



**GOA GOVT CANCELS PERMISSION
FOR FILM, TELE-SERIAL SHOOTINGS**
pg 08

**LACKING WITS OR INTENTIONALLY
WITLESS?**
pg 04

**FAMILY OF CHRIS CORNELL SETTLES
WITH DOCTOR OVER HIS DEATH**
pg 08



Summit TIMES

Vol 06 | Issue119 | Gangtok | Saturday | 08 May 2021

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

RNI No. SIKENG/2016/69420

Pages 8 | RS. 5

Gangtok lad wins Best Delegate award at Global Youth International Model United Nations

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 07 MAY:**

Rishal Pandey Chettri, a resident of Gangtok and a student of Class 12 at Delhi Public School, Siliguri, bagged the "Best Delegate Award" at the Global Youth International Model United Nations (GYIMUN).

He was a delegate representing India at the United Nations Human Right Council, a press release informs.

Rishal was feted for his "outstanding diplomacy skills and knowledge of International Relations."

The competition was organised virtually owing to Covid-19 travel restrictions and had delegates from 40+ countries on 24 and 25 April. The results were announced on 06 May.

Global Youth International MUN is a United Nation's Simulation Conference that aims to inculcate the skills of Public Speaking, Diplomacy



and Negotiations among the youth.

Born to Om Prakash Pandey and Meena Bhujel, Rishal completed his class 10 from Holy Cross School, Tadong, and went on to pursue his +2 from DPS, Siliguri.

Rishal shares, "These conferences and Model United Nations address real world concerns to equip the participating young adults with practical and applicable expertise which will enhance their skills of diplomacy."

Sikkim breaks daily Covid surge record for third time this month

268 NEW CASES AND 2 DEATHS IN PAST 24 HOURS

**SAGAR CHHETRI
GANGTOK, 07 MAY:**

Sikkim broke its single-day spike record within a day today, recording its highest single-day surge of 268 fresh cases of novel coronavirus. This record had been set only yesterday when 264 cases were recorded. What the State's statisticians should also pay closer heed to is that today's 268 cases were picked up from the testing of 802 samples while yesterday's marginally lower 264 cases were detected from the screening on substantially more, 903 samples.

This is the third time this month that Sikkim has broken its daily surge record ever since

it set it at 259 new cases on 01 May. This record had held since 14 August, 2020, when 149 cases were reported here.

In continuing bad news, two more deaths were recorded in the same 24 hours taking the State Covid toll to 160. One COVID-19 related death was reported from STNM Hospital and the other from Central Referral Hospital, Tadong. With these two deaths, the State has already recorded 11 COVID-19 related deaths this week.

There are currently 2,398 active cases of Novel Coronavirus in Sikkim, of whom 10 are currently admitted in the ICU facility of STNM Hospital and none currently at the ICU in

CRH-Tadong.

16 more Covid patients were hospitalised today [14 at STNM Hospital and 2 at Mangan District Hospital] and there are now 178 Covid patients in hospitals across the State. As per data maintained by the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme of the Health Department, there are 256 dedicated Covid-beds in hospitals across the State at present.

Of the active cases, 2,053 are under home isolation across the State at present, 256 total alone.

Of the new cases, 205 are from East District, 25 from West District, 24 from North and 14 from South Sikkim.

In the meanwhile, the number of recovered cases registered an encouraging surge today with 123 people returning to normal life after completing their period of home isolation. The number of recovered cases in Sikkim now stands at 6,688. Sikkim's cumulative total of confirmed cases of COVID-19 is now 9,451.

The 268 new cases were picked up in the testing of 802 samples on Thursday. While 227 cases returned positive in RT-PCR testing of 682 samples, two more tested positive in CB-NAAT of four samples and 39 persons were found positive for COVID-19 in rapid antigen testing of 116 samples.

In virtual meeting with Minister, Panchayats share real Covid-triggered woes of rural Sikkim

GANGTOK, 07 MAY [IPR]: A virtual meeting was convened on 07 May under the chairmanship of the Rural Development Minister Sonam Lama on "Management of COVID-19 at the Village level". The meeting had the participation of the Zilla Adhakshya/ Upa-Adhakshyas and ZP members/ Sabhapati/ Upa-Sabhapati and members of Gram Panchayats alongwith ADC (Dev), BDOs, DPOs, ADs, Sr VAA/ VAA and other functionaries of DoPR/ SIRD and RDD.

After the welcome address and a brief report presented on the intent of organizing the virtual meeting with PRIs by Bishal Mukhia, Director SIRD, a Power Point presentation on the status of Covid-19 and the experiences/ challenges faced during the 1st wave of the pandemic in 2020 alongwith preparedness measures to be taken up during the 2nd wave as per the Disaster Management Act was shared by Prabhakar Rai, Director Panchayat.

The participants placed their respective grievances along with suggestions in view of tackling the untoward situation at the village level during the interactive session.

One of the prominent points placed was regarding the free movement of vehicles ferrying



essential commodities and the requirement of setting up of transit points with shelter for drivers as it had been noticed that the drivers return to their respective homes to their families which is not advisable given the risk of exposure.

A suggestion was also placed for suspending all religious/ personal congregations in the villages through an Official Order.

A grievance on non-availability of Ambulances as well as noncooperation of taxi drivers or private vehicle owners in the village related to travel of suspected Covid-19 patients to the PHSC or Hospital was also raised in the meeting with a request for provision of Emergency vehicles in the village under the supervision of the Panchayats.

Further, it was also suggest-

ed that vaccination of employees posted in the Gram Panchayat Units to be considered irrespective of age enabling them to be confident in supporting the Panchayats towards Covid management.

Another issue raised by the Panchayats was related to RT-PCR tests which if facilitated at places convenient for the village folk would help them avoid travelling long distances and stay away from probable contamination too.

CS Rao, Pr. Secretary, RDD, in his remarks suggested all Gram Panchayats to procure a mobile Sim card and activate the village Helpline by using the services of the village/ ward level "Covid Monitoring Committee" so constituted as per the directive issued earlier.

He conveyed his sadness on hearing the stigma still prevalent in the society wherein a Panchayat member in Home isolation after testing positive was not provided any assistance by any other individual of the village.

The Minister expressed happiness towards this outreach programme for awareness generation at the village level with 434 participants in the meeting.

In his address, he said that all points raised have been considered and a collective decision shall be taken in consultation with the Chief Minister.

He issued a directive to all panchayats to generate awareness on Covid-19 protocol and vaccination through miking in the villages as is being done in the towns.

He also apprised all that the Government has been monitoring the situation in the state and is ready to handle the situation and with the cooperation of the Panchayats and Officials at the grassroot level is confident in fighting against the pandemic.

The Minister expressed his sincere gratitude to the Health Department, Police Department and the front line workers who have been tirelessly working for the safety of all Sikkimese. He requested all to reach to each person in the village and give them the required support from their end and if required get assistance from the Government too. He directed all Officers and staff of RDD to be vigilant and work sincerely for the well being and safety of the people.

Over 90 lakh COVID-19 vaccine doses still with States, says Centre



New Delhi, 07 May [PTI]: More than 90 lakh COVID-19 vaccine doses are still available with the states and Union Territories and they will receive over 10 lakh more vaccine doses within the next three days, the Union Health Ministry said today.

The Centre has so far provided more than 17.35 crore (17,35,07,770)

vaccine doses to states and UTs free of cost. Of this, the total consumption including wastages is 16,44,77,100 doses, according to official data made available at 8 am.

"More than 90 lakh (90,30,670) COVID-19 vaccine doses are still available with the states and UTs to be administered. States with negative balance are showing

more consumption (including wastage) than vaccine supplied as they have not reconciled the vaccine they have supplied to armed forces," the ministry said.

"Furthermore, more than 10 lakh (10,25,000) vaccine doses will be received in addition by the states and UTs within the next three days," it said in a statement.

Edwards Foundation converts Glenary's Restaurant into isolation ward

SMRITA KHAWAS

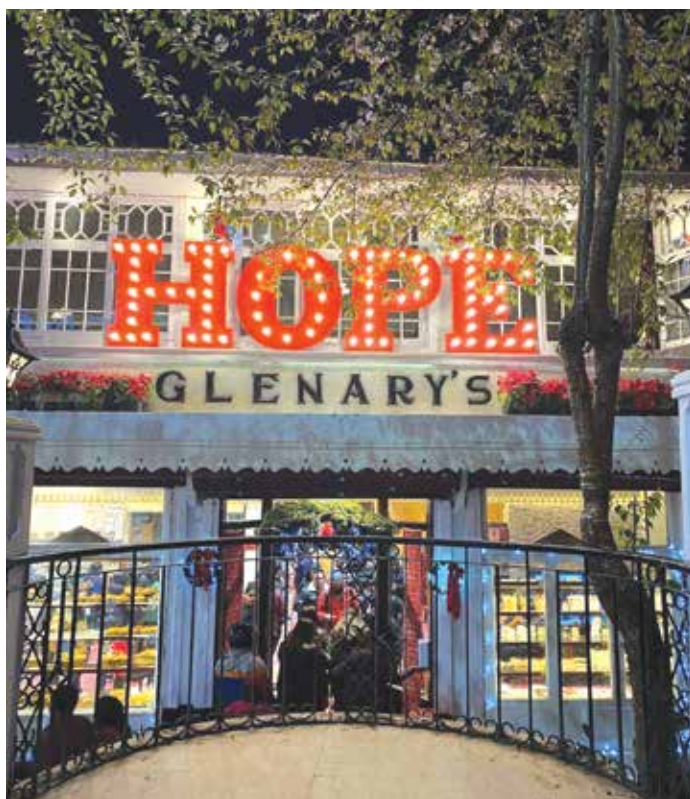
DARJEELING, 07 MAY:

The iconic Glenary's restaurant in Darjeeling has been converted into an isolation centre for Darjeeling residents who test positive for Covid-19 and don't have space for isolation in their homes. This gesture was not requisitioned and was instead volunteered by Ajoy Edwards, the owner of Glenary's and is being put together in association with "Edward's Foundation" to help Darjeeling weather the second wave of Novel Coronavirus.

Mr Edwards informs that the decision to convert his heritage property into an isolation centre was taken shortly after he received a letter from the West Bengal government seeking the help of NGOs to combat covid-19.

"Seeing the rising number of cases and the need for Covid-positive people to be comfortably quarantined and isolated, we, the members of Edward Foundation, decided to convert our over 100 years old heritage restaurant into an isolation centre," he explains.

The fact that Planters' Hospital is barely a hundred metres away, Glenary's offers an



apt location to keep positive people in quarantine since doctors are almost within earshot should a complication arise.

Mr Edward adds that the Foundation has already tied up with Planters' Hospital and have been deputed a doctor, Dr Plaban Das, to make twice-daily visits to the centre and check on the people housed in the isolation centre.

Volunteers at the isolation centre will also be given priority vaccination given their risk of infection.

The Foundation hopes to have the facility in operation by Wednesday next week. To begin with, they will establish 20 beds with the provision to go up to 45 should the situation demand.

The bakery below will continue to be in operation while the restaurant above is being converted to an isolation centre, it is informed.

In fact, proceeds from the bakery will be diverted to sustain the isolation ward, Mr Edwards informs.

8TH MAY AGREEMENT

*The Tripartite Agreement's Story on its Anniversary***SHANKER SHARMA**

The 8th May Agreement is considered very important in the history of Sikkim. It lays the foundation for the ultimate merger of Sikkim into the Indian union. Unfortunately, the majority of the people today have no idea about this important agreement, the circumstances surrounding which this agreement was signed, the imbroglio that ended with the signing of this agreement. This agreement was signed by the then foreign secretary of India, Kewal Singh, the Chogyal of Sikkim, Palden Thondup Namgyal, and representatives from the main political parties of Sikkim viz Sikkim Janta Congress (SJC), Sikkim National Congress (SNC) and Sikkim National Party (SNP).

The Tripartite Agreement, as it got to be called, was signed in the backdrop of a people's movement in 1973. The law and order situation in Sikkim had completely collapsed thereby forcing the Chogyal to hand over the administration to the Govt of India. This agreement was to restore normalcy in the kingdom, fulfil the aspirations of the people for democratic reforms [like one man, one vote, a written constitution, abolition of parity] and at the same time the interest of the Chogyal had to be safeguarded. However, it proved to be a bond for the ultimate merger of the country.

VULNERABLE KINGDOM

Tashi Namgyal ruled Sikkim from 1914 till his death in 1963. However, after the death of the crown prince Paljor Namgyal in an accident in Punjab in 1942, Tashi Namgyal virtually took retirement and the state of affairs was handed over to Palden Thondup Namgyal. It was Palden Thondup who was ruling Sikkim on his father's behalf from the 1940s though he became Chogyal formally only in 1965.

Sikkim had become a protectorate of British India after the Anglo-Chinese Convention 1890. Although at the time of framing this convention Sikkim was not present, it directed the future for Sikkim. When the British left India in 1947, independent India took the mantle of its formal colonial master in Sikkim. By the Indo-Sikkim treaty of 1950, Sikkim continued to be a protectorate of Independent India. By this treaty, Sikkim's defence, External Affairs and Communication went into the hands of India and the Chogyal had his complete control in the internal affairs in the state. Like in the British period, an Indian Political officer was continue to be stationed in Gangtok. Being located in a strategically important position surrounded by four countries namely India, China(Tibet), Nepal and Bhutan, although negligibly small in size, India's huge security interest lied on it.

ASPIRATIONS FOR DEMOCRACY

Inspired by the independence of India, democratic consciousness among the Sikkimese was on the rise. Nepalese, although the majority in number, were treated as a second class citizen by the ruling class. People were subjected to exploitations by the ruling class particularly the 'kazis' and 'thekadars' in the countryside. The landlords had control of the land and a hefty portion from the harvest was taken by them as revenue. The peasants were forced to do several kinds of unpaid labour by the landlords and aristocrats. The resentment was simmering among the people. The common people were under abject poverty. Roads, schools, hospitals were minuscule in number. Education was a privilege for a handful of families.

PROTECTORATE KINGDOM

India, having just got independence from British imperialism, did not want an imperialist tag on itself by incorporating a small independent kingdom. Many leaders from Indian National Congress including Sardar Patel were in the favour of making Sikkim a part of India. Sikkim being a member of the Chamber of Princes along with around 600 princely states in India would have given a justification for Sardar Patel for a forceful annexation. However, Nehru was against it. It was largely because of Nehru that Sikkim could maintain Independence after 1947. India decided to keep Sikkim along with Bhutan independent keeping the subjects of its interest with itself.

However, India did not afford any laxity in handling a vulnerable kingdom like Sikkim. India's alarm grew after China occupying Tibet, which India ideally would have wanted to act as a buffer state between itself and China.

To protect its interests, India played with Chogyal and the section of the people of Sikkim who were pro-democracy and anti-feudal. Generally, India followed the policy of pleasing and appeasing Chogyal but whenever it wanted Chogyal to submit to its whims, India used the anti-feudal, pro-democracy elements to create unrest in the kingdom.

REFORMS

Chogyal introduced several reforms to keep the pro-democracy elements under control. Probably his efforts were bearing fruit too. We can understand this from the fact that in the late 1940s there was a popular demand for Sikkim's merger with India among the political parties, which was not there in the subsequent elections held afterwards. In fact, by 1970, the revision of the 1950 treaty and maintaining independent status of the kingdom had become the demand of the political parties. This change in stance in political parties could be viewed in two ways, either it was because the political parties started reconciling with the Chogyal satisfied with his reformative steps or it was the result of the lack of cooperation from India in their demand that they felt it futile.

The Chogyal started holding elections regularly, introduced the five-year plan, primary schools were opened even in villages, roads were constructed to connect the major towns of Sikkim, PHCs were opened, attempts were made to modernise agricul-

ture, the administration was reformed etc. In short, there were attempts from the Chogyal towards reformation to meet the demand of the time.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

In 1965, Palden Thondup Namgyal became the Chogyal of Sikkim formally. In 1963, the 40 year old prince had married Hope Cooke, a 23-year-old American. Palden Thondup Namgyal was an ambitious ruler. He was not satisfied with Sikkim being a protectorate. He was determined to safeguard the independence of Sikkim. He started the demand for revision of the treaty of 1950. He wanted India to look after only Sikkim's defence and communication and external affairs returned to him. To strengthen Sikkim's position as an independent country, he was demanding Sikkim's membership in the UNO or at least in other organisations of UNO like WHO or ILO. Meanwhile, with an American becoming queen of a small Himalayan Buddhist kingdom, Sikkim started drawing the attention of international media. Many foreign citizens would visit the palace regularly. The visit of the Chogyal and Gyalmu to western countries would attract the attention of the media, Chogyal would address the press there. India being the country responsible for the external affairs of Sikkim was not happy with the Chogyal speaking about Sikkim with the foreign press in a foreign land. The Chogyal was purposefully doing this to assert the independence of his country. India was not at all pleased with such developments in its protectorate kingdom.

EFFORTS TO ASSERT INDEPENDENCE

To create a suitable environment in the kingdom to claim his demand that Sikkim had a distinct identity, the Chogyal formed a committee called Study Forum comprising of young officials and intelligentsia of Sikkim. Study Forum stood clearly for the revision of the 1950 treaty to enhance Sikkim's credential as a separate nation. Study Forum advocated that Sikkim should join Colombo Plan (seen as a natural step on the way to UN recognition), begin to print its stamps and earn foreign exchange and retain control of the Inner Line Permit.

During the coronation of Chogyal in 1965, the Sikkimese national anthem was played for the first time instead of the usual Indian national anthem on such occasions. In the same year, the Gyalmo Hope Cook, in an article in the Bulletin of the Institute of Tibetology, challenged the validity of the Indo-Sikkim treaty of 1950 and demanded the merger of Darjeeling to Sikkim based on historical grounds.

India's worries were growing with such activities in the kingdom. The fierce clashes between Indian and Chinese troops at the Nathu La in September 1967 only compounded India's worries. On 6th Aug 1968, in one of the fortnightly newspapers Sikkim, its editor Kaiser Bahadur Thapa wrote a very provoking editorial, where he demanded not only the revision of the treaty of 1950 but the registration of treaty with the UNO as well. He further wrote "if our rights are not given to us gracefully, we are prepared to get it anyhow. But in doing so let us hope that we will not be driven to the extreme so that we are compelled to repeat the underground Naga Story".

A few days later, on India's Independence Day, a group of school children walked through the street of Gangtok carrying anti-India banners like 'India go back'. Indira Gandhi had to face some serious questions in Parliament about this growing anti-India tendency in its protectorate kingdom. India worries were only growing with all these happenings in its protectorate.

REVENGE AND THE FEELING OF BEING ALIENATED

Nursing his old wound of family enmity with the Chogyal, Kazi Lhendup Dorjee Khangsarpa (LD Kazi) was using everything in his arsenal to show the Chogyal and Gyalmu in bad light. His marriage with the European Elisa-Maria had helped him greatly to further his anti-Chogyal and pro-democracy propaganda. There always was clandestine support from India.

Elisa Maria had a good education, good contacts with influential people in India, which helped Kazi greatly in furthering anti-Chogyal rhetoric. Anti-Chogyal articles calling him autocratic and oppressive were featured regularly in Indian newspapers. Many people had genuine aspirations for democracy and better life. Educated young people especially in the Nepalese community felt being alienated by the monarchy system, which favoured only the handful of privileged aristocrats. In the rural Sikkim, the land was controlled by minuscule aristocrats and monasteries. Peasants were exploited by the landlords. The uneducated lot were under severe oppression and exploitation of the ruling class. Kazi exploited such resentments of the people and united especially the people of the majority Nepalese community of South, West and East Sikkim and the poor Lepcha and Bhutia minorities.

RAW COMING TO THE PICTURE

A book written by the then RAW's (Research and Analysis Wing) chief in Sikkim, GBS Sidhu, who was the principal architect behind the merger of Sikkim, gives a clear picture of the policies India followed before and after 1972.

According to him, till the end of May 1972, India's policy toward Sikkim revolved around one 'cornerstone and three fundamental beliefs'. The cornerstone was that if India wanted to protect its strategic interests in Sikkim, the maharaja had to be supported under all circumstances to allow him to maintain a firm hold over the administration. The three fundamental beliefs were: (i) anti-durbar agitations had to

be curbed, contained and controlled to a certain extent so as to preclude any possibility of the so-called instability spreading in this strategically located state (ii) the efforts of the Nepalese-dominated parties, even though led by enlightened Bhutia and Lepcha leaders, to bring about significant changes in the political and administrative system of Sikkim should not be allowed to succeed beyond a point, as that could lead to similar political demands from the Nepalese of neighbouring Darjeeling and Siliguri. That, in turn, could also generate feelings of pan-Nepalism in this sensitive region and (iii) if Bhutia-Lepcha interests were ignored, and they felt threatened by the success of the Nepalese-dominated parties, they could look towards Tibet or China for help.

Following this policy, India did use the pro-democracy faction to force the Chogyal to submit in India's whims at times but never supported this faction beyond a point. In RAW's Sikkim

chief's own words, "in curbing, controlling and containing the anti-durbar activities of these parties, the Ministry of Exter-

nal Affairs (MEA) and its PO in Gangtok took care that these parties did not get totally marginalized. A somewhat healthy existence of anti-durbar parties was essential to contain the growing ambitions of Palden Thondup Namgyal and the pro-independence charter of Thondup's creation, the Sikkim National Party (SNP)."

INDIA AFTER SUCCESSFUL BANGLADESH MIS-SION

However, in 1972, the recently formed India's external intelligence agency RAW was brimming with confidence after its successful formation of Bangladesh from East Pakistan. Indira Gandhi too was in a very strong position after her resounding victory in the election of 1972.

India reversed its policy of 'apparent appeasement and cautious containment' and decided to support the pro-democracy political parties to ultimately merge the kingdom to Indian Union. The idea of the merger of Sikkim was conceived by the founder and the then chief of RAW RN Kao at the end of 1972.

Indira Gandhi gave her clearance to it and the operation was launched in early 1973. Only 3 persons, the RAW chief RN Kao, the RAW's Zonal (east) PN Banerjee and the RAW's head in Sikkim, were aware of this secret operation. Even the Political Officer stationed in Gangtok KS Bajpayee and Indian Dewan BS Das were not informed about the ultimate goal of the merger. LD Kazi in Sikkim was also informed about India's intention of ultimately merging Sikkim to India. The politicians in Sikkim were assured that India would no longer support the Chogyal and instead they would back them in their demand for democratic and economic reformation.

THE EARLY 1970S

In the election held in 1973, Sikkim National Party, the party close to the palace won 11 seats out of 18. Sikkim National Congress and Sikkim Janta Congress won 5 seats and 2 seats respectively. The defeated parties alleged that polling in Rabong in South Sikkim was rigged in the favour of the SNP candidate.

The Chogyal decided to leave the post of Dewan (Sidlon) vacant after the retirement of IS Chopra in 1972. This post was the ex-officio president of the executive council. Now all power was in the hand of the Chogyal. It helped the anti-Chogyal faction more to convince people that the Chogyal was autocratic.

BUILDING UP THE STIR

The RAW was already active. It had taken several leaders of SJP and SJC into confidence. On the behest of the RAW, SNC and SJC boycotted the inauguration of the new council. The RAW had a clear plan of creating a stir on 4th April, the 50th birthday of the Chogyal. Keeping this in mind, the RAW network suggested the leaders of two parties to form a single Joint Action Committee (JAC), to force their demands unitedly. Condemning Chogyal for rigging the election, with the demand of fresh election based on 'one man one vote' and democratic and economic reforms the leaders of the two parties started visiting the Nepalese dominated places of East, south and West Sikkim to build anti-durbar mood among the people.

On 26th March 1973, Sikkim Government arrested the SJC president KC Pradhan for 'unnecessary' criticism of the Government. It added fuel to the fire. The arrest galvanised more people. On 27th March, about 1000 people gathered in front of the council house, where the Chogyal had to address the councillors. Later during the day, the same crowd gathered around the palace, where the Chogyal addressed the crowd.

As the target date of 4th April was 9 days away, as per the plan of the RAW, the crowd did not force the issue further and the crowd slowly dispersed. However, RC Paudel and KN Upreti started hunger strike till their demands were met. They were taken to the hospital on April 1.

More people started to pour in. Many among them were brought from the Darjeeling district of West Bengal, it is alleged. Some authors have written that the Indian army personnel were also part of the crowd in civilian dress. As the event had the backing of the RAW it was exceptionally well coordinated. Despite the involvement and interference of the RAW and Indian house, no one can deny the fact that some people demanding for the reforms genuinely were also there.

ATTEMPT FOR COMPROMISE

The Chogyal had become too stubborn for India to handle. India's plan was to force the Chogyal to fall in line by intensifying the agitation in a manner such that the Chogyal would be forced to hand over the administration to the Govt of India. The Kazi and

JAC, fully aware of India's backing through RAW, were in a strong position. Even the release of KC Pradhan on April 2 was not enough to stop the steady flow of demonstrators. The Chogyal reluctantly agreed to invoke section 144 of the CrPC on 3rd April. Alarmed by the intensity of the agitation and to avoid violent confrontation, senior bureaucrats and councillors held a meeting with the JAC. The meeting, led by Jigdal Densapa, the Chogyal's right hand man, was attended by the members of JAC including the Kazi. By evening, they had reached an agreement. KC Pradhan was already released. Densapa agreed on the demand of 'one man one vote' and he also acknowledged that a new constitution was required. However, when everything was about to settle, Kazi left the room to make a telephone call, saying he had to confirm his party's position. Within minutes, to everyone's surprise, he returned to announce that the deal was off.

In all likelihood, he was on the phone with India House which directed him to call off the deal and continue the movement.

THE CHOGYAL'S 50TH BIRTHDAY AND INDIAN TAKEOVER

The 4th of April was the Chogyal's 50th birthday. Gangtok's streets were filled with agitators.

Early in the morning, the Chogyal's intelligence chief informed him that the small Sikkim police force was struggling to maintain order in the bazaar below the palace. The police had to use tear gas, lathis and even live fire to prevent the crowd of 'five to six thousands' from ascending towards the palace. Few were injured. Thondup was determined to carry on his birthday as planned.

The Indian Political Officer KS Bajpai was there in the palace waiting expectantly for the Chogyal to request Indian support to prevent himself from the mob below. The Chogyal knew accepting India's support meant leading to his country's downfall. He allowed the organisers of his birthday to cancel the afternoon sporting events but did not cancel the birthday dinner that evening. That night the chogyal received the news of loot of the police stations and violence in the west and south Sikkim. The events were now out of his control.

An incident on 5th April allowed the JAC leaders to paint the Namgyal family as an oppressive force. The crown prince Tenzing decided to leave the palace to assess the situation. Nothing untoward happened on his way to Singtam but on his return, they were stopped by a group of JAC youth at Ranipool. Panicking, one of Tenzing's companions shot his pistol in the air. It gave the JAC leaders much-needed issue to dramatize. The Kazi and other leaders sent a plea to Indira Gandhi asking her to 'intervene quickly and fully before we are massacred'.

Delhi responded immediately. A senior secretary the MEA was sent to Gangtok to assist the PO there to persuade the Chogyal to hand over the administration to India. On 7th the Chogyal agreed to allow CRPF to protect threatened police stations in the south and west Sikkim. On the 8th he finally gave in. He formally requested the Indian government to assume control of his country. The Kazi and the JAC immediately suspended the agitation.

India immediately sent a strong administrator BS Das to run the kingdom in place of the Chogyal as an administrator. Three OSDs were appointed in three Nepalese majority districts. CRPF jawans were deployed throughout the country. Das was categorically instructed to support the anti-Chogyal movement. The foreign secretary Kewal Singh made it clear that if Chogyal did not concede their demands Delhi was prepared for a showdown. While Das, in consultation with PO Bajpai, was working out a plan of action on the lines indicated by Kewal Singh, he arrived in Gangtok on 15th April. Kewal Singh explained that his sudden dash to Gangtok resulted from adverse reactions over the recent developments in Sikkim 'in some friendly and not so friendly countries'. This forced India to change its approach.

8TH MAY 1973

On 23rd April Kewal Singh met the Chogyal and a secret agreement was signed between the two which assured that the institution of Chogyal would be protected. The chogyal was also assured that the administrator would be withdrawn as soon as normalcy returns. He met the leaders of the political parties and left Sikkim. Kewal Singh returned in the early week of May. This time he brought a different agreement to the one he had signed with the chogyal on 23rd April. This new agreement was called the Tripartite agreement. It had the provision to pass some power to the politicians and instituted one man one vote. However, it did not include the guarantee about the Chogyal position. The Chogyal was not ready to sign this new agreement. He wanted the 23rd agreement to be operative. However, Singh assured him that the new agreement is just a public relation document, a sop to Kazi and his colleagues and the April 23rd agreement will be implemented. The Chogyal before signing the agreement reluctantly gave a dressing-down to the JAC leaders and accused them of 'betrayal and sell out to India' and they were 'not worthy of being called Sikkimese'. On 8th May 1973, at 9 pm the agreement was signed at the Palace.

References:

1. *Smash and Grab: Annexation of Sikkim*, Sunanda K Datta Rau
2. *Sikkim: Requiem for a Himalayan Kingdom*
3. *Sikkim: Dawn of Democracy*, GBS Sidhu
4. *Sikkim and Bhutan*, VH Coelho
5. *Sons of Sikkim: The Rise and Fall of the Namgyal Dynasty of Sikkim*, Jigme N. Kazi

New security feature added to CoWIN digital platform

DELHI, 07 MAY (PIB): It has been noticed in some instances that citizens that had booked their appointment for COVID vaccination through the CoWIN portal but did not actually go for vaccination on the scheduled date, have received notification through SMS that a vaccine dose has been administered to them. Upon examination, it has been found to occur largely on account of the Vaccinator wrongly marking the citizen as vaccinated, i.e., an instance of a data entry error by the vaccinator.

In order to minimize such errors and the subsequent inconvenience caused to the citizens,

the CoWIN system is introducing a new feature of “4-digit security code” in the CoWIN application from 8th May 2021. Now, after verification if the beneficiary has been found as eligible, before administering the vaccine dose, the verifier/vaccinator will ask beneficiary about his/her 4-digit code and then enter the same in the CoWIN system to correctly record the vaccination status.

This new feature will be applicable only for citizens who have done an online booking for a vaccination slot. The “4-digit security code” will be printed in the appointment acknowledgement slip and will not be

known to the vaccinator. The four-digit code will also be sent in the confirmation SMS sent to beneficiary after successful booking of appointment. The Appointment Acknowledgement slip can also be saved and shown from the mobile.

This will ensure that, for such citizens who have booked an online appointment, the data entries regarding vaccination status of a citizen, are recorded correctly and only for those who book online appointment and avail the services at the centre where they have booked the appointment. This will also reduce the opportunities of impersonation and

wrongful use of flexibilities provided in CoWIN for facilitating vaccination coverage.

Advisory for citizens –

- It is advised that the citizens must carry a copy (digital or physical) of their appointment slip and/or the registered mobile phone with appointment confirmation SMS, so that the 4-digit security code can be furnished for easy completion of vaccination recording process.

- It is also advised that the security code may be furnished to verifier/vaccinator before the vaccine dose has been administered. This is important as the dig-

ital certificate would be generated after the vaccine dose administration.

- Citizen must provide the security code to the vaccinator as the digital certificate will be generated only after the vaccination record has been updated with the security code.

- Citizen should get a confirmation SMS after the process has been successfully completed. The confirmation SMS indicates that the vaccination process has been completed successfully and the digital certificate has been generated. If one does not get the confirmation SMS, one should get in touch with the vaccinator/ vaccination center in-charge.

Rabong District Disaster Management team sanitizes town



SUMMIT REPORT

RANGPO, 07 MAY:

The District Disaster Management team stationed at Rabongla in South Sikkim sanitized various government and other office premises at Rabang Bazaar on Mata

Eshwarama Day today.

With the joint effort of DD Sharma, Yongda Bhutia, Surya Pradhan, Sukumar Rai, Purna Gajmer and Arjun Chettri, the sanitization of Rabang Police Post, Police Quarters, WT Office,

State Bank of Sikkim, State Bank of India, Sisco Bank, HDFC and public spaces including SNT Office, Post Office, various ATMs and Rabangla Primary Health Centre was carried out during the day.

WhatsApp scraps May 15 deadline for accepting new, controversial privacy policy

NEW DELHI, 07 MAY

[PTI]: WhatsApp has scrapped its May 15 deadline for users to accept its controversial privacy policy update and said not accepting the terms will not lead to deletion of accounts.

WhatsApp had faced severe backlash over user concerns that data was being shared with parent company Facebook.

A WhatsApp spokesperson told news agency Press Trust of India that no accounts will be deleted on May 15 for not accepting the policy update.

“No accounts will be deleted on May 15 because of this update and no one in India will lose functionality of WhatsApp either. We will follow up with reminders to people over the next several weeks,” the spokesperson said in an emailed response to a Press Trust of India query today.

The spokesperson added that while a “majority of users who have received the new terms of service have accepted them”, some people have not had the chance to do so yet.

However, the company did not clarify the reason behind the decision and did not divulge the number of users who have accepted the terms so far.

In January this year, WhatsApp had informed users about the changes in its terms of service and public policy through an in-app notification. Users were initially given time till February 8 to agree to the new terms in order to continue using the platform.

According to WhatsApp, the key updates include more information about its



service and how it processes user data; how businesses can use Facebook hosted services to store and manage their WhatsApp chats; and how WhatsApp partners with Facebook to offer integrations across the company products.

WhatsApp has insisted that the acceptance of the privacy policy update does not expand its ability to share user data with Facebook.

However, user backlash over WhatsApp's alleged sharing of user information with Facebook forced the company to postpone the February deadline to May 15.

The WhatsApp spokesperson said the company has spent the last few months working to “clear up confusion and misinformation”.

“As a reminder, this update does not impact the privacy of personal messages for anyone. Our goal is to provide information about new options we are building that people will have, to message a business on WhatsApp, in the future,” the spokesperson told the news agency.

The company further stated that it will take every opportunity to explain how it protects people's personal messages and private information.

The softening of stance on the deadline

comes at a time when digital platforms like Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp have become lifelines for people looking for oxygen cylinders, hospital beds, plasma donors and ventilators as the country reels under the deadly second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

India is the biggest market for WhatsApp, and the platform -- as per government data -- has 53 crore users in the country.

India remains a critical market for Internet companies like Facebook with its large population base and burgeoning Internet adoption.

The country is the world's second-largest telecom market and the biggest consumer of data.

Following the backlash faced by WhatsApp earlier this year, the popularity of rivals like Telegram and Signal surged as users thronged these platforms.

WhatsApp, in the past, has said it is open to answering any questions from the government on the privacy issue and that it will continue to explain to users that their messages are end-to-end encrypted.

It had also sought to assuage user concerns through blog posts and tweets by its Global Head Will Cathcart and even full-page ads in leading dailies in India.

UNB's Paribhasa on YouTube!

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 07 MAY:

Rapper UNB dropped the music video of his latest offering, “Paribhasa,” on YouTube on Friday.

The music video is a follow-up to “Dami Dami” which was released a month ago to good response from music lovers, it is informed.

In the new song, UNB talks about his stint as a musician and all the pitfalls leading up to his breakthrough as a “legit” artist. Produced by FittyanoBeats, the track features a layered delivery from the rapper who is known for his lyricism and relatability amongst his fans.

The music video shows the rapper singing to his fans at live shows which he had embarked



upon to promote his music.

The MV is shot by

Drax, DJ Karma, and

Prince and was released

on the official channel of UNB's record label “KAU-

SO Records”.

Already one of the most subscribed artists from the Northeast, the rapper has been featured in multiple leading publishing houses of the country including Rolling Stones India and GQ India.

Some of his most appreciated songs include Chogyal, Namaste, Malai Na Sikha, Timro Kura, Noor, Moonlight, and many more.

Earlier this year the rapper was featured in an all Northeastern Rap Cypher featuring some of the most influential rappers from the region like Moksh, K4, BK, Moko Koza, Yelhomie, and others. He represented Sikkim in the track which has become one of the fastest cyphers to touch the 1 million mark on YouTube.

Centre mulls relaxing cap of Rs. 2 lakh cash transaction for Covid treatment

NEW DELHI, 07 MAY

[PTI]: The Centre in-

formed the Delhi High Court on Friday that relaxation in cap of ₹ 2 lakh cash transactions for COVID-19 treatment in hospitals is under “active consideration”.

A bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Rekha Palli asked the Finance Ministry counsel to apprise it of the development on Monday.

The counsel said the issue has been raised

and it was under active consideration and some orders are likely to be passed in this regard during the day.

The high court was hearing a plea seeking suspension of Section 269ST of the Income Tax Act which puts a bar on a person from receiving an amount of ₹ 2 lakh or more, other than bank cheque, draft or electronic clearing system.

Petitioner Manisha Gupta, in her plea, said

during the COVID-19 pandemic, the cap on cash transaction beyond ₹ 2 lakh is creating a roadblock in the treatment of patients at the hospitals as hospitals are refusing to accept over and above the capped amount which in its turn is delaying the necessary treatment for the patient.

Senior Advocate Sachin Puri, appearing for the petitioner, submitted that persons suffering from COVID-19 are facing

serious inconvenience on account of refusal of hospitals to accept cash beyond ₹ 2 lakh towards the treatment.

The plea, filed through advocates Praveen K Sharma, Dhananjay Grover and Kamil Khan, said the patients are critical and if necessary treatment is not provided to them for want of payment of money, it would amount to violation of Article 21 (right to life) of the Con-

stitution.

“Second wave of COVID-19 is a case of national emergency and during these extraordinary times it is in the interest of people of this country that the cap on cash transactions be suspended for the time being only for the purposes of hospitalisation and treatment of a COVID-19 patient,” it said, adding that the provision under the law be suspended till May 31 or till any further date.

ing for vaccines,” Sonia Gandhi said.

Mrs Gandhi also highlighted letters written by Rahul Gandhi and former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in the “spirit of constructive cooperation”, but said these had fallen “on deaf ears”.

All three senior leaders have written several times to the centre; Mr Gandhi did so again this morning. Manmohan Singh's letter provoked a sharp retort from Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan.

Sonia Gandhi called on Congress leaders and workers to unite in the fight against the novel coronavirus, and reserved special praise for the efforts of the Indian Youth Congress.

“Modi government has failed people of India”: Sonia Gandhi on Covid

NEW DELHI: Congress chief Sonia Gandhi on Friday slammed the Narendra Modi government over its handling of the Covid pandemic, saying “let us be absolutely clear - the system hasn't failed... the Modi government has failed the people of our country”.

Delivering the opening remarks at a virtual meeting of the CPP (Congress Parliamentary Party), she urged the Prime Minister to “urgently call an all-party meeting” to discuss the COVID-19 situation.

“India is in the grip of a deadly health disaster. Thousands have died and millions are scrambling to access basic health-care, life-saving medi-

cines, oxygen, and vaccines. It is heartbreaking to see people battling for their lives in hospitals, on roads or waiting in vehicles,” Mrs Gandhi said.

“And what is the Modi government doing? Instead of alleviating suffering and pain, it has abdicated fundamental responsibilities and duties towards the people. Let us be absolutely clear - the system hasn't failed. The Modi government has failed the people of our country,” she added.

India is struggling to contain a devastating second wave of Covid infections; this morning over four lakh new cases were reported in the previous 24 hours. The tidal wave has left hospital

beds, medicines and oxygen supplies at a premium, and medical professionals overworked and traumatised.

This morning the Supreme Court issued a sharp reminder to the centre on the supply of oxygen.

Mrs Gandhi highlighted these “failures”, including “failure to place sufficient orders for vaccines”, and criticised BJP-ruled states for cracking down on people crying out for help.

“Instead of helping desperate patients, some BJP governments have been using the state's repressive power... cracking down on citizen groups who are trying to help. They are also com-

elling social media platforms and the media to obfuscate the truth,” she added.

The centre was also criticised over its stance on vaccine pricing, after manufacturers were allowed to charge up to 700 per cent more for doses sold to private hospitals and states. The Congress has accused the centre of “vaccine profiteering” but the centre has dismissed the charge.

“As you all know, Parliament allocated ₹ 35,000 crores in the union budget to ensure free vaccines for all. Yet the Modi government has placed the burden on already stretched state governments. It has allowed differential pric-

CONTACT

SUMMIT TIMES REPORTERS

SINGTAM

8170070813

MANGAN/ DIKCHU

9832612485/

9434011213

GANGTOK

8116388176

9832424750

8016270440



ANTHYESTI KRIYA (AARGHU)

The 21 days Anthyesti Kriya of Late Shri Prem Kumar Gurung S/o Late Shri B.B. Gurung, who left for his heavenly abode on 24th of April, 2021 (Saturday) falls on 15th of May, 2021 (Saturday).

All relatives, friends and well wishers are requested to join the bereaved family in offering prayers for the departed soul at their Ancestral Home, Nalam, Namthang, South Sikkim while keeping in mind the prescribed CoVid-19 protocols.

The family members also express gratitude to all those who stood by them during the time of bereavement.

RSVP

Sakun Gurung (Wife) : +91-9474350770
Anshika Gurung (Daughter) : +91-7908045388
Ashim Gurung (Son) : +91-9064079336
Ashok Kr. Gurung (Brother) : +91-9434445494

Lacking Wits or Intentionally Witless?

Oversight is necessary, but so is intent

One wonders when the State Government will wake up to the embarrassment that its investigating agencies have become. Shoddy investigations have traditionally compromised even important cases so severely that even the most professional prosecution cannot earn a conviction even in what appear on surface to be open-and-shut cases. If that is the case with “high profile” cases, one only wonders what it must be like for crimes which don’t catch the public eye or have played out of public memory. That is not to say that all is well with the prosecution arm of the justice delivery system either, and it was not until the Supreme Court nudged state governments across the country some years back to get their investigation and prosecution arms more accountable that anyone even paid attention. And despite that, many years have passed without any improvements and this shortcoming is often sought to be replaced by more draconian laws in a country and a culture where policing is yet to grow out of its colonial hangover.

Admittedly though, it is when cases are being investigated and chargesheeted that the need to ensure justice for victims is compromised most of the times. One hopes that the fault in the police department is one of training, because then corrective measures like improved oversight and better grooming will solve the problem. If, however, as many suspect, the bungles are intentional and cases are sabotaged at the investigation and chargesheeting stage on purpose [think about it, how many ‘high profile’ criminal cases, apart from the corruption-related which are almost always politically motivated, have ended in a conviction?], then no number of committees, standing or otherwise, will be of any help.

For the latter situation, priorities will have to be realigned in which the people will have to become important again and the need to solve crimes and convict criminals feature in the agenda afresh. At present, these are not the emotions that khaki invokes any more. It has become a force focused on pleasing masters instead of serving the public and playing mediators more often than fixing crime. Anyone who has had to deal with a ‘police case’ will vouch for the fact that beyond inconveniencing everyone involved, the investigators achieve little else – and the best evidence for this is in the frequency with which police investigations fail to stand up to judicial scrutiny. In the past, people, including leaders, picked up during a crackdown on rioters have escaped conviction even after the episodes played out in “broad daylight.” Remember the shooting case outside a local disco, the police investigation was so botched that it could not even convince the court that the victim had been shot! The accused, caught with his pistol for which the license had expired could not be convicted even on that count. And what was the most disturbing is that the acquittal was played down and kept away from senior officers until it was almost too late to appeal. Even after the need to appeal was brought to the notice of concerned seniors [some of whom probably sat on the standing committee to ‘analyse’ acquittals], they could not muster the urgency or interest that serving the ends of justice required.

Attitudes like this will require more than oversight committees to repair. Political leaders too often make the mistake of favouring a lazy police force because the less-than-mediocre are always over-eager to please and invariably willing to do as desired. Such a force however serves only very limited purpose because the same political leaders find themselves climbing walls when they need some real police work for a change. Locking people up and packing in allegations work for only so long, because eventually, these charges go to trial, and then comes the ignominy of an embarrassing conviction record, so embarrassing that it requires a standing committee to analyse acquittals. What can one say then, but all the best...

To book ad-space, contact SummitTIMES at
GANGTOK:

For circulation details Contact: (Sandeep) 9734152451
& for Advertisement booking at 9933427505 or at office no 03592 208698. Mail us at advertise@summittimes.com

SILIGURI:

Mr. Mani Rai, M/s. Space Ads, B.R. Ambedkar Building, Room No.7, 1st floor. Opp. Ganga Hotel. Hill Cart Road. Siliguri – 03. Ph. 9832318644/ 9800682989/ 9153035100 or mail at mani_siliguri@yahoo.co.in.

KOLKATA OFFICE:

Irshad Ali/ Imteeyaz. Synapse, 6, Madan Street, Mezzine – 2, 2nd floor. Kolkata – 700072. Ph. 033-22124348/ fax 033-22124337/ mob. 9830547774/ 983108397. E-mail: contact.synapse@gmail.com/ irshad_ali123@rediffmail.com

Popping toys, the latest fidget craze, might reduce stress for adults and children alike

KATHERINE ISBISTER
THECONVERSATION.COM

The newest fidget craze is popping toys. Adults and kids all over the world have been buying up this endlessly reusable version of a longtime favorite fidget activity: popping bubble wrap. Made of silicone and coming in a range of colors, shapes and sizes, they are half-sphere “bubbles” that can be pushed in, making a satisfying soft popping sound. After “popping” them all, you can turn the toy over and start again from the other side.

Some might remember the fidget spinner craze of 2017 and the controversy that these devices caused, with some teachers even banning them from classrooms. Popping toys raise the perennial question of whether and when fidget toys might be useful. Are they a nuisance? Or could having them help you or your children manage pandemic stress and fuzzy thinking?

Over the past several years, my research group has taken a deep look at how children and adults use fidget toys and objects. What we found tells us that these items are not a fad that will soon disappear. Despite sometimes being annoying distractions for others, fidget items seem to have practical uses for both adults and children, especially in stressful times.

UNDERSTANDING FIDGETING

Fidgeting didn’t start with the popping toy and spinner crazes. If you’ve ever clicked a ballpoint pen again and again, you’ve used a fidget item. As part of our

work, we’ve asked people what items they like to fidget with and how and when they use them. (We’ve been compiling their answers online and welcome additional contributions.)

People often report that fidgeting with an object in their hand helps them stay focused when doing a long task or keeping still and attentive in a long meeting. Objects people fidget with include paper clips, USB thumb drives, earbuds and sticky tape. But people also buy specialized items such as a popping toys for this purpose.

FINE-TUNING FOR FOCUS

Psychology research about sensation seeking tells us that people often try to adjust their experiences and their environments so that they provide just the right level of stimulation. Different people function well under different circumstances. Some like total quiet to help them focus, while others are happiest working in a busy, noisy environment.

The optimal level of stimulation varies among people and can change for one person throughout the course of a day depending on what they are trying to do. People fine-tune their environments to get things just right – for example, putting on headphones in a noisy office environment to switch to less distracting noise.

A person who can’t get up and walk around to feel more energized or go have a cup of tea to calm down may find it helpful to use a fidget item to stay focused and calm while also staying put.

Another common reason for fidgeting that we saw among adults in our online study is that some fidget objects – such as a favorite smooth stone – can be used to calm them down and achieve a more relaxed, contemplative or even mindful state. Children also spoke about how fidget items help them manage emotions. For example, they might squeeze a stress ball when they feel angry, or they might stroke a soft, fuzzy toy when they are anxious.

RELIEVING ANXIETY, FOCUSING ATTENTION

The self-reported data we got from adults and children aligns with anecdotal accounts that fidget toys can help children with attention or anxiety issues stay focused and calm in the classroom. In fact, fidget toys have been available for kids to use for therapeutic purposes for quite some time.

There hasn’t yet been a definitive research study about the impact of these toys. In one preliminary study looking at stress ball use, sixth graders who used these fidget toys during instruction independently reported that their “attitude, attention, writing abilities, and peer interaction improved.”

The closest significant research is a study by University of California, Davis behavioral science professor Julie Schweitzer of letting children with ADHD fidget – wriggle, bounce or otherwise move gently in place – while they work on a lab-based concentration task called the “flanker paradigm.” She found that more overall movement

in children with ADHD, as measured using an accelerometer on the ankle, did help them perform this cognitively demanding task. After I learned about her research, I approached Schweitzer to join forces, and we’re currently collaborating on the first rigorous study of the effects of fidget objects on people with ADHD, with support from the National Institutes of Health. We aim to better understand how using fidget toys may support people’s cognition.

To do this, my team built a “smart” fidget ball that senses when and how it’s used. Schweitzer’s team is tracking exactly when study participants fidget as they work, and how this correlates with changes in their performance on challenging thinking tasks. (If you happen to live in the Northern California Bay Area, you can apply to take part in the study.)

My group is also working with specialists in children’s social-emotional learning and technology, including Petr Slovak of King’s College London, to understand whether and how giving kids a “smart” fidget item that can respond to their touch might help calm them down and improve their self-soothing skills. We built a small “anxious creature” that children could hug and pet to calm it down. The creature begins with a fast heartbeat and then settles into happy purring once it is soothed. Early results are promising and have recently been applied by commercial product developers to create an interac-

tive toy for calming kids. (I served briefly as a paid consultant on the toy’s initial research and development but have no ongoing financial stake.)

AVOIDING DISTRACTION

If fidget items are so helpful, why were schools banning the spinners, and why did teachers take them away? Not all fidget items are created equal. Some are more distracting than others. The fidget items most therapists recommend can be used without looking and don’t attract other people’s attention too much with motion or noise. Fidget-spinner motion distracted other kids in classrooms.

Popping toys don’t have movement that attracts others’ eyes, but they do make some noise. Kids in our study reported that noise was a reason they got fidget toys taken away in class. For this reason, popping toys might not be as welcome as the world slowly returns to more in-person learning. But they might be great for kids (or adults) who can hit the mute button in online school and meetings.

Though research is still ongoing, therapists’ practical experience and both adults’ and kids’ self-reflections suggest that fidget toys can be helpful for emotional and cognitive support. There may actually be some benefits in getting yourself or your child a fidget toy to power you through a wall of boring Zoom meetings or a stressful school day.

[the writer is Professor of Computational Media, University of California, Santa Cruz]

US-backed vaccine patent waiver: pros and cons explained

FARASAT BOKHARI
THECONVERSATION.COM

The Biden administration has now agreed to back a proposal to suspend intellectual property protection for COVID vaccines. This is a break from US government’s long-held position on strong intellectual property protection, which has also been supported by many research-intensive countries in western Europe as well and the pharmaceutical industry.

These protections are codified in the World Trade Organization’s Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreements. India, South Africa, and many other emerging economies have been pushing for a waiver from patent protection, and have been supported in this effort by the director general of the WHO, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

While the waiver cannot be put into place until other WHO members agree (at which point manufacturers can presumably start production without any licensing agreements), more and more countries that were previously opposed to the deal, including France and New Zealand, are also now indicating their support. It could be a matter of time before the proposal goes into effect.

So what are the pros and cons of this waiver and what are the alternatives?

The primary concern remains that while the COVID-19 vaccines now thankfully exist, their distribution across the world is not even, despite the existence of the COVAX network: a global effort to share vaccines between countries.

At the time of writing, 44% of the US population and 51% of the UK population are vaccinated, but these percentages are woefully much lower in many developing economies with India at 9.4% and all of Asia and Africa at 4.4% and below 1% respectively.

If intellectual property protection is waived in the face of a public emergency, even as a one-off, will firms invest next time there is a similar emergency? The fact that Pfizer reaped millions



in profits is beside the point. What is more relevant is how much more we benefited from the vaccines through saving lives, reducing suffering, and opening up the economy (when we eventually do).

Setting aside intellectual property protection can be a dangerous precedent, particularly if it may not work.

So what can be done to alleviate the production problem globally? Voluntary licenses are a start. Along the same lines, the US could just buy the patents from the current manufacturers

outright based on their discounted future value, and then make them available to manufacturers world over.

These purchases could be done not just for the patents, but also for providing assistance for technology transfer. This would maintain incentives for research, development and innovation, and at the same time protect populations around the world and in the US from the rise of variants that may be able to evade the vaccines we have.

[the writer is Senior Lecturer (Associate Professor) in Economics, University of East Anglia]

12 Nepalis reach the summit of Everest to become the first to achieve the feat this year

SANGAM PRASAIN KATHMANDU, 07 MAY [KATHMANDUPOST]: Twelve sherpas who fixed ropes to the summit of Everest on Friday became the first to reach the top of the mountain this year.

Kami Rita Sherpa led the group and became the only person to reach 8848.86 metres tall Mt Everest for the 25th time, breaking his own record set in 2019.

This is also the first time that mountain has been scaled since Nepal and China jointly announced the new and common height of the mountain which is 86 centimetres higher than the earlier established height.

They reached the summit at 6pm, said Mingma Sherpa, managing director of Seven Summit Treks.

"With the record feat, Kami Rita has now set his sights on climbing the world's tallest peak for the 26th time next week," Sherpa told the Post. "He will be leading an Indian team," said Sherpa.

Kami Rita, 52, made his first ascent of Everest in 1994 when he was 24 years old.

Other climbers who reached the summit are Tenjing Sherpa, Mingma Tenje Sherpa, Mingma Dorchi Sherpa, Phurtenje Sherpa, Lakpa Nur-

bu Sherpa, Ngima Tashi Sherpa, Fura Tshering Sherpa, Phurba Chhotar Sherpa, Chheten Dorjee Sherpa, Tenging Gyaljen Sherpa and Furba Kusang Sherpa.

According to Seven Summit Treks, the first climbing weather window is favourable until May 12.

This year, a record 408 climbers, including one from the "other gender" category, have received Everest climbing permits.

The earlier record was set in 2019 when 381 climbers had been given permission to climb the mountain by the Department of Tourism.

No permits were issued in 2020 as Nepal was on a four-month lockdown from March to July to check the spread of coronavirus.

Friday's climb comes amid concerns over coronavirus infections on Everest as a second wave of infections is raging in Nepal.

On April 15, a Norwegian climber Erlend Ness reportedly complained of cough and fever, also symptoms of Covid-19, at Everest base camp; and was immediately airlifted to a hospital in Kathmandu. He was later diagnosed with Covid-19. Ness quit the expedition



because he could not be exposed to high altitudes again.

Another climber, Steve Davis, a member of the Elite Himalayan team, also tested positive for the virus.

The incidents stoked concerns among the mountaineering community if the coronavirus had made it to the Everest base camp, where around 1,500 people have gathered including Nepalis who help the foreign climbers in different capacities as well as officials.

But the government officials have dismissed

reports of a Covid-19 outbreak on Everest.

On Friday, the Tourism Ministry issued a statement saying its attention has been drawn to various media reports claiming there is a virus outbreak on Everest. The ministry urged not to publish stories without verification as it could terrorise the mountaineers as well as their family members.

The ministry said it has constituted a Covid-19 crisis facilitation and coordination unit to rescue trekkers and mountaineers and help them.

With the large number of climbers and concerns of overcrowding on the mountain in the past, this year Nepal has introduced a quota system setting the maximum number of climbers that will be permitted to make an attempt on Everest on particular days.

The Department of Tourism has said a specified number of mountaineers, selected on the basis of their climbing permit numbers, would be allowed to make attempts at the summit during the different fine weather windows.

If this plan does not work, the expedition outfitters will have to coordinate among themselves and organise the climbing, limiting numbers to a maximum of 170 individuals in one weather window, the Department of Tourism said.

According to Guinness World Records, which lists ultimate record-breaking facts and achievements, the most number of people to reach the peak of Everest on a single day is 354, with 212 climbers from the Nepal side, as recorded on May 23, 2019.

"Oxygen demand will rise to 550 tonnes in a week": Mamata Banerjee to PM

KOLKATA, 07 MAY [PTI]: Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday - for a second time in two days - to highlight a potential shortfall in oxygen supply to the state, which is among those worst-affected by the second wave of coronavirus infections.

Ms Banerjee, sworn in as Chief Minister for a third time on Wednesday, flagged the increasing consumption of oxygen in the state and urged the centre to allocate more; she said the demand had already gone up to 470 metric tonnes per day, and was expected to rise to 550 MT.

"... consumption of medical oxygen is increasing rapidly due to increase in Covid positive cases. It has gone up to 470 MT per day in the last 24 hours and expected to increase to 550 MT in the next seven to eight days," she wrote.

Ms Banerjee said the Bengal Chief Secretary had already raised this issue with senior central government officials, including the Union Health Secretary.

"However, instead of allocating the same... Government of India has increased allocation to other states, from the total production in West Bengal during the last 10 days, from 230 MT to 306 MT... keeping the allocation for West Bengal constant at 308 MT," the Chief Minister said.

Bengal produces around 560 MT of medical oxygen, of which it is currently using only 470 MT.

However, as cases continue to pile up this expected to rise sharply and Ms Banerjee said "anything less than 550 MT per day will adversely affect the situation... and may lead to loss of lives".

The oxygen crisis

has been triggered by a devastating increase in Covid cases; this morning over four lakh were reported from across the country, of which more than 18,000 were from Bengal.

Covid cases have been on the rise in the state after polling for the eight-phase election that concluded last week. Experts say the increase in cases may be the result of poll campaigning.

Thousands of people violated social distancing and face mask rules to attend rallies and roadshows held by Prime Minister Modi and Chief Minister Banerjee, among other leaders.

Bengal currently has more than 1.2 lakh active Covid cases. The state has ordered extensive restrictions, including asking all visitors to show a Covid-negative report.

Bengal isn't the only state to red-flag oxygen supply issues. Earlier today the Supreme Court ruled against the centre on a Karnataka High Court order asking it to increase supply of medical oxygen.

The crisis is particularly acute in Delhi, where the High Court, the Arvind Kejriwal government and the centre have been locked in argument for nearly two weeks. The Supreme Court today finally ordered the centre to supply the 700 MT of oxygen per day that Delhi had been asking for.

As more and more states start to worry about oxygen, the centre has insisted that supply of medical oxygen is not the issue. It says transporting it to high-demand areas.

Part of the reason for the increased oxygen demand - as against the first wave - is that more patients are suffering from breathlessness in the second wave, the centre has said.

Nepal's factories face shortages of raw materials as prohibitory order cuts supply lines

MADHAV DHUNGANA KATHMANDU, 07 MAY [KATHMANDUPOST]: Factories in western Nepal are having a hard time getting raw materials to keep their machines running, and they say they are alarmingly low on inventory.

The prohibitory order issued by the provincial government has hit transportation services in Bhairahawa and nearby areas and disrupted supply lines. Traders and industrialists say they can handle a short period of immobility, but they are worried the lockdown may be prolonged.

Business and industry associations say they are ready to operate the factories and manufacture goods by following strict health protocols set by the government, but storage has become a problem with unsold inventory piling up as the markets and shops are closed completely.

They are asking how long they are supposed to store the finished products in their warehouses and feed and house hundreds of workers on the factory premises.

The local government has permitted factories to operate provided they keep their workers indoors.

Rajesh Agrawal, managing director of the Siddhartha Industrial



Group and central member of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, said that it had become difficult to keep the factories running due to the prohibitory order which has strangled the supply chain.

"We have a responsibility to keep the factories running by adhering to the safety standards set by the government," he said. "Otherwise the market may face shortages of goods in the middle of the pandemic."

But only around 80 percent of the factories will be able to remain open under the existing health protocols fixed by the government. The rest don't have enough space to accommodate the workers and store the manufactured goods, he said.

The government has

set several conditions for operating factories during the prohibitory period which include keeping all employees on the premises and feeding and housing them, maintaining physical distance between people, checking the health of all workers daily for fever, and using masks and sanitisers. In case workers become infected, they should be put in isolation.

Bidur Dhungana, general secretary of the Western Cement Producers' Association and general manager of Jagdamba Cement Industry, said they were operating the factory by keeping all workers within the plant compound.

"But there are many problems as the government has not allowed transportation. Besides, factories are facing a shortage of labour," he

said. "We decided to face the problem for a few days as it helps to prevent the spread of Covid-19," he said. "But if the situation prolongs, it will become difficult."

During last year's lockdown, domestic factories suffered labour shortages for a long time as their Indian workers returned to their homes, he added.

Companies have been providing training to local workers. Nepali migrant workers who returned home during last year's lockdown also received training after getting jobs at local factories.

Dhungana said that things were easier this year for factory owners as the local workers they have hired had not left for foreign jobs. He said there was no labour shortage this time. "We don't have to shut down the factory

for lack of workers," he said.

The Bhairahawa-Lumbini corridor contains 26 factories. They include cement, synthetics, steel, paper and plywood plants, and spinning and grain mills. They employ around 5,000 workers.

Besides, there are about five dozen factories at the Bhairahawa-Parasi and Bhairahawa-Butwal industrial corridors. There are 11 steel factories in operation in Rupandehi, Nawalparasi and Kapilvastu.

Local workers from Dhakdhahi, Marchwar, Suryapura and Lumbini areas used to travel daily to work at the cement and steel factories in Rupandehi. Now it is not easy to commute to the factory due to the travel restriction.

"The prohibitory order has not had a big im-

pact on industry so far, and entrepreneurs are ready to bear the minor hardships at a time when the country is fighting the Covid-19 pandemic," said Kul Prasad Neupane, immediate past of the Siddhartha Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

"Industrialists are ready to operate their factories by respecting the restrictions and following the health protocols," he said. "If the prohibitory order is extended and problems arise, entrepreneurs will move ahead by coordinating with the local administration."

WRITE US:

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

Ladakh daily COVID-19 recoveries outstrip new infections

LEH, MAY 7 (PTI): The Union Territory of Ladakh reported more recoveries than new COVID-19 infections as 160 people were discharged from hospitals, while 98 new cases were added, according to officials on

Friday.

Officials said the latest cases takes the Union Territory's overall tally of infections to 14,909, while the total number of active infections in the UT stands at 1432 with 1220 in Leh district

and 212 in Kargil. A total of 13326 people have recovered.

A total of 151 people have died due to COVID-19 in the Union Territory so far which includes 107 in Leh, 44 in Kargil. Of the 98 new cases reported

during the past 24 hours, the officials said all were detected in Leh, they said.

They said a total of 160 patients -- 142 in Leh and 18 in Kargil -- were discharged during the period after successful treatment.

VIDEO NEWS SECTION

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

To book ad-space, contact SummitTIMES at

GANGTOK:
For circulation details Contact: +91-9749877695, +91-9647102692
& for Advertisement booking at +91-9934279005 or at office no 03592

KOLKATA OFFICE:
Irrishad Ali/Imteyaz: Synapse, 6, Modan Street, Marine - 2, 2nd floor, Kolkata - 700072. Ph. 033-22124348/ fax 033-22124377/ mob. +91-9830547774/ +91-983083971. E-mail: contact.synapse@gmail.com/irishad.ali123@gmail.com

SILIGURI:
Mr. Mani Rai, M/s. Space Ads, B.R. Ambedkar Building, Room No.7, 1st floor, Opp. Ganga Hotel, Hill Cart Road, Siliguri - 03. Ph. +91-9832318644/ 9806827897/ 9153035100 or mail at manirai_siliguri@yahoo.co.in.

Phone
03592-208698
+91-9832556698
+91-9832080753

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

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

PCB completes first phase of COVID-19 vaccination for players and support staff

LAHORE, MAY 7 (PTI): Pakistan's national team players and support staff have got their first jabs of vaccination against COVID-19, country's Cricket Board said on Friday.

The inoculation drive was conducted in collaboration with Pakistan government's National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC), the PCB said.

In the first phase, 57 men players, 13 officials of the men's team and 13 NHPC men and women coaches were vaccinated.

A number of franchise players and support staff besides PCB match officials involved in the February-March phase of the Pakistan Super League (three match referees, three umpires) were also vaccinated.

The vaccination drive started on March 4 in Karachi and carried on for more than two months, before its conclusion on May 6 when eight players part of Pakistan's squad for the ongoing Test series against Zimbabwe were given second doses in Harare.

"... we requested the NCOC for vaccines during the HBL Pakistan Super League 6. The vaccination drive started in Karachi and our first priority was to get the players and support staff involved in the tournament vaccinated," PCB Chief Operating Officer Salman Naseer said in a statement.

"After the initial round of vaccination in Karachi, we focused on getting the remaining members of the men's squad, who were not involved in the PSL 6, vaccinated before the tours of South Africa and Zimbabwe."

In the next phase, remaining domestic men cricketers, national women cricketers, age-group cricketers and support staff of the domestic, national women and age-group teams will be vaccinated.

"The PCB is fully behind the government's vaccination drive and once again urges people across Pakistan to get vaccinated in order to ensure the health and safety of their own selves and their families," Naseer said.

"Our players both men and women and PCB management will continue to provide full support and backing to the NCOC vaccine awareness initiatives as they have done repeatedly since the outbreak of the pandemic last year.

Tokyo Olympic head says Bach visit to Japan could be 'tough'

TOKYO (AP): The president of the Tokyo Olympic organizing committee said Friday that a visit to Japan this month by IOC President Thomas Bach seemed unlikely with a state of emergency order being extended by the government to Tokyo and other areas until May 31.

Canceling the trip could be embarrassing for the International Olympic Committee and local organizers who say they can hold a "safe and secure" Olympics in the middle of a pandemic as cases surge in Japan — particularly in Tokyo and Japan's second metropolis of Osaka.

The postponed Olympics are to open in only 11 weeks, on July 23, followed by the Paralympics on Aug. 24.

"Frankly speaking, I personally think it would be quite tough for him to come now," organizing committee president Seiko Hashimoto said at a weekly briefing, adding that "nothing had been decided."

"But the extension of the state of emergency and having him visit during that time will



mean that president Bach will be visiting in a quite a difficult time," Hashimoto said. "I think that would be a very difficult thing for him."

Bach said recently he hoped to go to Hiroshima to meet the torch relay — and presumably to Tokyo — on May 17 and 18. But he has said his plans were not finalized.

Coincidentally, powerful IOC member Sebastian Coe is in Tokyo for a track and field test event on Sunday at the new \$1.4 billion national stadium.

Coe is the president of World Athletics, the governing body of track and field, and was also the head of the 2012

London Olympics. He is seen as a potential successor to Bach when the German's term ends in 2025, and is also a two-time Olympic gold medalist in the 1,500 meters.

Coe has been laudatory about a half marathon test event run earlier this week in Sapporo. He's also sympathetic with Hashimoto trying to pull off the Olympics.

"I know the pressure that you are under," Coe said to Hashimoto. "But mercifully in London, we didn't have the added complexity of worrying about protocols around a pandemic. So you have our sympathy in that extra tier of complexity."

Coe also met with

very positive," the organizing committee and FINA, the governing body of swimming and diving, said in a statement.

The statement quoted Canadian diver Jennifer Abel saying: "The main goal for everyone is to be and feel safe, and we are very safe here. We cannot ask for better conditions with the COVID situation."

Hashimoto said a donation by vaccine developers Pfizer and BioNTech to inoculate athletes and officials preparing for Tokyo would make the games safer. The agreement was announced Thursday by the IOC.

Hashimoto said this was particularly true for residents of Japan, where less than 2% of the population has been vaccinated.

"I myself fully understand that people will not feel comfortable," she said, referring to young athletes jumping to the front of the line ahead of the elderly and other vulnerable populations. "This should not impact the vaccination of the priority population in Japan."

Clippers rout Lakers 118-94, move into No. 3 spot in West



LOS ANGELES (AP): Paul George led seven players in double figures with 24 points and the Los Angeles Clippers routed a Lakers team minus LeBron James 118-94 on Thursday night, moving into the No. 3 spot in the Western Conference playoff race.

The loss kept the defending NBA champion Lakers at No. 6. The Staples Center co-tenants could potentially face each other in the first round.

The Lakers have lost four of five, with six games remaining in the regular season. The only thing they've clinched so far is a spot in the new play-in tournament, which James has derided. Still dealing with a high ankle sprain, he will be out again Friday night for a pivotal game at Portland. That season series is tied at one.

"We don't look at it as something bad," Anthony Davis said of the play-in format. "We need games to get back accustomed to each other anyway. We don't want to go that route, but if it happens, it happens."

Davis was limited to four points on 2-of-9 shooting in nine minutes. He said he tweaked his ankle after stepping awkwardly on the scorer's table in the first. He fell, but got up and stayed in the game. He was later ruled out due to back spasms.

"I know it looked bad, but it's fine," Davis said of his ankle, adding that his back locked up. He had it worked on and expects to play Friday in what he called the Lakers' biggest game left in the regular season.

"When we're 100% healthy we are the top team in the league, so we keep that in our minds," Davis said.

Kawhi Leonard had 15 points, eight rebounds and six assists, and Ivica Zubac added 14 points and eight rebounds for the Clippers, who have already clinched a playoff berth. They've won two straight after dropping three in a row, and are a half-game ahead of fourth-place Denver in the standings.

"Our intensity was great from jump," George said. "We got to the paint, made extra plays and defensively we were locked into the game plan."

Kyle Kuzma led the injury-plagued Lakers with 25 points.

Davis' latest setback comes after he already lost two months recovering from a calf injury.

"I don't know if we got juju issues around here," Kuzma said. "Every game is something different — injuries, mishaps. Can't complain, can't dwell, can't have excuses."

The Clippers shot 63% in the first half, when they led by 24 points. The Lakers' only lead came when Davis

scored the game's first basket.

"We're hanging in there," Lakers coach Frank Vogel said. "No one is feeling sorry for themselves. We know we've got to be better even under adverse circumstances."

The Lakers got with-in four early in the second quarter, but the Clippers responded by scoring 11 straight to restore a double-digit lead that stretched to 65-42 at halftime. DeMarcus Cousins had nine of his 11 points in the second, hitting a 3-pointer and getting a steal and dunk as part of an 8-0 spurt.

The Lakers outscored the Clippers 29-27 in the third, but couldn't make a serious dent in the deficit. Kuzma's 3-pointer drew them within 17 early in the period, when Andre Drummond picked up his fourth and fifth fouls.

Kuzma played part of fourth with the Lakers' second unit, which scored all of the team's 23 points in the period.

The Clippers were better on the boards (47-34) and at the free throw line, making 23 of 26. The Lakers hit 18 of 29.

TIP-INS

Lakers: Alex Caruso had eight points and seven assists in his second start of the season at guard. ... Talen Horton-Tucker (right calf strain) sat out and will be out Friday, too. ... Also missing the game was Dennis Schröder (health and safety protocols). ... It's possible Jared Dudley, out since March 15 with a right MCL tear, could still play this season. He has returned to the court.

Clippers: Swept the season series, winning by seven, 18 and 24 points. ... Made just two 3-pointers in the second half. ... Amir Coffey remained out due to health and safety protocols.

WHERE'S LBJ?

James hasn't been on the Lakers' bench the last two games. He won't travel with the team to Portland, either. Vogel said there isn't a medical reason why James isn't present.

"He's just not here," the coach said.

SLOPPY PLAY

The Clippers committed 22 turnovers, with five each by George and Leonard. Coach Tyrone Lue wasn't happy his team gave up 30 points on miscues, calling it "just messing around too much."

"We'll be all right," Leonard said. "Two of my turnovers were offensive fouls. That's just being aggressive, physical. We can live with that."

UP NEXT

Lakers: Visit the Portland Trail Blazers on Friday in the second game of a back-to-back.

Clippers: Host the New York Knicks on Sunday.

If T20 World Cup drains Indian resources or is unsafe, better not to play over there: Cummins

MALE (MALDIVES), MAY 7 (PTI): Australian pace spearhead Pat Cummins believes if hosting the ICC T20 World Cup amidst raging COVID-19 pandemic is a "drain on Indian resources" or is "unsafe", it would be prudent to shift it to the United Arab Emirates.

The postponement of Indian Premier League after multiple cases of COVID-19 inside the bio-bubble has led to a big question-mark on whether the marquee ICC event should be held in India where a third wave is expected around that time.

"If it's going to be a drain on resources or it's not going to be safe, then I don't think it's right to play it over here. That's the first question which needs to be answered," Cummins was quoted as saying by the 'Age' newspaper.

Cummins said cricket authorities should check with Indian government and do what's best.

"It probably too early to say. It's six months away. The priority should be for cricket authorities to work with the Indian government to see



what's best for the Indian people," Cummins said.

Cummins feels hindsight always provides better perspective like many who feel that IPL could have been held in UAE this time also.

"The IPL in the UAE last year was brilliant, it was really well run, but millions of people were saying it should have been played in India, so what do you do? You can see both sides. They set up this tournament with all the best advice."

Cummins, who has himself donated

USD 50,000 to India's COVID-19 fight, has a lot of empathy for what the country is currently facing.

"Around the hotel there is less staff and when you hop in the bus to go to training there is normally a few hundred people waiting. There's no one out there now and no crowds at games."

He spoke about how half of the KKR's Indian squad has had COVID-19 at some point last year.

"Close to half our [KKR] squad has had it at some point over the last

year," Cummins said.

"Their families are all currently in lockdown in different cities across India. A lot of the family structures are different to Australia, where you've got three generations all living in the one place."

"They [Indian teammates] always try to stay upbeat and positive, but it's really tough out there. We're always checking in with them to see how they're going."

Being in a bubble keeps people detached but when they see the sufferings, they are

bound to feel helpless, said world's premier Test bowler.

"I've felt quite helpless and quite detached from it all being kept in comfortable hotels. We were playing games and training like every other year. It just felt that I should be doing more for the people around us."

In fact, when Cummins was coming to India for the IPL, he had divergent opinions thrown at him.

"The first thing I wanted to do was make sure playing the IPL was the right call. Speaking to people back home, some had the view that it didn't see right cricket was going on over here in amongst all the COVID cases," he said.

"But the response I was getting from people in India was the opposite. They all said that with so many people in lockdown they really appreciate the fact that for three or four hours each night they can watch the IPL."

"It gives people a routine, it helps to keep them in homes. Everyone thought it was a positive the IPL was still going on.

Doncic, Mavs hold on to beat Irving, Nets 113-109 for sweep

DALLAS (AP): Luka Doncic scored 24 points, Tim Hardaway Jr. added 23 and the Dallas Mavericks beat the Brooklyn Nets 113-109 on Thursday night to finish a season sweep.

Kyrie Irving scored a season-high 45 points for the Nets. They lost a season-high fourth straight game and dropped two games behind Eastern Conference-leading Philadelphia.

Dorian Finney-Smith scored 17 points as the Mavericks reached 10 games over .500 for the first time this season and held

on to the fifth seed in the West.

Dallas (38-28) is a game ahead of the Los Angeles Lakers and Portland (both 37-29) with six to go after LA's 118-94 loss to the Clippers. The Mavericks hold the tiebreaker on the defending NBA champs but not the Trail Blazers. One of the three teams will be forced into the play-in tournament as the No. 7 seed.

"This is all experience we need," coach Rick Carlisle said. "There's a lot of situations that are new. Last year at this time we were locked into

the seventh position and we weren't going lower. This year is a whole different ballgame. There's so much in play. The thing I'm most proud of with this group is they're blocking out all the external noise."

Kevin Durant had 20 points and nine rebounds for the Nets but was just 1 of 10 from the field in the second half with each team missing an injured star: James Harden for Brooklyn and Kristaps Porzingis for Dallas. In the Mavericks' 115-98 win at Brooklyn in Febru-

ary, Harden played while Durant and Irving were out.

The Nets visited Dallas after back-to-back losses at Milwaukee. The current skid started with a home loss to Portland.

"I think pressure is good," coach Steve Nash said. "You're going to face pressure in the playoffs and you have to be pressure-tested. This is a little bit of pressure for us, a little bit of a hole for us to dig out of. How can we solve this riddle? How can we get over the line in some of these games?"

Doncic had 10 rebounds, and one of his eight assists came on a layup by Dwight Powell that put Dallas ahead for good at 94-92 and started a 7-0 run. Doncic was just 2 of 11 from the field after halftime, but had seven rebounds and five assists.

"When Luka goes through periods where he's not scoring, he finds other ways to impact the game," Carlisle said. "He was rebounding really well during that stretch. He moved it to some guys for some really good

looks."

The Nets were down six in the final minute when Irving was free for an easy layup and the ball slipped out of his hands. Irving finished 17 of 30 from the field after repeatedly getting to the rim in a 25-point first half.

"We need to be tested like that," Irving said. "We're not a perfect basketball club. We could be doing ourselves a great disservice if we weren't honest. We've just got to have better continuity down the stretch."

China discounts possibility of harm from falling rocket

BEIJING (AP): China says the upper stage of its Long March 5B rocket that launched the core module of its space station will mostly burn up on re-entry, posing little threat to people and property on the ground. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbing said Chinese authorities will release information about the re-entry of the rocket, expected over the weekend, in a "timely manner."

Wang said China "pays great attention to the re-entry of the upper stage of the rocket into the atmosphere."

"As far as I understand, this type of rocket adopts a special technical design, and the vast majority of the devices will be burnt up and destructed during the re-entry process, which has a very low probability of causing harm to aviation activities and the ground," Wang said at a regularly scheduled briefing.

The largest section of the rocket that launched the main module of China's first permanent space station into orbit is expected to plunge back to Earth as early as Saturday at an unknown location.



Usually, discarded rocket stages re-enter the atmosphere soon after liftoff, normally over water, and don't go into orbit.

China's space agency has yet to say whether the main stage of the huge Long March 5B rocket is being controlled or will make an out-of-control descent. Last May, another Chinese rocket fell uncontrolled into the Atlantic Ocean off West Africa.

The Communist Party newspaper Global Times said the stage's "thin-skinned" aluminum-alloy exterior will easily burn up in the atmosphere,

posing an extremely remote risk to people.

The U.S. Defense Department expects the rocket stage to fall to Earth on Saturday.

Where it will hit "cannot be pinpointed until within hours of its reentry," the Pentagon said in a statement Tuesday.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said at a Wednesday briefing that the U.S. Space Command was "aware of and tracking the location" of the Chinese rocket.

The nonprofit Aerospace Corp. expects the debris to hit the Pacific

near the Equator after passing over eastern U.S. cities. Its orbit covers a swath of the planet from New Zealand to Newfoundland.

The Long March 5B rocket carried the main module of Tianhe, or Heavenly Harmony, into orbit on April 29. China plans 10 more launches to carry additional parts of the space station into orbit.

The roughly 30-meter (100-foot)-long stage would be among the biggest space debris to fall to Earth.

The 18-ton rocket

that fell last May was the heaviest debris to fall uncontrolled since the former Soviet space station Salyut 7 in 1991.

China's first space station, Tiangong-1, crashed into the Pacific Ocean in 2016 after Beijing confirmed it had lost control. In 2019, the space agency controlled the demolition of its second station, Tiangong-2, in the atmosphere.

In March, debris from a Falcon 9 rocket launched by U.S. aeronautics company SpaceX fell to Earth in Washington and on the Oregon coast.

UK's Conservative Party strikes early blow in elections



LONDON (AP): Britain's governing Conservative Party has won a special election in the north of England town of Hartlepool, dealing a big blow to the main opposition Labour Party, which had held the parliamentary seat since its creation in 1974.

The victory for Prime Minister Boris Johnson's party, announced Friday morning, provides further evidence that the Conservatives are making ground in parts of the country that have been Labour strongholds for decades, managing to present itself as the party of change even though it's been in power for 11 years.

Over the coming couple of days, results from an array of elections in Britain will be announced. On what was dubbed Super Thursday, around 50 million voters were eligible to take part in scores of elections, some of which had been postponed a year because of the pandemic that has left the U.K. with Europe's largest coronavirus death toll.

The results of Thursday's election in Hartlepool showed the Conservative candidate Jill Mortimer winning with 15,529 votes, or nearly 52% of the vote.

The Labour candidate, Paul Williams, only received 8,589 votes, or around 29% of the vote.

"It is a truly historic result and a momentous day," Mortimer said in her victory speech. "Labour have taken people in Hartlepool for granted for too long."

In the 2019 general election, the Conservative Party made big inroads into Labour's "red wall" in northern England on a combination of factors, including its pro-Brexit stance. The recent success of Britain's coronavirus vaccine rollout also appears to have given the Conservatives a shot in the arm.

Whatever lay behind the result, the loss of Hartlepool, a post-industrial town that is one of the poorest in England, represents a stunning defeat for the Labour Party and its new leader Keir Starmer.

Hopes were high that Starmer would help Labour reconnect with its lost voters in the north of England when he took the helm a little more than a year ago after succeeding the more left-wing Jeremy Corbyn, who led the party in 2019 to its worst election performance since 1935.

Steve Reed, Labour's communities spokesman, said it was "absolutely shattering" to see a Conservative candidate win in a place like Hartlepool.

"I think what this shows is that although we have started to change since the cataclysm of the last general election, that change has clearly not gone far enough in order to win back the trust of the voters," he told the BBC.

Over the coming couple of days, Labour should have some results to cheer, with Sadiq Khan and Andy Burnham expected to easily win second terms as the mayors of London and Manchester.

Other results to come include the elections for the devolved governments in Scotland and Wales. In addition, thousands of council members, police commissioners and other local authorities are up for grabs in England. No elections took place in Northern Ireland.

The result that could have the biggest U.K.-wide implications is the Scotland election, where the governing Scottish National Party is looking for a renewed mandate that could speed up the prospect of a second independence referendum.

Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms not seeking reelection

ATLANTA (AP): Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms announced Thursday she will not seek a second term, an election-year surprise that marks a sharp turnabout for the city's second Black woman executive who months ago was among those President Joe Biden considered for his running mate.

Bottoms, 51, disclosed her decision publicly in a lengthy open letter and accompanying video Thursday night after having told family and a close circle of associates and supporters.

"It is with deep emotions that I hold my head high and choose not to seek another term as mayor," Bottoms wrote, saying she'd prayed about the decision with her husband, Derek, an executive at the Home Depot Inc.

The mayor is expected to speak publicly Friday morning.

Bottoms, who narrowly won a runoff election four years ago, pushed backed against any questions about whether she could have secured a second victory later this year. She noted a reelection fundraiser she held with Biden's support and said polls showed her in a strong position.

"Is she afraid of the competition?" NEVER," Bottoms wrote.

City Council President Felicia Moore has already announced her mayoral

bid.

Bottoms' tenure has been a mix of rough-and-tumble City Hall politics and an ever-brightening national spotlight for her beyond the city.

She was among Biden's earliest endorsers, taking a risk early in a crowded Democratic primary campaign. She was later rewarded as one of the women Biden considered to be his running mate, though he eventually chose another Black woman, Kamala Harris, the former California senator who is now the first woman to hold the national office.

Bottoms nonetheless watched her profile rise during the coronavirus pandemic and with the renewed attention on policing in the United States after George Floyd's killing by a white Minneapolis officer last spring.

She drew plaudits for a nationally televised news conference in which she chided protesters to "go home" while noting her own experiences as a mother of Black sons to empathize with citizens distraught over police violence. She pledged to review Atlanta's police procedures in the wake of Floyd's killing.

Yet Bottoms met criticism herself just weeks later when an Atlanta police officer shot and killed Rayshard Brooks. The officer, Garrett Rolfe, was fired last June, a day after

he shot the Black man in the parking lot of a fast food restaurant. Rolfe was later charged with murder.

The Atlanta Civil Service Board on Wednesday reversed the firing, finding that the city did not follow its own procedures and failed to grant Rolfe due process. Bottoms said then that Rolfe would remain on administrative leave while criminal charges against him are resolved.

The mayor did not mention Floyd or Brooks in her announcement letter, focusing instead on having giving the city's police and firefighters raises and alluding to a "social justice movement (that) took over our streets.... and we persisted."

Bottoms came to the mayor's office as an ally of her predecessor, Kasim Reed, whose endorsement proved critical in her campaign. But she sought to establish her own identity, in no small part because of a long-running FBI investigation in City Hall contracts and finances during Reed's tenure.

The "far-reaching and ever-growing" investigation, she said Thursday, "consumed City Hall, often leaving employees paralyzed, and fearful of making the smallest of mistakes, lest they too be investigated, or castrated on the evening news."

Bottoms has never been implicated.

Early in her term, Bottoms eliminated cash bail in Atlanta and ended the city jail's relationship with federal immigration enforcement agencies, joining big-city mayors around the country in criticizing then-President Donald Trump's hardline immigration policies. Her administration navigated a cyberattack on the city's computer systems early in her tenure.

She helped renegotiate the long-term redevelopment of "The Gulch," part of the city's old railroad footprint downtown. But the city did not score the biggest potential prize for the location: the second Amazon headquarters that instead is being built in northern Virginia, outside Washington, D.C.

An Atlanta native and graduate of Florida A&M University, a prominent historically Black college, Bottoms is just the second Black woman to lead the city. She joined Shirley Franklin, who served two terms from 2002-2010. Bottoms noted her family's deep ties to the city and surrounding region whose history traces Black America's arc from slavery and Jim Crow segregation to the ongoing legacy of institutional racism.

"My ancestors, direct descendants of the once enslaved, traveled by horse and buggy from the cotton fields of east Georgia in search of a better life for themselves

and their children in Atlanta," she wrote. "I have carried their belief for a better tomorrow in my heart, their earnest work ethic in my being, and their hopes for generations not yet born on my mind, each day that I have been privileged to serve as the 60th Mayor of Atlanta."

**DONATE BOOKS FOR NOBLE CAUSE
TO BUILD LIBRARY**

*If anyone willing to donate books or
support through
Finance, than you are most welcome*

**"GIVING IS NOT JUST
ABOUT
MAKE A DONATION ,
ITS ABOUT MAKING
DIFFERENCE"**

For more Details Contact ; 6294745117,8768809862

Email ; chitishchetri7@gmail.com

SummitTIMES
PIONEER IN THE NEWS

Family of Chris Cornell settles with doctor over his death

LOS ANGELES (AP): The family of Chris Cornell and a doctor who they alleged over-prescribed him drugs before he died have agreed to settle a lawsuit.

Court documents filed by attorneys for the rock singer's widow, Vicky Cornell, and their children, Toni and Christopher Nicholas Cornell, said a confidential settlement had been reached. The documents were filed in April, but they had gone unnoticed before City News Service reported on them Thursday.

The Cornell family alleged in the lawsuit filed in 2018 in Los Angeles Superior Court that medication, especially the anti-anxiety drug lorazepam, prescribed by Dr. Robert Koblin led to erratic behavior from the Soundgarden front man before his death in Detroit in 2017 at age 52.

Coroner's investigators in Michigan ruled Cornell's death a suicide by hanging. Tests showed the presence of lorazepam, better known by its brand name Ativan, in Cornell's system along with barbiturates and the anti-opioid drug naloxone, but did not cite them as a factor in his death.

The lawsuit said Koblin and his Beverly Hills, California, office "negligently and repeatedly" prescribed "dangerous mind-altering controlled substances to Chris Cornell which impaired Mr. Cornell's cognition, clouded his judgment, and caused him to engage in dangerous impulsive behaviors that he was unable to control, costing him his life."

The lawsuit said the doctor did this knowing Cornell had a serious history of substance abuse.



In court documents responding to the lawsuit, Koblin and his attorney denied any wrongdoing or responsibility for Cornell's death.

Emails seeking comment sent Thursday night to attorneys for both sides were not immediately returned.

"After years of litigation and settlement negotiations, Plaintiffs and Defendants ... have reached a confidential settlement agreement to resolve all claims," the Cornell family attorneys said in the April 2 court filing.

The document said essential to the compromise was the agreement to minimize publicity and keep the terms confidential.

The case has "received significant media coverage and attention from fans of Mr. Cornell and allies of Plaintiffs," the

court filing says. "Unfortunately, as with many celebrity cases, this action has also attracted the attention of troubled individuals who have harassed Plaintiffs, including by threatening the life and safety of Plaintiffs Toni Cornell and Christopher Nicholas Cornell."

A judge must still approve the parts of the settlement that involve the children, who are both minors, and the documents say the lawsuit will proceed toward trial if that doesn't happen.

Cornell's wailing voice and his long-haired, shirtless stage presence made him an essential figure in the grunge rock of the 1990s. Soundgarden was among the first groups to surge to national attention in a wave that later included Nirvana, Pearl Jam and Alice in Chains.

Aditya Chopra to provide financial aid to cine workers amid COVID-19 crisis

MUMBAI, MAY 7 (PTI): Filmmaker Aditya Chopra on Friday launched 'Yash Chopra Saathi' initiative to provide financial support to the daily wage earners of the film industry, who are affected due to the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Federation of Western India Cine Employees (FWICE) has about 2.5 lakh registered workers.

Under the initiative, the Yash Chopra Foundation will provide Rs 5,000 to the women and senior citizens working

in the film industry as well as distribute ration kits to workers for a family of four for an entire month through their NGO partners Youth Feed India.

Those in need can apply to avail the support through an online application process, a press release issued by the production house said.

Akshaye Widhani, senior vice



president, Yash Raj Films said the foundation is committed to provide support to the Hindi film industry and its workers, who have been an integral part of their 50 year journey.

"The pandemic has pushed the backbone of our industry, the daily workers, to a breaking point and YRF wants to support as many workers and their families who are in need due to the loss of liveli-

hood.

"Yash Chopra Saathi Initiative is aiming to provide support to the pandemic hit workers of our industry who we urgently need to focus on," Widhani said in a statement.

Last week, Yash Raj Films had also requested Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray to help the production house in vaccinating 30,000 cine workers.



COOL GIRL! The songstress, Miley Cyrus shows off her funky style during an outing in New York City.

Goa govt cancels permission for film, tele-serial shootings

PANAJI, MAY 7 (PTI): The Entertainment Society of Goa (ESG) on Thursday cancelled all permissions granted for film and television serial shootings in the state in the wake of the raging COVID-19 pandemic.

ESG is the Goa government's nodal agency which is empowered to give permission for commercial shootings in the coastal state.

Several film and TV serial makers from Mumbai and Chennai recently shifted their shootings to Goa in the wake of the surge in COVID-19 cases in their respective places, ESG's Vice Chairman Subhash Faldesai told PTI.

He said all permissions granted for film shootings in Goa have now been cancelled till the COVID-19 situation in the state comes under control.

"We will not allow any shooting of films or television serials in public or private properties," he said.

All those currently shooting films and se-



rials in Goa have also been asked to wind up their schedules, Faldesai said.

Faldesai said the state government has enforced strict curbs, including imposition of Section 144 of CrPC, which bans assembly of five or more people at one place, due to which shootings cannot be permitted.

The ESG will review its decision only after the COVID-19 situation is under control, he said.

On Wednesday, Goa reported 3,496 new COVID-19 cases and 71 fatalities, taking the tally of infections to 1,04,398 and the death toll to 1,443, as per official data.

has chosen to stay open when your circumstances have challenged you to shut down. So, choose to look at what's taking place right now through the lens of wisdom as you bring a little more compassion and a little more tenderness into the equation. What the cards want you to remember: you are so loved and so protected. Trust that everything you put into the Universe will come back to you manifold.

LEO: Don't be fooled by what your physical reality is showing you, Leo. You are prepared for this great change and you have been preparing for this great change for lifetimes now. So, pick up the pieces, recommit to your path, and continue to march forward. Remember, it's not going to be a straight road. You may also trip and fall a few times along the way. But, the fear of failure is something you made peace with a long time ago.

VIRGO: You can either think of this as a time of 'imprisonment' or an opportunity to explore your personal freedom in a way you never have before. 'Lemons to lemonade' has always been your mantra, Virgo. What you're focusing on this weekend: spending quality time with your family members, nurturing your garden, redecorating your home, and cooking up a storm. If you've been thinking about polishing a certain skill or signing up for an online course, the time is now.

LIBRA: What the cards are urging you to become aware of today: self-judgement. All the ways in which you are playing small. All the ways in which you are undermining your true

potential. Truth tea, Libra: you are capable of achieving so much more than what you allow yourself to believe. So, break out of that self-imposed prison. Challenge yourself to do that one thing that scares the living daylights out of you. You cannot change your life overnight, but you can take a step in the right direction starting today.

SCORPIO: It's time for a quick check in, Scorpio: How many times have you snoozed your alarm in the past week, and what do you think is the reason behind your lack of enthusiasm? Even though you're doing what you're meant to be doing, could you somehow be out of alignment with the 'grand plan'? Today, the cards are urging you to check in with yourself. As you do, consider changing the approach a little. Create from a space of joy, love, and creativity instead of trying to impress the world or meeting certain targets. Who knows? This could just be the secret to reconnecting with that lost sense of purpose.

SAGITTARIUS: If somebody gave you a nickel for every time you've doubted yourself in the recent past, you'd give Beyoncé a run for her money, Sagittarius. What the cards are reminding you today: you are where you need to be and you are progressing at the right pace. Trust the bold moves you have made recently as they are helping move closer to the desired destination. Remember, you are the creator of your reality. Replacing fear with faith will help you create a paradigm shift in your physical reality.

CAPRICORN: Worry doesn't change a thing, Capricorn. We repeat: worry doesn't change a thing. What it does is lower your vibrations and makes you more susceptible to all kinds of disease. So, consider changing the approach a little. Bring the vibrations of love, trust, and surrender to the table. This will render you with the magical ability to transform even the most challenging circumstances.

AQUARIUS: You know what's overrated? Adulting! Today, you're being asked to tap into your inner unicorn and get serious about being playful. Rekindle your sense of adventure and bring an element of joy into everything you do. While you're at it, colour outside the lines and surprise yourself by unlearning the rules. Given that it's quarantine season all over again, you may feel inspired to devote your time and energy to your hobbies as well. PS: We love the smell of that zucchini-cocoa bread wafting through the Aquarius HQ!

PISCES: If you had to name this chapter of your life, you would call it 'Silver Linings', Pisces. Despite everything that's taking place right now, you're being able to find your centre and look at your circumstances through the lens of wisdom. Maybe things are neither good nor bad. Maybe, they simply are—and at this point they are challenging you to level up and integrate important life lessons. The good thing is, you don't have to navigate the tricky territories by yourself. You've got your siblings and soul family by your side, holding your hand through the troubles.