Nickel found in blood of people with mystery illness in Andhra

HYDERABAD, 08 DEC [PTI]: Traces of lead and nickel were in the blood of the people who contracted the mystery illness in Andhra Pradesh's Eluru, doctors from the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences have found. In all, 467 people have been found ailing since December 5, more than 45 children below the age of 12 are among them. All complained of convulsions, nausea and fainting. One person, a 45-year-old, has died.

Doctors have been trying to diagnose the illness, which struck parts of the town last week amid the Covid outbreak. A battery of teams from various medical organisations and hospitals are working to detect the cause.

Today, a communique from the Chief Minister's Office said preliminary findings indicated the presence of lead and nickel in blood which could have caused the symptoms.

"More tests are being conducted by Indian Institute of Chemical Technology and other institutes and the results are expected soon," the Chief Minister's Office release said.

Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy has told the authorities to "inquire on how lead and nickel particles could have got into the bodies of the people of that region and asked to conduct a detailed study and submit a report".

Mr Reddy has also asked the public health personnel and other departments to "probe the issue deeply and find out the reasons for the illness," the statement read.

What the authorities have pointed out is that the episodes of fits and fainting seem to happen only once. The source of water for different cases reported is not the same. Not more than one member per family has reported the symptoms. The disease does not seem to spread from person to person.

"Our earliest tests had ruled out heavy metals. Even organochlorine could cause these kinds of neurological symptoms," one source said.

Mr Reddy -- who visited the hospital in Eluru yesterday where 150-odd patients are admitted -- met the Governor today to discuss the situation. After Governor Biswa Bhushan Harichandan's advise to take the help of Central institutes, teams were flown in from Delhi's AIIMS, the National Institute of Nutrition, the Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (IICT) and the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology.

The Chief Medical Officer of the state has said that the test reports should be compiled for analysis.

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Aids and appliances for disabled distributed in South Sikkim

NAMCHI, 08 DEC [IPR]: A program for distribution of aids and appliances was organised by District Disability Rehabilitation Centre (DDRC) at DAC, Conference Hall, today.

The chief guest for the program was Additional Political Secretary, Anjeeta Rajalim who was accompanied by Joint Commissioner, MB Chettri, Assistant Commissioner, PN Pradhan, Social Welfare Officer (South), Nakul Rawat along with staff of the concerned department.

It may be mentioned here that this distribution program was held under the Scheme of Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase/Fitting of Aids and Appliances (ADIP Scheme), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

Addressing the gathering Chief Guest, Anjeeta Rajalim spoke about the aim of this program which is to distribute aids to the disabled and also to hear their suggestions as to how the concerned department and able bodied person can help the disabled. She added that it is extremely imperative for one and all to contribute in a substantial manner for the betterment of



the disabled people and highlighted that the Sikkim State Government has always looked after the difficulties faced by the disabled so that they can live a dignified life.

She also underlined state specific schemes like Chief Minister's Disability Pension Scheme and the recently announced cash incentive by the Chief Minister, PS Golay for differently-abled toppers of class X and XII board exams from 2021 onwards and informed that the Sikkim State Government will continue to prioritize the needs of the disabled in order to trans-

form Sikkim to be truly inclusive in nature

Assistant Commissioner, PN Pradhan briefed about District Disability Rehabilitation Centre which would provide rehabilitation support to persons with disabilities through surveys and identification of persons with disabilities and by other various outreach programs.

He updated that the population of disabled persons in Sikkim currently is 18,187 out of which 5,375 are in South Sikkim. He also informed about Unique Disability Identity (UDID) card and

added that this card is valid throughout the country.

He further emphasized that disabled persons in the district should be issued with Disability Certificates on priority and appraised that presently this certificate has been given to a total of 5,767 person in Sikkim out of which 1,355 Certificates has been distributed in the south district. Moreover, he notified about the various special schools running at present and some of them are Jawaharlal Nehru Institute for the Visual Impaired in Namchi, Speech and

Hearing Impaired in Sichey, Intellectual Disabilities in Burtuk and added that the department has consistently tried to give quality attention to these schools.

Speaking, during the program Social Welfare Officer, Nakul Rawat stated the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act and other various kinds of Rights issued to the disabled persons as per the norms of the Government. He also underscored process and other documents required if any disabled persons has to get certificate or any financial assistance from the department. He pointed out that the department is putting its earnest efforts in assisting the disabled persons in providing accessible facilities.

During the course of the program various items were distributed namely Wheel Chair for adults and children, Walking Stick, Axilla Crutch, Daisy Player, Hearing Aid and Elbow Crutch and the beneficiaries included students and adults. An interaction session was also held wherein the beneficiaries put forth their suggestions to the concerned officials.

Sanitary napkin making training begins in Mangshila



MANGAN, 08 DEC (IPR): The inaugural ceremony of five days training on production of cloth pad to SHG women of under Beti Bachao Beti Padao was held in Mangshila, Village Administrative Centre on 07 Dec, 2020.

The training program is being initiated by District Administration, North Sikkim under the banner of BBBP with the vision of making SHG women of Mangshila self-reliant, to adopt GPU as sanitary waste free and benefitting adolescent girls at large.

The program was held in presence of In-charge Dzongu, Chungkipu Lepcha, District Collector (North), Ten-

zing T Kaleon, Zilla Panchayat, Zomin Limboo, Panchayat President, Meena Limboo, CDPO Mangan, LD Denzongpa, CDPO Chungthang, Sonam Lhaden Lachungpa, CDPO Dzongu, Netuk Lepcha, Women Welfare Officer, Tsheringkee Lama, District Coordinator, Mrinalini Gurung, MSK and all Panchayat members.

During the programme, DC, North expressed his views on how sustainable cloth pads are and the various advantages that the use of cloth pad can bring in the society. He also insisted upon making Mangshila-Tibuk GPU sanitary waste free and adopting

the GPU for making it a role model. Chungkipu Lepcha also encouraged the SHG members to work properly in making the production successful.

CDPO Chungthang, Sonam Lhaden Lachungpa gave the overall view on sustainable menstrual product and hygiene management. Women Welfare Officer, Tsheringkee Lama gave the training overview on making of cloth pad and the usage of it.

The five days training of cloth pad started from today i.e. on 07 December and will end on 11 Dec, 2020. The training will be conducted for production, sales and marketing.

Cutting & Tailoring training underway in South Sikkim

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 08 DEC: Livelihood Enterprise Development Programme was started at Bermiok Daring under Temi BAC, South Sikkim and at Tingley under Namthang BAC, South Sikkim for Women Self Help Groups of SSRML on 24 Nov, 2020.

The programme funded by NABARD Sikkim was attended by NABARD DDM Namchi, Rupen Lamichaney along with implementing agen-

cy, Himalayan Educational Society representatives, president, Bikash Pradhan and general secretary, TP Sharma.

Similar programme was launched in Nandugaon and Wok Omchu under Jorethang BAC, South Sikkim on 26 Nov, 2020.

There are 30 SHG members taking part in Cutting & Tailoring (LEDP) training programme in each center. Altogether, 90 women are taking part in three Centers.

Sustainable Mountain...

The session also had various speakers like Coordinator, Dr Yuka Makino, Mountain Partnership Secretariat, FAO, Rome; Dairy Makarios Bous, Samuel Yonzon, Kalimpong, West Bengal, Adventurers and Entrepreneurs, Tashi Malik & Nungshi Malik, Uttarakhand and Advisor, Theja Meru, Task Force for Music and Arts (TaFMA), Government of Nagaland.

The speakers shared inspirational stories of success and left a message for their counterpart youth about the importance of focusing on their potential and not on failures.

Prior to the inaugural session, a special two-hour session on "Mindfulness" was taken by LEAD-India.

The winner of the Himalayan Photography Contest, which has been a regular feature of the SMDS, was also announced today. The theme for this year was "Life under Lockdown: Visual Stories from the Hills." The winner was Chinmaya Shah from Uttarakhand, followed by Stanzin Khakyab from Ladakh in second place and Nawami Gurung from Darjeeling in third spot.

The youth summit has been specially organised with the aim to empower hill youth and improve the quality of life and livelihood in the Mountain States by taking their voices and concerns along.

This year, the cross-cutting theme was COVID19.

The youth brainstormed in small breakout sessions on various issues ranging from SDG, Entrepreneurship, Sustainable Tourism, Skill development, migration and Natural Resource Management.

These short break-out sessions were moderated by resource persons from various fields.

On Wednesday, the youth delegates will further deliberate and propose a set of recommendations for consideration in policy framework to an audience comprising of CEO Amitabh Kant, NITI-Aayog and Chief Economic Advisor, Sanjeev Sanyal, during the valedictory session.

13 new cases...

While providing details of the new cases reported from in and around Gangtok, Mr Bhutia informed that one person from Lingding, one from Forest Colony Road-Baluwakhani, one from Development Area, one from Upper Sichey, one from near Goskhan Dara in Chandmari, one from near Dokan Dara in Decheling, one from near the Durga Mandir in Jalipool, one from Greendale School Road-Daragon and one from Gairi Gaon-Tadong have tested positive.

Likewise, one person from Nobgaon, Pakyong in East District, one from near the car wash at Dudwa, Namchi in South District and one from Middle Gyalshing in West District also tested positive for COVID-19.

He further informed that a 53-year-old female from Sichey, Gangtok has tested positive but cannot be reached on the phone number provided by her and has urged her to immediately contact the concerned authorities.

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Lost North Bengal University Migration Certificate bearing SI No 1188 belonging to Tilak Bahadur Bardewa on 5.12.2020 at Namchi Central Park. If found, please contact at 8016880884.

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Two plots available - 30X40 sq ft and 50X30 sq ft
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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

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Two and half storeyed (1st to 3rd floor) complex is available for rent in the heart of Ranipool Bazaar (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 land sale at Lower Sichey, suitable for construction, good locality, near the road, Total size: 90x55ft, (30x55ft each plot). genuine person may contact@9734122366.

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.

ADRA-India launches adolescent-focused Life Skills Program in NE

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 08 DEC: Adventist Development and Relief Agency [ADRA], India, today launched a life skills program for kids titled, "The Birds and Bees Talk" with support from Reckitt Benckiser. The curriculum was launched for children between the ages of 10-19 years.

This curriculum aims to provide accurate, fact-based, and age-appropriate information that will help adolescents make informed choices.

The Birds and Bees Talk program will be executed and implemented across three states of the northeast- Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur in both Government and recognized Private Schools.

The program com-

prises of 27 chapters in two levels allowing schools to teach these life-skills in a staggered format spread over the year.

The program seeks to help in developing key skills like critical thinking, decision-making and analytics and informed choices among the young.

Launching the program, Country Directorm ADRA-India, Weston Davis said, "We are excited to introduce a one-of-its-kind, life skill training module for adolescent children with generous support and guidance from RB's Dettol 'Banega Swasth India' campaign. The northeast of India has been an area of focus for us for some years now and we are proud to be leading the change in seven states..."

World Disability Day observed at JNMI Boomtar



BIKAS CHETTRI NAMCHI, 08 DEC: World Disability Day with the theme 'Celebrating Biodiversity' was organized by Samaksha Siksha, Education Department, South Sikkim in the courtyard of Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Institute (JNMI) located in Boomtar, Namchi, South Sikkim, today.

The day could not be celebrated on 03 December, as is done every year, so it was celebrated today.

The short program

was organized with 31 visually challenged students of JNMI and 5 other differently abled children, guardians, officials of Samaksha Siksha, and teaching and non-teaching staff of JNMI.

Cutting of cake, distribution of packed lunches, sanitizers and face masks was done by the officials from Samaksha Siksha. Samaksha Siksha officials also handed over cash incentive amount to the principal of JNMI during the program.



Team of ex-servicemen meet CM

GANGTOK, 07 DEC (IPR): A team of ex-servicemen led by Secretary, Rajya Sainik Board/Director STNM Hospital, Col DN Bhutia called on the Chief Minister, Prem Singh Tamang at Mintokgang Office earlier today.

During the call on, the Chief Minister

offered his gratitude for their dedicated service towards the Nation and extended his wishes on the occasion of Armed Forces Flag Day Col DN Sherpa provided updates regarding the Rajya Sainik Board and apprised him about several matters

from the members' point of view.

The Chief Minister assured them that the Government shall extend every possible support for their welfare and informed them that they can approach him for any form of assistance.

Ulsan to face Beijing, Kobe take on Suwon in Asian Champions League

HONG KONG, 08 DEC (REUTERS): Former champions Ulsan Hyundai will take on Chinese side Beijing Guoan in the quarter-finals of the Asian Champions League after the draw for the next round of the continental club competition was made in Doha on Tuesday.

Japan's Vissel Kobe, currently home to former Barcelona and Spain midfielder Andres Iniesta, were drawn to face South Korea's Suwon Bluewings. The quarter-finals will be played on Thursday with the semi-finals due to be held three days later.

The teams will meet at Al Janoub Stadium as the competition continues to be held in a bio-secure bubble in the Qatari capital after its suspension earlier in the year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Persepolis awaits in the final after the Iranian side advanced to the decider in October at the end of a centralised event also played in Qatar for teams from the west of the continent.

Ulsan are the only team remaining in the competition to have won the event in its current guise, claiming the title in 2012, and they take on a Beijing side that have advanced to the quarter-finals for the first time.

Kobe are making their debut in the competition while Suwon have twice been crowned Asian champions in the past, winning its predecessor, the Asian Club Championship, in 2001 and 2002.

TMC worker shot dead in Bengal's Nadia district



KALYANI (WB), DEC 8 (PTI): Unidentified gunmen shot dead a Trinamool Congress worker at Gayeshpur in Nadia district, police said on Tuesday.

Bappa Sarkar was fired upon in a field at Sukanta Nagar locality of Gayeshpur on Monday night. Local people took

him to a hospital where he was declared "brought dead", a police officer said. It was not clear why the 40-year-old man, who owns a tea stall, had gone to the field.

Sarkar's son Visal said, "My father was a TMC worker.

We do not know who killed him."

Surfing and breakdancing among four sports to win Paris 2024 spot

PARIS, 08 DEC (REUTERS): Breakdancing, surfing, skateboarding and sports climbing won a spot in the 2024 Paris Olympics when the International Olympic Committee ratified their inclusion on Monday, IOC President Thomas Bach said.

The Paris 2024 organising committee had last year proposed the four sports for inclusion and was waiting on a final review by the IOC's Executive Board.

Surfing, climbing and skateboarding are already part of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, having by proposed along with karate by

the Japanese hosts.

Paris Games organisers have said they want to deliver a programme that is in keeping with the times and will attract a new and younger audience.

Under new IOC rules first introduced for the Tokyo Games, Olympic host cities can hand-pick sports and propose them for inclusion in those Games if they are popular in that country and add to the Games' appeal.

The IOC is desperate to refresh the Games' sports programme to remain relevant to sponsors, broadcasters and younger fans.

TMC begins sit-in demonstration in support of farmers

KOLKATA, DEC 8 (PTI): The TMC on Tuesday began its three-day-long sit-in demonstration against the new farm laws and demanded that the "anti-people" legislation should be withdrawn immediately.

The farmers and agricultural workers wing of the TMC, led by its state president and TMC MLA Becharam Manna, began its sit-in demonstration in front of the statue of Mahatma Gandhi in central Kolkata this afternoon.

Party activists carrying placards and demanding the withdrawal of the new farm laws shouted slogans against the BJP government at the Centre.

"We support the issues raised by the farmers and will hold protest programmes and sit-in demonstrations. But we are against shutdowns and the bandh culture and will not enforce it in the state," Manna told reporters.

The ruling Trinamool Congress in West Bengal has decided to extend "moral support" to the nationwide strike called by farmers on December

8 to protest against the new agriculture laws and will stage sit-ins in various parts of the state for three days, in solidarity with the farmers.

It will culminate with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's address at the protest programme on December 10.

The 'Bharat Bandh', called by agitating farmers' unions against the Centre's farm laws, partially affected the state with private vehicles remaining off the roads, while public transport, including buses and taxis, operating fewer than the usual.

Supporters of the Congress and Left parties on Tuesday blocked railway tracks at several places and held sit-ins on roads to enforce the nationwide shutdown, which evoked a mixed response in West Bengal.

Representatives of thousands of agitating farmers are sitting on various borders of the national capital since November 26 demanding repeal of the three agri laws.

The farmers are protesting against the Farmers (Empowerment and

Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020; Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020; and The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act 2020.

Enacted in September, the three farm laws have been projected by the government as major reforms in the agriculture sector that will remove middlemen and allow farmers to sell anywhere in the country.

The protesting farmers have expressed apprehension that the new laws would pave the way for eliminating the safety cushion of Minimum Support Price and do away with the mandis, leaving them at the mercy of big corporates.

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Notice Inviting Tender

"Invitation of Bids for Auction of Coal Mines/ Blocks for Sale of Coal"

In exercise of the powers conferred by Section 4(1) and 4(2) of the Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act, 2015 and Section 11A of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 and in accordance with the Rule 8(2) of the Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Rules 2014 and the Rule 3(1) of the Coal Blocks Allocation Rules, 2017 respectively, the Nominated Authority conducted the first attempt of 11th Tranche of Auction under CM(SP) Act and 1st Tranche of Auction under MMDR Act of identified coal mines/ blocks vide tender document dated June 18, 2020. However, since the number of Technically Qualified Bidders pursuant to this tender process were less than 2 for Chendipada & Chendipada-II, Kuraloi (A) North and Seregarha Coal Mines, the tender process for these Coal Mines were annulled vide notice dated September 30, 2020.

Pursuant to Para 2.2.(b) of the Office Memorandum No. CBA2-13011/2/2020-CBA2 dated June 1, 2020 issued by Ministry of Coal, the Nominated Authority is initiating the second attempt of auction of these Coal Mines with the same terms and conditions as in the first annulled attempt of auction i.e. vide tender document dated June 18, 2020, and with the highest Initial Offer of Technically Qualified Bidder, if any, in the first annulled attempt of auction as the Floor Price for the second attempt of auction.

Accordingly, bids are invited in **digital format only** from the eligible companies in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Tender Document. Detailed Tender Document can be downloaded from the website of MSTC Limited (<https://www.mstccommerce.com/auctionhome/coalblock/index.jsp>). Timelines for the tender process have also been provided on the website of MSTC Limited.

For the coal extracted from the coal mine/ block, there shall be no restriction on the sale and/ or utilisation of coal including captive consumption, sale to affiliates, coal gasification, coal liquefaction and export of coal. Interested and eligible companies can register themselves on the above website. On successful registration, eligible companies will obtain Login ID and password necessary for participation in the tender process. **Last date for purchase of Tender Document** after payment of a fee of Rs. 5,00,000 (Rs. Five Lakh Only) per mine/ block on MSTC Limited website is **09.12.2020**.

Last date for submission of bid on 12.01.2021 in accordance with the timelines provided. Bidders will not be allowed to submit their bids beyond stipulated date and time. For any query/ clarification kindly contact the Nominated Authority at the contact details mentioned above in the advertisement.

davp 04101/11/0036/2021

District Level Nasha Mukh Bharat Campaign Committee meets

GANGTOK, 08 DEC (IPR): The first meeting of the District Level Nasha Mukh Bharat Campaign Committee was conducted at the chamber of the District Collector, District Administrative Centre, Sichey, East Sikkim on 07 December.

The meeting was chaired by District Collector-cum-Chairman, Ragul K along with SP East, Dr Siva P Yellasi, Additional District Collector, Tushar Nihare, East Sikkim and all the Members.

During the meeting, the District Collector explained in detail about the Nasha Mukh Campaign to be conducted in the District for effective implementation and role and responsibilities of the District Committee.

In the meeting, the following points were discussed for taking further action:

1. To conduct awareness generation programme in all schools and colleges and to increase community participation and public cooperation.

2. Utilization of various media strategy for mass awareness like print media, social media, art work etc for the district campaign and further implementation.

3. To use local language in the awareness materials like posters, pamphlets and brochures in all block level so that the information, education and

communication reaches to grass root level.

4. Implementation of on line awareness activities through NGOs.

5. Identification of substance users and taking them to rehabilitation centres/Hospitals for counselling and treatment and after rehabilitation measures of the drug recovering patient.

6. Monitoring of counselling and treatment facilities in the districts.

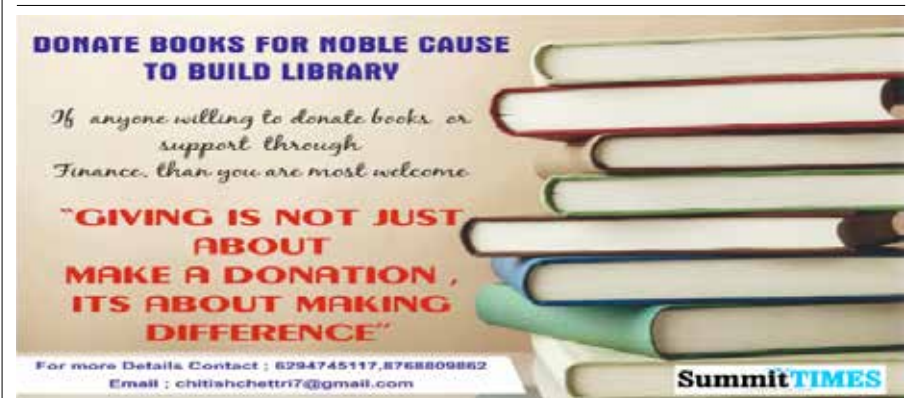
7. Formulation of students clubs in colleges to discuss and spread awareness and revival of SAATHI programme.

8. Strict implementation of ban in sale of cigarettes with 100 meters of any Educational, Religious institutions and Hospitals.

9. Obtaining information on the availability/sale of drugs and review the action taken on such information.

10. Identifying volunteers in the community, giving them ID card/badge and training them as a community peer for spreading awareness in the community through Resource Person appointed by the concerned Ministry and training programme for the service providers as and when required.

11. To utilize social media platform by uploading videos featuring renowned personalities who have quit usage of substance/drugs, helpline numbers, counselling centre/ information etc.



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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

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.

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.

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**

In Pursuit of Happiness

One way to address so many social ills haunting a land of such few material worries

And no, this is not a moral science lesson. It will however begin with reference to an international conference the State Government had organized several years back on “Science, Spirituality and Education” with the Dalai Lama as a special guest and speaker. The conference was motivated by a felt need to work on school curriculums in a way that would tease out more empathy and deeper engagements from students and deliver Sikkim the much-needed involved citizenry for the future.

The Dalai Lama had charmed the audience with his ready wit and open mind and set the conference on course by suggesting that the participants deliberate over how common sense, and not necessarily religious regimen, if harnessed with conscious empathy could deliver an education which inculcated moral ethics. Individual moral ethics, he stressed would link together to deliver genuine social empathy which would in turn manifest in more compassionate societies peopled with citizens with a stronger sense of universal responsibility and calmer dispositions. Strife and an unbridled pursuit of material acquisitions, whether at the individual or the nation-state level, have come to define the 21st century which has now almost made a virtue out of mercenary materialism. Proof of this faulty prioritization is apparent in how “happiness” is now increasingly being sought in acquisitions and not so much in the satisfaction derived from contributing to the world. While the former results in competition and hence conflict, the latter is a more personal experience which in not in competition with anyone else and hence does not lead to strife. Also, as societies get more and more obsessive with acquiring more to be happy, they can also slip into depression when they cannot gather enough ‘benefits’. Sikkim should understand this phenomenon well because it has to be accepted that apathy - that listless lack of interest and refusal to get excited or engage – underlines social response and engagement here.

This apathy does not necessarily stem from denial or oppression, but is born from an inferred sense of loss over not having acquired enough. Even as this manifests in listlessness in outward behaviour, internally, the mind is agitated and it is perhaps in this internal disquiet that Sikkim can find the reasons to explain the high suicide rates, addiction and other social challenges, including corruption and even the universal inurement towards dishonesty. Obviously, what has happened in Sikkim, as in societies across the world, is that the pursuit has been for a warped interpretation of happiness, one that is incomplete.

Sikkim requires to seek out answers on how to address the paradox of so many social ills haunting a land of such few material worries. Expecting solutions to be provided and executed by someone else or the government would doom the possible solutions to failure because social course-corrections require social engagement, not governmental or even divine interventions. To return to what the Dalai Lama has often said, Change depends on individual action. Divine intervention, he stresses, is fine so long as it was for individual consolation, but for change and betterment, it was individual action that is needed. This proactive engagement needs to be internalised by Sikkim at the individual, then community and governance levels. A generation groomed with a stronger sense of universal responsibility will also be one with a clearer sense of self and more importantly, with more respect for the aspirations and needs of others. That is the kind of generation which Sikkim needs to reach out for and chalk up as resolution for the New Year...

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Refugees are at risk from dystopian ‘smart border’ technology

EMRE EREN KORKMAZ
theconversation.com

New technologies deployed on borders for migration management and border security under the umbrella of smart border solutions are ignoring the fundamental human rights of migrants.

Unmanned aerial vehicles (drones, for example) are often deployed in the surveillance of refugees in the US and the EU; big data analytics are being used to monitor migrants approaching the border. Though methods of border security and management vary, a great deal are increasingly used to prevent migratory movements.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is an important component of migration management. For instance, the EU, the US and Canada invest in AI algorithms to automate decisions on asylum and visa applications and refugee resettlement. Meanwhile, the real-time data collected from migrants by various smart border and virtual wall solutions such as satellites, drones and sensors are assessed by AI algorithms on the border.

At the US-Mexico border, for example, the US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agency is using artificial intelligence, military drones with facial recognition technologies, thermal imaging and fake cellphone towers to monitor migrants before they even reach the border. They can listen to conversations between migrants, try to identify them from their faces, check out their social media accounts and locate people trying to cross borders.

A new UN report has warned about the risks of so-called “smart” border technology on refugees in particular. These technologies are helping border agencies to stop and control the movement of migrants, securitise migration governance by treating migrants as criminals and ignore the fundamental rights of people to seek asylum. Furthermore, they collect all data without taking the consent of migrants - factors that in other circumstances would likely be criminal if deployed against citizens.

As researcher Roxana Akhmetova has written: “the automated decision-making processes can exacerbate pre-existing vulnerabilities by adding on risks such as bias, error, system failure and theft of data. All of which can result in greater harm to migrants and their families. A rejected claim formed on an erroneous basis can lead to persecution.”

This is a good example of how algorithmic technology more generally can be influenced through the biases of its creators to discriminate against the lower classes of society and serve the privileged ones. In the case of refugees, people who have had

to flee their homes because of war are now being subjected to experiments with advanced technology that will increase the risks carried by this already vulnerable population.

DATA AND CONSENT

Another issue at stake here is the informed consent of refugees. This refers to the idea that refugees should understand the systems they are sub-

vate partnerships and technical preparations for a long period of time before refugees encounter them on the ground. And at the end of all the processes to decide, fund and develop algorithms, recognition of the right of “beneficiaries” to reject these technologies is not realistic, nor is it practical. Therefore, most of these tech-based investments categorically undermine refugees’ informed consent because the



jected to and should have the chance to opt out of them. While voluntary informed consent is a legal requirement, many academics and humanitarian NGOs focus on “meaningful informed consent” which is more than signing a paper and helping refugees to fully understand what they are subject to. Secret surveillance gives them no such chance. And the technologies involved are so complex that even the staff operating them have been said to lack the expertise to assess the ethical and practical implications.

Despite the recent UN report warning on the smart border solutions, many governments and various UN agencies dealing with refugees increasingly prefer to employ tech-based solutions, for example to assess people’s claims for aid, cash transfer and identification. But what happens to people who are not willing to share their data, for any reason, be it political, religious or personal?

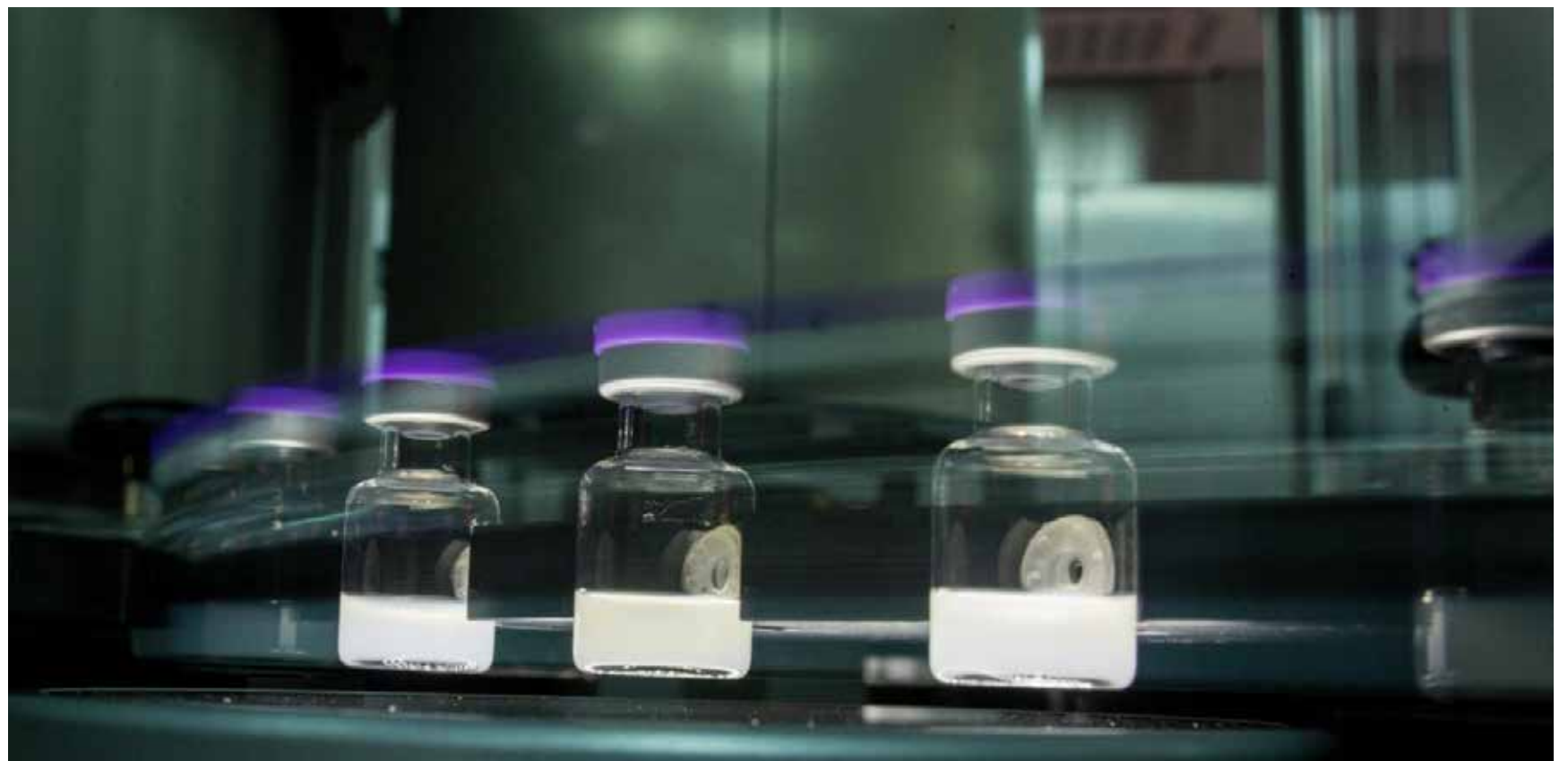
Use of these technologies requires public-pri-

nature of the work of those behind these decisions is to deny their rights.

Refugees can benefit from the increasing use of digital technology, as smartphones and social media can help them connect with humanitarian organisations and stay in touch with families back home. But ignoring the power imbalance created through their loss of rights as a result of using such technology leads to the romanticisation of the relationship between refugees and their smartphones.

It’s not too late to change this course of technological development. But refugees do not have the same political agency as domestic citizens to organise and oppose government actions. If you want to see what a dystopian tech-dominated future in which people lose their political autonomy looks like, the daily experiences of refugees will provide sufficient clues.

[the writer is Researcher, University of Oxford]



Is it safe to have more than one type of COVID vaccine?

TRACY HUSSELL
theconversation.com

If we are ever to return to some semblance of normality, then the world’s population needs to be immune to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. But with so many different vaccines in production, questions are undoubtedly going to be raised, such as can I still have a vaccine if I have been involved in a trial testing other versions? And, what if I’ve already had COVID – do I still need a vaccine?

A basic understanding of immunology can answer all these questions. All COVID vaccines try to generate an immune response to proteins the virus needs to enter your cells. Whether this is by using a harmless virus carrying the protein that mimics SARS-CoV-2 but doesn’t replicate, or by using the genetic code for those proteins (a messenger RNA), the outcome is the same. The protein critical to stopping SARS-CoV-2 is displayed, recognised by the immune system,

and the body produces antibodies and T cells that are then ready to stop future infection.

IS IT OK TO HAVE A DIFFERENT SECOND DOSE?

A booster vaccination enhances the quality of the immune response and sends a reminder about the virus. It doesn’t matter if the vaccine used to prime the immune system is different from the one used to boost, as long as they both contain the critical viral protein.

Booster vaccinations are common, and the time interval between them varies. For example, a booster for tetanus is advised every ten years whereas vaccines for hepatitis A or measles are one-shot wonders – a booster is not needed.

Only by studying the immune response in people who have been vaccinated, will we be able to tell when and if further booster vaccinations are needed. This will be determined by measuring SARS-CoV-2 specific antibody and T cell responses in a

sample of blood. It is possible that certain groups, such as older people, might need a different booster strategy – and this will take time to work out.

WHAT IF I’VE ALREADY HAD A TRIAL VACCINE?

If you’ve taken part in a COVID vaccine trial, it could give you a head start on the prime/boost approach, and you could reach the required immunity threshold quicker. Alternatively, your trial vaccination may have been so effective that the non-trial version of the vaccine isn’t necessary.

It is important for vaccine developers to follow up people who have had the vaccine to see how their immune system has reacted and whether or not the vaccine gave them immunity. This follow up should be conducted over a long period and encompass different sections of the population: young, old, different ethnic groups, and patients on drugs that dampen the immune system (such as chemotherapy).

WHAT IF I’VE HAD COVID?

Even if you have recovered from COVID-19, you can still benefit from vaccination. There is evidence in hospitalised patients that the infection was so overwhelming that the immune response became exhausted and so immune memory to the virus was not created efficiently. Also, if you had a very mild infection, your immune system may not have reached the point of laying down immune memory. So vaccination could be beneficial, regardless of whether you experienced severe or mild disease.

Though vaccination is a choice, don’t forget that vaccines have been around a long time and have saved more lives than any other medicine. The risk of getting COVID and its awful and often long-term side-effects outweigh any theoretical risk of a vaccine.

[the writer is Professor of Inflammatory Disease, University of Manchester]

BJP's north Bengal bandh evokes mixed response

SILIGURI, DEC 8 (PTI): Activists of the ruling Trinamool Congress and the BJP on Tuesday clashed here over alleged tearing up of hoardings with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's picture during a 12-hour north Bengal bandh called by the saffron party, which evoked mixed response.

The bandh has been called to protest the death of party worker Ullen Ray in alleged police firing during BJYM's march to 'Uttarkanya', the branch secretariat here, on Monday.

Protest marches were held by bandh supporters at different towns and district capitals in north Bengal with road-blocks being put up at Coochbehar, Mathabhabanga and Malda affecting traffic movement.

However, no major untoward incident was reported from the region, official sources said.

Markets and shops were partially open



while private buses and other modes of road transport were fewer in number than usual. However, government buses were available.

Tension mounted at Mahatma Gandhi crossing here over alleged tearing up of hoardings displaying messages and picture of the chief minister.

TMC and BJP workers clashed over the alleged vandalism and blocking of movement of traffic in the area.

While the TMC alleged that the flex hoardings of the party supremo were damaged by the BJP supporters, the saffron party claimed that its flags were torn by the workers of the

ruling party.

Darjeeling MP Raju Bista and Jalpaiguri MLA Dr Jayanta Kumar Roy on Tuesday visited the victim's family at Mengara village and assured his family that the party will bear the education expenses of his three school-going children.

Police had fired tear-

gas shells and used water cannons on Monday to quell a violent protest called by the Bhartiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) against the Mamata Banerjee government during which Ray died.

The BJP, initially, had alleged that Ray was "beaten to death" by the police during a baton charge.

BJP resorting to politics of bandh: Subrata Mukherjee

KOLKATA, DEC 8 (PTI): Ruling TMC on Tuesday accused BJP of resorting to the politics of bandh in West Bengal and asserted that the reason for the death of the saffron party worker in Siliguri was not firing by police but from shot gun pellets probably carried by a participant of the BJYM rally on December 7.

The BJP observed a 12-hour shutdown in certain parts of north Bengal on Tuesday over the death of its supporter during the rally.

Senior TMC leader Subrata Mukherjee told a press meet that the police was far away from the location of the rally and the wounds on the BJP worker's body was caused by firing from close distance. To buttress his point, Mukherjee quoted from the post mortem report of the dead BJP activist Ulen Roy, who had taken part in the BJYM march in Siliguri.

The wounds, he claimed, were caused by pellets fired from a shot gun which is not used by police. Used for shooting birds, it was probably carried by people in the rally to hurt the police.

"The post mortem exposes BJP's gameplan of causing large scale disturbances and provoke the police to open fire," Mukherjee, also senior minister in Mamata Banerjee cabinet said.

Claiming that the police "kept it's cool despite great provocation by the



rallyists", he said "The police used the baton and tear gas as last resort.

Police had fired tear-gas shells and used water cannons on Monday to quell a violent protest called by the Bhartiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) against the Mamata Banerjee government during which a BJP worker died. Several protesters and police personnel were injured in the clashes.

The BJP had alleged that a party worker identified as Ullen Ray was "beaten to death" by the police during a baton charge and demanded imposition of President's Rule in West Bengal in view of the "breakdown of law and order". However, police claimed there was no lathicharge.

Mukherjee said "BJP has turned mad in the pursuit of power. They are resorting to falsehood just for the sake of power. But the people of Bengal will vote to power the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress for the third term." "BJP is trying to

foment trouble in Siliguri and other places in north Bengal today in the name of strike," he said.

On the issue of Bharat Bandh called by farmers bodies and supported by almost all opposition parties, Mukherjee said "Though TMC is against any strike we support it this time due to the cause and factors which necessitated this shutdown call." "TMC believes not only a movement of farmers, the strike is all about bread and butter issue of ordinary farmers and the common man. We are also protesting by coming out in the street by holding sit-ins," he said.

"We are holding protests in 344 blocks for three days from today and near Gandhi statue in the city. Our MPs had protested in both houses of Parliament as the three farm bill's were passed by the Centre. Our MP (Derek O'Brien) had also expressed solidarity by visiting the agitating farmers near the Delhi border," he said.

15 new COVID-19 cases in Andamans; tally rises to 4,773

PORT BLAIR, DEC 8 (PTI): Andaman and Nicobar Islands COVID-19 tally rose to 4,773 as 15 more people tested positive for the virus, a health department official said on Tuesday.

Of the 15 fresh cases, four were detected during contact tracing, while 11 have travel history, he said.

Seven more persons were cured of the disease

on Tuesday, taking the total number of recoveries in the archipelago to 4,631, the official said.

The Union Territory now has 81 active cases, while 61 people have so far died due to the infection, he said.

The Andaman and Nicobar administration has conducted 1,40,961 sample tests for COVID-19 so far, he added.

Assam reports 2 more COVID deaths, 166 new cases

GUWAHATI, DEC 7 (PTI): Two more persons succumbed to COVID-19 on Monday taking the death toll to 995, while 166 new infections pushed the tally to 2,13,925, Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

He said that 131 coronavirus patients recovered from the disease and the number of total discharged people went up to 2,09,342.

Assam currently has 3,585 active cases, while three patients had migrated out of the state.

"Sad to share the demise of two #COVID patients today... Condolences & Prayers!" Sarma said on Twitter. The two fresh

fatalities were reported from Tinsukia and Kamrup Metropolitan districts, the minister added.

The death toll now increased to 995.

However, Sarma had earlier said on multiple occasions that several hundred more COVID-19 patients have died, but the government's Death Audit Board has not included them in the tally of deaths as they had other ailments too.

"166 Cases detected out of 29475 tests conducted with positivity rate of 0.56%," the minister tweeted.

Assam thus tested 54,91,479 samples for COVID-19 to date.

20 new COVID-19 cases in Arunachal Pradesh



ITANAGAR, DEC 8 (PTI): Twenty more people tested positive for COVID-19 in Arunachal Pradesh, pushing the tally in the northeastern state to 16,415, a senior health official said here on Tuesday.

Of the fresh cases, four were reported from East Siang and three from Changlang, State Surveillance Officer (SSO) Dr Lobsang Jampa said.

Two cases each were also recorded in the Capital Complex region, West Kameng, Lepa Rada and Lower Subansiri and one each from Siang, Papumpare, Namsai, Lower Dibang Valley and Lo-

hit, he said. Eighteen infections were detected through rapid antigen tests while one each was diagnosed through RT-PCR and True NAT tests, the SSO said.

Barring eight, all the new patients are asymptomatic and shifted to Covid Care Centres, he said. Forty-eight people recovered from COVID-19, taking the total number of recoveries in the state to 15,653.

The state now has 707 active coronavirus cases.

A total of 55 patients have succumbed to the infection so far, the official said. The recovery

rate among the coronavirus patients in the state is 95.35 per cent, he said.

The state's positivity and fatality rates are 4.65 per cent and 0.33 per cent respectively, Dr Jampa said.

The Capital Complex region, comprising Itanagar, Naharlagun, Nirjuli and Banderdewa areas, has the highest number of active cases at 541, followed by West Kameng (50), Changlang and Lower Subansiri at 13 each.

The state has so far tested 3,65,286 samples for COVID-19, including 866 on Monday, he added.

Suspected NLFT ultras kidnap three constructions workers

AGARTALA, DEC 8 (PTI): Suspected insurgents of the banned National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) have kidnapped three construction workers from a village near the Indo-Bangla border in Dhalai district, police said on Tuesday.

The workers were engaged by NBCC for the erection of border fencing in the Maldapara village under Ganganagar police station of the district, about 140 km from here.

The kidnapped persons were identified as Subhash Bhowmik, JCB driver, Subal Debnath and Ganapati Tripura.

Police said a group of six insurgents armed with automatic weapons raided the construction site bordering Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of the neighbouring country and took the



three workers to Bangladesh on Monday.

Immediately after receiving the news of the kidnapping, Superintendent of Police, Kishore Debbarma rushed to the spot with a huge contingent of police and Tripura State Rifles (TSR) and launched a search operation in the area.

In another incident, a 35-year-old trader, identified as Litan Nath was kidnapped at gunpoint on November 27 by suspected NLFT insurgents from Joyrampara, a remote tribal village along

the Tripura-Mizoram inter-state border in North Tripura district, police said. The ultras have demanded Rs 1.5 lakh as ransom for his release, they said.

Tripura Police and Mizoram Police have jointly launched a search operation to rescue the kidnapped trader.

The opposition CPI(M) in a statement condemned the incident and alleged that a BSF camp is situated within 200 metres of the border, but still, the persons were kidnapped.

61 new cases take Nagaland's COVID-19 tally to 11,479

KOHIMA, DEC 8 (PTI): Nagaland's COVID-19 caseload on Tuesday increased to 11,479 with detection of 61 new cases, a health department official said.

Of the fresh cases, 35 were reported from Kohima, 22 from Dimapur, and two each from Wokha and Zunheboto, he said.

Eight coronavirus pa-

tients recovered during the day, Health Department director Dr Denis Hangsing said.

A new fatality due to the infection was reported from Kohima on Tuesday which has pushed the COVID-19 death toll in the state to 70, he said.

The recovery rate came down to 91.91 per cent from 93.34 per cent on Monday, Dr Hangsing

said. Nagaland now has 628 active cases while 10,666 people have recovered from COVID-19.

A total of 115 patients have migrated to other states, he said.

The northeastern state has so far conducted 70,286 RT-PCR tests, 8,744 rapid antigen tests and 36,194 through TrueNat, Dr Hangsing said.

Odisha reports 349 new COVID-19 cases, 6 more deaths

BHUBANESWAR, DEC 8 (PTI): Odisha reported 349 new COVID-19 cases on Tuesday, taking the tally to 3,21,913, a Health Department official said.

Six more deaths raised the state's toll to 1,784, he said.

Of the new cases, 198 were reported from different quarantine cen-

tres. Sundergarh district recorded the highest 46 new cases, followed by Khurda (44) and Angul (26). While two deaths were reported from the Puri district, one patient each died in Jharsuguda, Khurda, Sambalpur and Sundergarh.

There are 3,629 active cases in the state at

present, while 3,16,447 patients have so far recovered.

The state has altogether tested 62.14 lakh samples for COVID-19, including 32,184 on Monday.

Odisha's positivity rate is 5.18 per cent, as per data released by the Health Department.

CBI issues look-out notice against coal trader

KOLKATA, DEC 8 (PTI): The CBI which is probing the illegal coal trading case has issued a look out notice against an accused Anup Majhi alias Lala, a spokesperson said on Tuesday.

The notice was issued to ascertain his whereabouts as his interrogation is needed during the course of the probe, spokesperson said.

The central investigating agency had on November 28 conducted raids at 45 places, including in West Bengal against illegal coal mining at different places including West Bengal.

Search operation were also carried out at different locations of Eastern Coalfields Limited in Jharkhand, Bihar and UP as well against illegal coal mining.

Premises of two general managers of ECL, three officers, unknown officials of ECL, CISF and Indian Railways were raided along with that of Majhi. These people have been accused of illegally mining coal and theft from Kunustoria and Kajora mining areas under ECL.

The spokesman had said no arrests have been made so far.

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SILIGURI:
Mr. Mani Rai, M/s. Space Ads, B.R. Ambedkar Building, Room No.7, 1st. 18108397, E-mail: contact.synapse@gmail.com/irishad_ali23@rediffmail.com

Phone
03592-208498
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Olympics branded a 'mockery' after inclusion of breakdancing for Paris Games

SYDNEY, 08 DEC [AAP]: Australian squash great Michelle Martin says the Olympic Games have become a “mockery” after breakdancing was added to the program for Paris 2024.

Australia's three-time world champion's immediate reaction to learning squash had been overlooked yet again, this time in favour of breakdancing was “oh my god”.

“You just look at the whole thing and you just go ‘where’s the Olympics going?’ I know some people say breakdancing’s a sport but ... I don’t understand,” Martin told AAP.

“The Olympics was all about a score, or it was a running race. There was a definitive answer and results to sports. You bring in all these judging things and it just gets so corrupt and so out of control. I just don’t get it anymore.”

Squash has been lobbying hard, unsuccessfully, for decades to be included at the Olympics. But not even support from tennis star Roger Federer has been able to give squash a look-in.

Before breakdancing, officially named “breaking” beat it, squash has lost out to sports including skateboarding, sport climbing, BMX, surfing, golf and wushu, which was trialled in Beijing in 2008.

As heartbroken as she is, Martin – who also won six British Opens, the Wimbledon of squash – is no longer surprised.

“After the last ones, you get to the point where it’s almost expected,” the former long-time world No 1 said. “Why? I don’t know because the amount of effort squash players put in.

“I know what it was like, training for the sport. It’s one of the hardest sports to train for and play. They’ve obviously got something against squash, because it’s been rejected in the past, it just keeps getting overlooked. I don’t know, I don’t know what to say.”

The 53-year-old has lost all hope of squash ever gaining Olympic status, especially when the IOC has opted for breakdancing on this occasion.

“It’s sort of making a mockery of what the Olympics is,” Martin said. “When you look at what it all used to stand for, the Olympics, it definitely fits in the category. What does the Olympics stands for these days, I don’t really know.

“They either need to go back to what the Olympics was about and let the other sports stay outside of that because the problem is it’s having such an impact on the sports that don’t get into the Olympics now.

“The Olympics has lost what it was. Yes they’re trying to move with the times but it’s creating a mockery of the thing.” But Australia’s Olympic chief, Matt Carroll, said the addition of events like breaking were a positive sign of a more modern Games.

“The Olympic Games are adapting to a post-corona world as well as a continuation of the IOC’s Agenda 2020,” Carroll said.

Liverpool revive their relentlessness in ominous sign for title rivals

JONATHAN WILSON

LONDON, 08 DEC [THEGUARDIAN]: Between a quarter and a third of the way through the season the table is, at least, beginning to take on some sense of normality. Tottenham are first and seven points separate the top half, so it’s not entirely normal. But as a vaccine is approved, fans are allowed back in limited numbers and a return to something approximating to what we knew before can be imagined, so familiar tropes return to football. Manchester City are casually dismissing lesser sides at home, West Ham are losing leads, Everton are flaky and Liverpool are overpowering opponents at Anfield. Welcome back, normality, we’ve missed you.

Within that sense of the plates settling, of everything calming down, though, Liverpool’s situation still feels odd. The perception remains that this has been a difficult season for them. The early part of their campaign was characterised by wild football, by the 4-3 win over Leeds, the 7-2 defeat at Aston Villa and the 2-2 draw at Everton, the repercussions of which continue to be felt. There has been a raggedness to some of their play and, the win away to Atalanta aside, their Champions League form has been no better than it needed to be.

Jürgen Klopp’s spikiness after the draw at Brighton – while a reminder that he, like most managers, is a ter-



rible loser (or drawer when the circumstances feel like a loss) – suggested a man under pressure. And that, perhaps, is understandable enough as the injuries mount up, even if blaming the broadcaster seemed misguided when the whole culture of elite football, in which Liverpool are as complicit as anybody, is founded on squeezing fans for as much as possible to watch as many games as possible.

Yet since losing Virgil van Dijk in the derby, Liverpool have conceded just four goals in six league games. Add in the Champions League and it’s six clean sheets in 11. They’ve only actually lost one league game this season, al-

beit a spectacular one. More than that, the last two home games, against Leicester and then Wolves, have followed a very encouraging pattern for the champions. Both fixtures were, on the face of it, testing games against sides adept on the counter. If there were weaknesses in a back four stripped of three regulars, the sense was that these were opponents equipped to take advantage. But between them they managed just seven shots on target and lost by a combined score of 7-0. Both were entirely emphatic.

The victory over Leicester was arguably Liverpool’s best performance since beating the same opponents at the King

Power last Boxing Day. The win over Wolves might even have been better, if only because it was achieved without the reassuring figure of Alisson in goal. Caoimhín Kelleher was just as assured replacing him as he had been against Ajax in midweek, though, and made one fine first-half save from Daniel Podence when the score was still 0-0.

In the long run, it may even be that these awkward few weeks come to be seen as having been a positive, in getting pitch time for players such as Kelleher, Curtis Jones and Neco Williams. The young right-back impressed again before being removed for Trent Alexander-Arnold

midway through the second half. His return after a hamstring pull is, clearly, a relief for Klopp, but the form of Williams means there should be no need now for Alexander-Arnold to be flogged through seven games in 23 days as he was before sustaining the injury.

Liverpool’s unbeaten run at home now extends to 65 games, and matches like this are the kind to make opponents blanch at the prospect of a trip to Anfield, even with only 2,000 fans. Wolves, admittedly without Raúl Jiménez, who might have offered some kind of outlet, never looked like being able to build anything. This may

be a slightly more restrained Liverpool than the side of a year or so ago, but it stifles opponents with similar effectiveness.

Comparisons with last season must be treated with caution given the differences in the calendar but back then Liverpool kept only two clean sheets in their first 15 league games before embarking on a run of seven in a row from early December. This season there have been three in 11. The last two games at Anfield have been characterised by a sense of a balance, of a team comfortable in holding their opponents at arm’s length but still lethal when chances come.

The stereotype of Liverpool is of relentlessness, of wave after wave of attacking. And they are capable of that, as various comebacks or demolitions have proved. But last season they also had the best defensive record in the league – and that despite a fairly ragged end after lockdown. What made them unstoppable was the three-month spell from the beginning of December to the middle of February in which they conceded just one goal in 11 games while always having the firepower to win. The Brighton game casts some doubt, but the last two home games have suggested a side rediscovering that sort of balance and relentlessness.

That it is being achieved with so many absentees is all the more ominous for the rest of the league.

Booing those that kneel is an act of violent disrespect, a handshake met by a punch

BARNEY RONAY

LONDON, 08 DEC [THEGUARDIAN]: There is a famous, perhaps apocryphal tale about the Millwall end throwing a hand grenade on to the pitch at Griffin Park in November 1965. That story is often taken as an example of extreme Millwall hostility. In fact it was a joke (the grenade was a harmless blank).

Fast-forward more than half a century and something similar was lobbed on to the pitch at the Den in the moments before kick-off on Saturday. Except, this one isn’t a dud. And its explosive effects are far from over.

It is hard to know what to make of the news that Millwall and QPR players will now link arms before kick-off on Tuesday night at the Den “in a show of solidarity for football’s fight against racism”.

This is clearly a case of damage-limitation – and too little, too late for a club, in Millwall’s case, who knew this was coming weeks ago, failed to respond to the warning signs, and have yet to work out a way to placate both their fans and the demands of the outside world. The damage is out there, though. And it won’t be solved by a clapping circle.

It is also hard to overstate the effects of the sustained booing from the home fans before kick-off against Derby. The boos were directed at Millwall’s players for taking a knee against discrimination, and specifically racism. They were also in evidence at Colchester. Social media is awash with supportive messages purporting to speak as fans of other clubs. This is a very real point of tension.

There doesn’t seem much point at this stage in dwelling on the extraordinary lack of respect shown toward those for whom such gestures have a deep and personal meaning. Or on the inability to remain silent for five seconds if your politics preclude you from sharing the moment. Not to mention the fact those involved must realise that booing – not ignoring, but actually pissing all over – a gesture that expresses anti-racism is by its nature a racist act.

Yes, really. Call it what it is. No need to hide behind the trumped-up connection to Black Lives Matter UK, a fringe organisation that has nothing to do with English football; and which doesn’t really exist in the everyday lives of anyone concerned, other than as a distant enemy in the culture wars.

As for the idea this was a response to having “politics” inserted into our football grounds, well, politics are everywhere. Ig-

nore them if you like. That is one of the freedoms we have.

The idea that BLM UK is simply an unignorable enemy, Marxist anarchists currently threatening our very way of life, is laughable.

Neither the Premier League nor the EFL have any formal connection to this small, fringe organisation (the EFL’s anti-racism slogan is Not Today or Any Day, a terrible slogan, but not a political one).

Plus, of course, BLM UK in no sense “owns” or defines the taking of a knee, which goes back at least as far as the civil rights movement. For many people who have experienced prejudice, taking a knee at football is a sign they are now welcome in these places, that their children can safely come, that acceptance awaits them not hostility.

To boo across the top is an act of violent disrespect totally out of kilter with the gesture itself, a handshake met with a punch to the throat. Not to mention a pretty good way of keeping the gate numbers down for the foreseeable future in a borough where 47% of people are black British or other minority ethnic group.

A statement of personal interest: I have been going to The Den, old and new, for 35 years. I can see the ground from my front door. Via these pages I helped to stop Millwall being forced out of the Den a few years back but I know also that simply writing this article will cause huge offence.

There will be fans who see it as a betrayal of the club to point out the hurt caused on Saturday. This is incorrect. It is instead an act of despairing love and a refusal to allow this version of Millwall, south-east London or modern life – tribally angry, consumed by the wider culture war – to drown out everything else.

The other side of this discourse is also incorrect: the urge to pile on, to dismiss everything and everyone here as defective human matter, a bad lot to be given up on.

There has been significant progress at Millwall and in this part of London over the past four decades. These are changes that actually matter, because this is where the rivers meet, a football club that exists in one of the few remaining ungentrified areas of inner London.

It is an attractive fiction for some to maintain South Bermondsey was always a hive of far-right activity (the National Front was chased out of Millwall in the 1970s). But we do know that racism exists in society. We

know that it exists where tensions are felt most keenly.

When an institution like Millwall FC promote anti-racism, when it works to break barriers down – as the community trust has – when the people in the ground become more mixed (as they have), when black players are routinely voted player of the year (a small thing but still the case); then this is actual progress in a place where it is felt, not just a gallery of the pre-converted.

Club, fans and community trust have been proud of this progress but it has also now been beaten into tiny pieces with the bluntest of clubs.

There has been some talk already this week of internal meltdown, with disenchanted employees considering their positions and long-standing home-and-away fans who feel bereft, betrayed and humiliated.

This may now get much worse. Millwall play QPR on Tuesday night with that pin already pulled. A group of 2,000 home fans will again be present. Both teams intend to take a knee. The talk around the place is that at least one player is prepared to leave the pitch if the boos are repeated.

The Den has always been a place of naysaying, of fuck-yous, of comically cursed hostility. For all the upset caused, it is still the case that no one can or will be punished for booing. This is also one of our freedoms.

But the delusion here is that by booing the taking of a knee those present are standing up to some greater power, refusing to be told by those in charge, taking back control.

This is entirely back to front. There is nothing to be gained from disempowered people squabbling among themselves. The best fuck-you in the world is the one directed towards those with actual influence, those who do actually have the power to deny you opportunity or freedom; a fuck-you that involves punching up not down.

The club itself has the power to intervene here, to set an example and to lead. The anger that led to Saturday was a long time brewing, germinated in part, it seems, by a failure to adequately accommodate the club’s remembrance game in November.

For now south-east London holds its breath. Some still maintain this was about politics. It has been made quite clear, and from many sides, that it looks and feels like racism. An escalation will pose the question of how exactly the club can survive such contortions.

Cricket faces tough test as long bio-bubble stays add to mental stress

NICK SAID

CAPE TOWN, 08 DEC [REUTERS]:

England’s cricketers hoped rounds of golf would ease the stress of long periods within a bio-secure bubble but after the One-Day series in South Africa was postponed organisers are taking a fresh look at the impact of COVID-19 protocols on players’ mental health. The decision to postpone the series came after potentially five COVID-19 cases were flagged inside the teams’ bio-secure environment in Cape Town -- one South Africa player, two hotel staff and two members of the England touring party.

With cricket tours requiring players to be away from their families for weeks or even months, the sport is having to look carefully at how teams handle the strict conditions imposed on them by host countries.

Some have found the toll of moving from bubble to bubble too much. England’s Tom Banton and Tom Curran have already pulled out of Australia’s domestic T20 Big Bash League this month.

With England’s players restricted to bio-bubbles throughout the home summer, and some spending more time locked away while playing in the Indian Premier League, the England and South Africa boards agreed to create a “bio-secure environment”, where some movement was allowed under strict guidelines.

“Golf was a key request for the tour to go ahead and we were com-

fortable with that because some allowances have to be made for the players’ mental wellbeing,” South Africa team doctor Shuaib Manjra was quoted by the Daily Mail.

“Many of the England players have been in some sort of bubble for months and you cannot expect them to sit in their rooms all day. Such concessions will have to be made if we want to continue playing cricket.”

The teams did manage to play a three-match Twenty20 series prior to the ODI games, which England won 3-0, but the postponement will come as a massive financial blow to embattled Cricket South Africa.

It also casts doubt on their ability to host planned future tours with Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Australia all set to arrive in the coming months.

DIFFERENT APPROACH

Manjra says there would be changes to the bio-secure environment for the visit of Sri Lanka, who start a two-test tour in Pretoria on Boxing Day. “The Sri Lanka series was set to be very different because the hotel is very different,” he said.

“Again, we were looking to try and balance the mental wellness with strict COVID-19 protocols. But now maybe need a different approach.” ECB managing director of men’s cricket Ashley Giles said there were early concerns about the bio-secure environment, and that this build-up of anxiety among the players led to the decision to call off the remainder of the tour.

Australia to reveal laws to make Google and FB pay for news

CANBERRA, DEC 8 (AP): Australia's government will reveal legislation in Parliament on Wednesday that would make Facebook and Google pay for journalism.

Treasurer Josh Frydenberg said Tuesday that the legislation to create the News Media Bargaining Code will be scrutinized by a parliamentary committee following its introduction and before lawmakers vote on it next year.

This is a huge reform, Frydenberg told reporters. This is a world first. And the world is watching what happens here in Australia.

This is comprehensive legislation that has gone further than any comparable jurisdiction in the world, he added.

The legislation differs from draft proposals that were released in July after consultations with the social media platforms as well as Australian media organizations.

The government had initially planned to exclude state-owned media Australian Broadcasting Corp. and the Special Broadcasting Service from being compensated by the tech giants for their journalism.



Frydenberg said those broadcasters would be paid under the latest draft legislation like commercial media businesses.

Facebook has warned it might block Australian news content rather than pay for it.

Google has said the proposed laws would result in dramatically worse Google Search and YouTube, put free services at risk and could lead to users' data being handed over to big news businesses.

Frydenberg said Google was taking 53 per cent of online advertising dollars and Facebook

took a 23 per cent share.

Michael Miller, executive chairman of News Corp Australia, one of the nation's largest media organisations, described the draft legislation as a significant step forward in the decade-long campaign to achieve fairness in the relationship between Australian news media companies and the global tech giants.

All we have ever sought is a fair commercial outcome and fair payment for the valuable news content our journalists create, Miller said in a statement.

I believe this code

puts in place the framework for this to be achieved.

Neither Facebook nor Google immediately responded to a request for comment on Tuesday.

The conservative government might need the support of the center-left opposition Labor Party to get the legislation through the Senate, where no party or coalition holds a majority of seats.

Senior Labor lawmaker Jim Chalmers said his party gave in-principle support for efforts to ensure that the playing field is levelled between the tech platforms and

the news media organizations.

But Chalmers said the government had yet to brief Labor on the legislation's details.

The legislation would create an arbitrator to address the bargaining imbalance between the tech giants and news businesses.

If a platform and a news outlet can't reach an agreement on price, an arbitrator would be appointed to make a binding decision.

Spain and France and have both failed to make Facebook and Google pay for news through copyright law.

Chinese online platform JD Health rises 50% in stock debut

BEIJING (AP): Shares in China's biggest online health care platform rose 50% in their Hong Kong stock market debut Tuesday, reflecting investor enthusiasm for the fledgling industry as the country emerges from the coronavirus pandemic.

JD Health, an arm of JD.Com Inc., China's biggest online retailer, sells medications, hospital care packages and online consulting by doctors.

Chinese internet companies increasingly offer health services in a society where hospitals are crowded and distribution of drugs and medical supplies outside major cities is uneven. Online consulting with Chinese-speaking physicians is popular with families from China who live in the West or other developing countries.

Other competitors include e-commerce giant Alibaba Group's Alibaba Health; Baidu Health, run by search giant Baidu.com Inc.; and WeDoctor, run by Tencent Holding, operator of the popular WeChat messaging service.

The coronavirus pandemic has boosted demand for Chinese online platforms.

Investors have "high hopes for this kind of companies to develop in China," said Jackson Wong, asset management director for Amber Hill Capital Ltd. in Hong Kong.

The ruling Communist Party has encouraged growth of the industry by authorizing online pharmacies to deliver prescription drugs.

During the pandemic, patients switched from going online only for urgent care to staying in touch with doctors about chronic conditions, according to industry analyst Kevin Chang of Bain & Co.

"This new pattern of digital engagements is likely to continue and to increase the frequency of consultations," Chang said in a report.

Consumer spending and business activity have rebounded to above pre-pandemic levels after China, where the pandemic began in December, declared the disease under control in March and eased most controls. Restrictions on travelers coming from abroad still are in place and visitors to public buildings are checked for fever.

JD Health raised

about \$3.8 billion by selling 20% of the company to public shareholders.

It was Hong Kong's second-biggest stock offering this year behind parent JD.Com, which has shares traded in New York and raised \$4.5 billion in June when it joined the Hong Kong exchange.

The ruling party is encouraging use of online health services to reduce the burden on hospitals.

JD Health said it plans to expand its online pharmacy and develop "smart healthcare solutions" supported by artificial intelligence to work with physicians.

The company says it had 72.5 million active users in June, up 30% over a year earlier.

The industry might face tougher competition once the coronavirus is brought under control and patients have more offline options, said Wong.

"If vaccines are very effective and people start going out again, the growth of these online service providers might not be as high," said Wong. "That would be the biggest risk for this kind of company."

New Zealand mosque shooter travelled to India before carrying out attack: Report

MELBOURNE, DEC 8 (PTI): Brenton Tarrant, the Australian-born attacker who killed 51 Muslim worshippers at two mosques in Christchurch, travelled extensively around the world, including India where he spent nearly three months, before moving to New Zealand to carry out the country's worst massacre in 2019, according to a detailed report into the shootings released on Tuesday.

Five Indians were among those killed in the terror attack on March 15 last year that also left dozens of others wounded and had shaken New Zealand, regarded as one of the most peaceful countries in the world.

The 792-page Royal Commission of Inquiry report notes that after leaving school, the 30-year-old attacker worked as a personal trainer at a local gym until 2012 when he suffered an injury.

"He never again worked in paid employment. Instead, he lived off the money that he had received from his father and income from investments made with it. With the money from his father, the individual travelled extensively. First, in 2013, he explored New Zealand and Australia and then between 2014 and 2017 he travelled extensively around the world," it said.

Between April 15, 2014, and August 17, 2017, the individual travelled extensively and always alone, except for his travel to North Korea as part of a tour group.

"The longest visit the individual made to any one country was to India where he stayed between November 21, 2015, and February 18, 2016. The countries that he visited for periods of about a

month or more included China, Japan, Russia, South Korea among others," said the report that took about 18 months to compile. The inquiry report did not provide details of what Tarrant was doing in India during his nearly three-month stay in India.

However, The New Zealand Herald reported that there was no evidence that he met with extremist groups while overseas, investigated potential targets, or carried out any training, in a report.

The inquiry did not believe that the travel fuelled his racist views to any great extent, rather concluding: "Put simply, he travelled widely because he could and had nothing better to do," it said. But he did visit right-wing internet forums, subscribe to right-wing YouTube channels, and "read a great deal about immigration, far right political theories and historical struggles between Christianity and Islam", it added.

About the attacker's upbringing in Australia, the Royal Commission of Inquiry report notes that it was marked by a number of stressors, including his parents' separation and his mother's subsequent relationship with an abusive partner.

He expressed "racist ideas" from an early age and was also an avid internet user, it said.

"In February 2017, he booked flights to New Zealand to arrive in Auckland on August 17, 2017, and then on to Dunedin on August 20, 2017. We see these activities as the first manifestations of his terrorist intent," said the report that details the extensive world travels of Tarrant.

Capsule with asteroid samples arrives in Japan for research



TOKYO (AP): Japanese space agency officials were delighted Tuesday by the return of a small capsule containing asteroid soil samples obtained by their Hayabusa2 spacecraft and they are anxiously waiting to look inside after preparations are complete.

The Hayabusa2 dropped the capsule from space and it landed in the Australian Outback over the weekend. It arrived in Japan earlier Tuesday and it will soon be studied for insight into the origin of the solar system and life on Earth.

The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency said the capsule, tightly sealed and carefully stored in a container box, arrived at its research facility in Sagami-hara, near Tokyo, for curation and analysis beginning later this month.

"It's really like a dream," said Yuichi Tsuda, the Hayabusa2 project manager. "After 5.2 billion kilometers (3.2 billion miles) of space journey which took six years, (the capsule) has returned and now it's here with us."

Mission officials will have to wait until next week to look inside.

"I'm anxious to find out if the samples are really inside and how much is there," project manager Makoto Yoshikawa said. "Otherwise, everything is perfect so far."

At the end of its year-long journey from asteroid Ryugu, more than 300 million kilometers (190 million miles) from Earth, Hayabusa2 released the capsule Saturday from 220,000 kilometers (136,700 miles) in space, successfully sending it to land on a targeted area in a sparsely populated desert in Australia.

The extremely high precision work at the end of Hayabusa2's six-year mission thrilled many Japanese.

Launched in December 2014, the unmanned Hayabusa2 spacecraft touched down twice last year on Ryugu. Despite an unexpectedly rocky surface that even forced the mission's team to revise landing plans, the spacecraft successfully collected data and soil samples from two locations — on the surface and from underground.

Scientists say the samples, especially ones taken from under the asteroid's surface, contain data from 4.6 billion

years ago unaffected by pace radiation and other environmental factors. They are particularly interested in studying organic materials in the samples to learn about how they were distributed in the solar system and if or how they are related to life on Earth.

The samples will be treated in a clean room at the Sagami-hara facility to avoid any external impact, and the work is expected to start soon. After initial studies and curation in Japan, some of the samples will be shared with NASA and other international scientists for further study.

Initial inspection at a quick check facility in Australia detected unidentified gases from the capsule, a sign they are related to solar wind or Ryugu samples. JAXA will further analyze the gases, which could provide information about organic elements and water.

Outside the JAXA's facility in Sagami-hara, senior members of the Hayabusa2 team and local fans lined up at the gate Tuesday and welcomed the arrival of the capsule, transported from the airport on a truck, some holding up a sign saying "Welcome back!"

HONG KONG, DEC 8 (AP): Hong Kong police on Tuesday arrested eight pro-democracy activists over their role in an unauthorised protest last summer, widening a crackdown on dissent in the semi-autonomous Chinese city.

The arrests, which included several former lawmakers, are tied to a July 1 demonstration in which thousands defied a protest ban and rallied on the streets against a national security law imposed on the city by Beijing the day before.

Former pro-democracy lawmakers Wu Chi-wai, Eddie Chu and Leung Kwok Hung were arrested at their homes on charges related to organising and participating in the protest,

according to Facebook posts on their respective pages. Hong Kong police said in a statement that eight men aged between 24 and 64 had been arrested for inciting, organising and taking part in an unauthorized assembly.

Traditionally, a protest march is held every year on July 1 the day Hong Kong was handed from British to Chinese control in 1997 but this year's protest was banned with authorities citing the health risks from the pandemic.

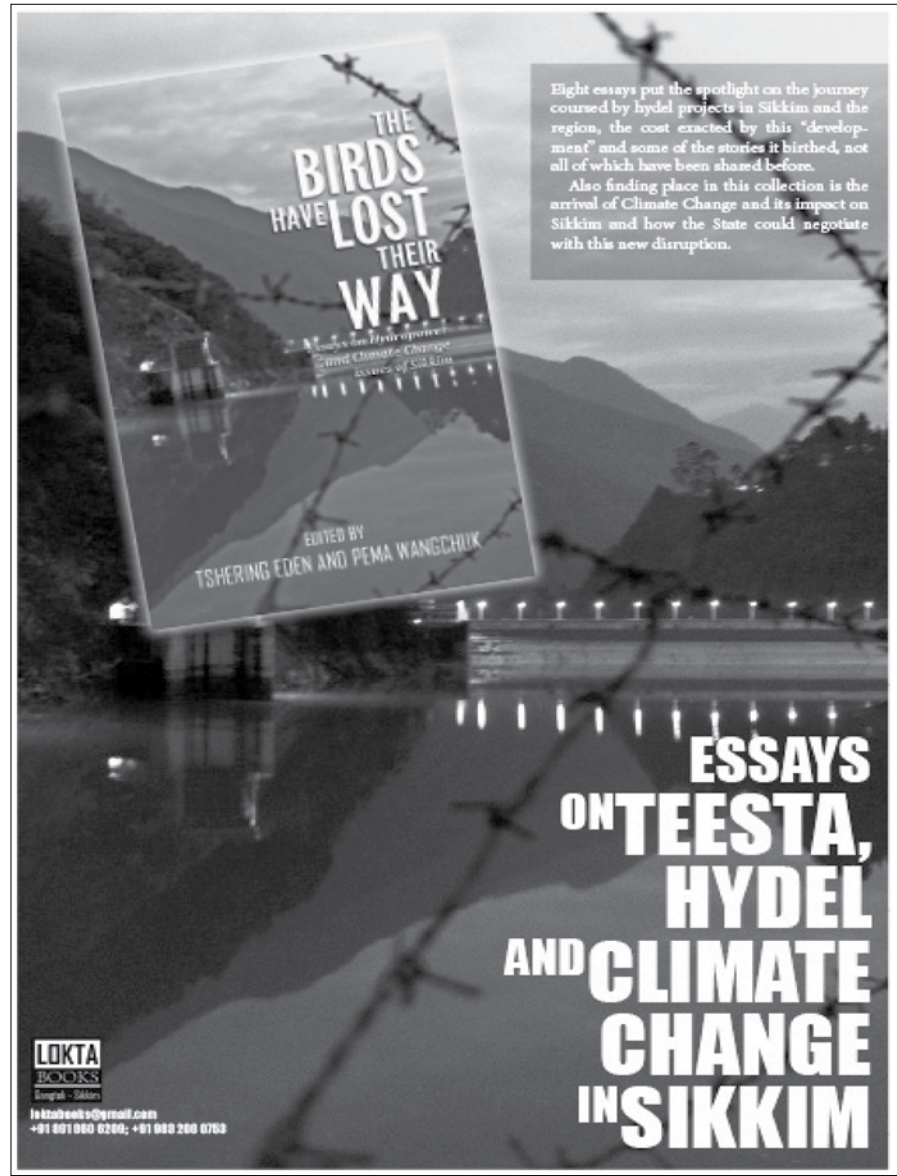
Hong Kong and Beijing have increasingly clamped down on dissent in the city since the introduction of the national security law, which was aimed at curbing months of political un-

rest and protests against the government.

The crackdown has led to accusations that Beijing is violating the autonomy it promised Hong Kong would have following the 1997 handover. It also has triggered warnings the ruling Communist Party is damaging Hong Kong's appeal as a global business center and one of Asia's most dynamic cities.

More than 370 people were arrested on July 1, with at least 10 arrested under the national security law.

In August, the US imposed sanctions on 11 officials from mainland China and Hong Kong, including Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam, for undermining the city's autonomy.





A GOAT FOR THE G.O.A.T! Actress Vanessa Hudgens performed with a goat at the 2020 MTV Movie & TV Awards: Greatest Of All Time broadcast.

Queen Latifah to star in Netflix's 'End of the Road'

LOS ANGELES, DEC 8 (PTI): Actor Queen Latifah is set to play the lead role in Netflix's upcoming thriller "End of the Road".

Millicent Shelton, known for helming episodes for shows such as "P-Valley", "Insecure", "The Walking Dead", "Titans" and "Black-ish", is attached to direct the film.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, David Loughery penned the screenplay based on an original draft by Christopher Moore.

The thriller follows a recently widowed, Brenda, who drives her family cross-country to start a new life after losing her job. While isolated in the desert in New Mexico, the family must learn to fight back when they become targeted by a mysterious killer.

The film will be produced by Tracey Edmonds for Edmonds Entertainment, Mark Burg for Twisted Pictures and Brad Kaplan.

Latifah, who previously worked with the streamer on Ryan Murphy's "Hollywood", will executive produce the movie along with Shakim Compere of Flavor Unit Entertainment.

The 50-year-old actor will next feature in Adam Sandler-starrer "Hustle", which is also set to release on Netflix.

Christopher Nolan calls Warner's streaming plan 'a mess'



Christopher Nolan, one of Warner Bros.' most important filmmakers, has come out strongly against the company's decision to debut its films on HBO Max and in theaters in 2021. The "Tenet" filmmaker told The Associated Press Monday that it's not a good business decision and criticized how the company handled it.

"It's a unilateral decision that the studio took. They didn't even tell the people involved," Nolan said. "You have these great filmmakers who worked with passion and diligence for years on projects that are intended to be feature films with fantastic movie stars. And they've all now been told that they're a loss-leader for a fledgling streaming service."

The company announced last week that its 2021 film slate, including the new "Matrix" movie, "Dune" and "In the Heights" would debut on its streaming service and in theaters simultaneously in the U.S., rattling Hollywood and resulting in doomsday predictions about the future of the movie theater.

"I've never seen everybody so upset about one particular decision," Nolan said.

AMC Theaters chief Adam Aron condemned the move last week, but no in-house filmmaker has spoken out on the record until Nolan, one of the studio's marquee names. Nolan has worked with Warner Bros. on every film since 2002's "Insomnia" in a profitable and critically acclaimed run that's included "The Dark Knight" trilogy, "Inception" and

"Dunkirk." "It's not right. And it's not a good business decision," Nolan said. "It's all a bit of a mess."

The studio declined comment.

"Tenet," his time-bending sci-fi thriller starring John David Washington, is not following suit and heading straight to HBO Max. It is being released on DVD, Blu-ray and digital on Dec. 15. Nolan said he's "very glad" his film "isn't caught up in the mess that they've made."

"We will be accessible through Roku and Amazon Prime and iTunes and be everywhere all at once for people to enjoy," Nolan added.

"Tenet" was the first and only major blockbuster to test the waters opening in theaters in early September after they had been closed for nearly six months because of the pandemic. With major markets like Los Angeles and New York closed, domestic ticket sales fizzled, and Warner Bros. and other studios responded by delaying the year's remaining major films. But internationally "Tenet" has made over \$300 million.

"That sends a very optimistic message about when theaters can open, as long as there are films for them to show, people are going to come back," Nolan said. "I think everybody in this business completely understands that long term people are always going to want to go to the movies. I think that a lot of short-term thinking going on right now, which is maybe inevitable in such a terrible situation."

'B.A.P.S.' star Natalie Desselle Reid dies at 53

LOS ANGELES (AP): Natalie Desselle Reid, who starred alongside Halle Berry in the 1997 film "B.A.P.S." and on the sitcom "Eve," has died. She was 53.

Reid's death on Monday was confirmed by Je'Caryous Johnson, the CEO of Je'Caryous Entertainment, which was planning a stage adaptation of "B.A.P.S." A rep for the actor's family said she died after a battle with colon cancer.

In the film "B.A.P.S.," Reid and Berry played the roles of two waitresses at a Georgia food diner who decide to fly to Los Angeles for a music video audition. The tandem

ended up living a luxury lifestyle as "Black American Princesses" while caring for an elderly Beverly Hills millionaire.

Johnson said Reid was looking forward to bringing her role as Mickey in the film back to life. He said everyone fell in love with Reid's "undeniably witty, always giving and caring and hilariously show-stopping personality" during rehearsals earlier this year.

"The world has truly lost one of its most angelic souls here on Earth," Johnson said in a statement, noting the dedicated approach Reid took to her acting. "There

will never be another woman like her who so effortlessly lit up the screen, as well as any room she walked into."

Berry said on Twitter that she was "in total shock. ... completely heartbroken."

Reid starred as Eve's friend Janie Egins over a three-season span on the UPN sitcom "Eve." The actor also appeared in Tyler Perry's "Madea's Big Happy Family," F. Gary Gray's "Set It Off" and Def Jam's "How to Be a Player."

Eve paid tribute to Reid on her social media saying "thank you for your light and spirit."

Clooney honored by MoMA as actor, director and humanitarian

George Clooney's co-stars, friends and collaborators gathered virtually to share anecdotes and praise his contributions as actor, director, humanitarian and colleague -- not to mention Sexiest Man Alive twice over.

Among those paying tribute to Clooney at the Museum of Modern Art's annual film benefit Monday night was David Letterman, who recalled something Clooney had once said to him "that I carry with me today."

Clooney had told him his humanitarian efforts in Darfur hadn't turned out quite as he'd hoped, but added that it didn't matter. "What matters is you just keep trying," Letterman quoted Clooney as saying. "If it doesn't work the first time, try something else."

"And I thought, 'This is such a simple, eloquent way to express the importance of helping others,'" Letterman said. "I've never forgotten it and I never will."

The tributes mixed praise with humor. Actor David Oyelowo, who appears in Clooney's new Netflix film "The Midnight Sky," told him, "I'm so grateful to be in your orbit." He also quipped how Clooney is humble -- but sometimes falsely so, "because he will get the fact that he was (People's) Sexiest Man Alive TWICE into almost every conversation."

Julianna Margulies, who co-starred with Clooney in the TV drama "ER" early in his career, told the story of how she'd told him she loved to drive, and he'd asked her, "Have you ever driven a Porsche?" And then he handed her his keys and said "Let's go take a spin."

"And I thought, 'Who's this guy who's letting me drive his Porsche? This guy can't be for real,'" she said. "I would read the telephone book for you, my friend."

Clooney joins a group of previous MoMA honorees that includes Martin Scorsese, Tom Hanks, Julianne Moore, Cate Blanchett, Quentin Tarantino, Pedro Almodovar and others. MoMA's annual film benefit raises funds to bring great works of film to the museum's collection. This year, amidst the COVID-19 crisis, the event -- presented since 2011 by Chanel -- also benefits Artist Relief, an emergency initiative supporting artists.

Also giving virtual tributes Monday evening were actors Felicity Jones, Tiffany Boone, Kyle Chandler and Demian Bichir, who appear in "A Midnight Sky," which Clooney stars in and directs. Sam Rockwell, Jeffrey Wright,

Tilda Swinton and Bradley Cooper also appeared. In his own remarks, Clooney spoke of how he'd first come to MoMA as "a kid from a small town in Kentucky, and it opened my eyes to a whole world, a world where anything is possible." He also threw some shade at President Donald Trump.

The benefit featured clips from some of Clooney's many films: "Michael Clayton," "Syriana," "The Descendants," "Gravity," and "Good Night, and Good Luck," among others.

In earlier comments to The Associated Press, Clooney said "Good Night, and Good Luck" was probably his proudest professional accomplishment. The 2005 film, which he di-



rected and co-wrote with Grant Heslov, portrays the conflict between journalist Edward R. Murrow and Senator Joseph McCarthy.

"I wrote a film about the fourth estate when the other three estates dropped the ball, and I was proud of that," he said. He added he was also proud of "The Midnight Sky," "because it takes on a lot of those same issues of responsibility and how we have to look out for one another, and what man can do to man."

Clooney also told the AP what he found most striking about parenthood; he and Amal Clooney are parents to 3-year-old twins.

"The thing that I have learned, that everyone else who's had children know and they don't tell you, is that they're born with their personalities, and ... basically your job is to make sure they survive until they can feed themselves."

"Because the truth of the matter," he added, "is they have all their personality already in them. My daughter and son are twins so I can really compare the two. They are very different. So mostly it's just about keeping them alive while they plot to overthrow the entire family."

Aries:
Aries, the cards are pointing towards a certain problem you've been struggling with for a while. Is there a possibility that you're looking at this problem from just one angle when there are so many other angles waiting to be examined? Spirit is urging you to expand your horizon and to use your mind wisely. There is an aha moment for you around the corner. So keep going!

Tip: Use your mind wisely.

Taurus:

The thing about distance is that it has a way of providing us with much-needed perspective. The cards are urging you to step away from the given situation for a bit. Put your feet up and put your phone on DND mode. Make connecting with your own self a priority right now. What you will discover in the process: things are not quite as complicated as you imagined them to be.

Tip: Take time out.

Gemini:

Life is not a race or a competition, Gemini. There is no rush to get anywhere or prove anything to anybody. You are where you are supposed to be, and you've worked your way here. So, instead of obsessing over the destination, take a moment to recognise what you have, now and in this moment. Spirit is being benevolent with you in so many ways. It's only by slowing down that you will be able to recognise the many blessings that are pouring into your life.

Tip: Slow down.

Cancer:

What if our creations are not limited to the canvas, Cancer?

What if every thought and action is a part of the co-creation process? The cards are urging you to recognise your role in this divine play, and remember the infinite potential within your being. You are in the process of dreaming a new world into being, one that will elevate your life to a whole new level.

Tip: You are the co-creator of your reality.

Leo:

The trouble is, we're too hung up on the idea of how things should be. As a result, when circumstances don't turn out the way we imagined they would, we tend to go into a downward spiral. Here's the thing you want to remember, though: Spirit has a plan. So slow down. Breathe. Find the beauty in these imperfections. You will soon understand that things had to fall apart so you could start afresh and build something you would be proud of in years to come.

Tip: Let go of the old idea as you embrace the new.

Virgo:

What if we said that the Universe is designed to support your dream-weaving process? That the fruition of your desires is essential to the harmony of the divine matrix? Today, the cards are urging you to slow down, breathe, and surrender those worries that have been weighing you down. Remembering that you are supported, now and in every moment, will take the burden off your shoulders. So take the first step. Take the first step despite the butterflies in the pit of your stomach! Before you know it, the path will have cleared up, and you will have clarity on where you are being led to.

Tip: You are being supported, now and in every moment.

Libra:

Don't let your circumstances throw you off, Libra. The cards are reminding you that you are where you are today because of your hard work and consistent efforts. So, take a moment to look back at the trajectory of your life. Acknowledge both the difficulties and the soul lessons. In doing so, you will realise that you have already dealt with a challenge of this magnitude before, and are prepared for this. Let your inner guide—or what the Sufis refer to as the 'khidr'—hold your hand through this process.

Tip: Turn your knowledge into wisdom.

Scorpio:

That Scorpio season was synonymous with intensity is not news to you. But it reaffirmed the old cliché 'What doesn't break you, makes you stronger'. Today, you're celebrating a newfound freedom from the old you and the detrimental patterns you were repeating on loop. The new you doesn't have a clue as to where life is leading you, but you're pretty sure it's going to be a wonderful place. Spirit has a plan, Scorpio. Spirit has a plan. And you've come to trust this divine plan a hundred per cent.

Tip: You are experiencing a newfound freedom.

Sagittarius:

The trouble is, we get hung up on how things should be. As a result, we refuse to look at the various ways in which we can navigate the given situation. Are you giving into the rigidity, Sagittarius, and is it serving you in any way? Today, the cards are urging you to let go of the false sense of control—just a little—and be receptive to

what Spirit is pointing you towards. What you will realise in the process is that being in a state of flow makes life infinitely easier.

Tip: Let go of both your rigidity and false sense of control.

Capricorn:

Generosity is a virtue, Capricorn, one that you have been blessed with in abundance. So give with all your heart without being attached to a specific outcome or reward. Nurture those you care for in a way you never have before. Spirit is reminding you that the more you stay in the energy of giving, the more fulfilled you will be by what life is offering you at the moment.

Tip: Generosity is required of you.

Aquarius:

You could do everything on your own, but where's the fun in that? The cards are reminding you of the power of collaboration and co-creation. So, sync your forces with those who are jamming at the same frequency as you, and get ready to make magic together. The potential of what you can create is infinite. Remember that as you take the next step.

Tip: Embrace the power of collaboration and co-creation.

Pisces:

You've got a 'house of cards' situation at hand, Pisces. Given how precarious everything is, chaos is going to be a constant around here. While you have no control over what unfolds, your state of mind is something you have complete dominion over. So, focus on finding that space of Zen within you as you watch the show. Something tells us you're going to find a way to find beauty in the imperfections too.

Tip: This too shall pass.