



**FOR FIRST TIME, DUBAI  
EXPO 2020 SAYS 5  
WORKERS DIED ON SITE**  
*pg 08*

**SARAH EVERARD: WE STILL  
TREAT INDECENT EXPOSURE AS  
MERELY A 'NUISANCE' OFFENCE**  
*pg 04*

**AISHWARYAA R DHANUSH TO  
DIRECT BILINGUAL THRILLER**  
*pg 08*



# SummitTIMES

Vol 06 | Issue 253 | Gangtok | Sunday 03 October 2021

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

RNI No. SIKENG/2016/69420

Pages 8 | Rs. 5



## Governor and CM lead Gandhi Jayanti cleanliness drive at Ganesh Tok

**GANGTOK, 02 OCT (IPR):** Governor Ganga Prasad, along with Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang, attended the 'Swachhata Hi Seva' cleanliness drive at Ganesh Tok on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti today.

The programme was organized by Rural Development Department, Sikkim Institute of Rural Development and Pan-chayati Raj (SIRD&PR) and Urban Devel-

opment Department celebrating Swachh Bharat Diwas and also as a part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.

The cleanliness drive with the theme Swachhata Hi Seva was carried out at Ganesh Tok premises covering an area of approximately 100 meters.

The drive was also attended by Cabinet Ministers, MLA, Member of Parlia-

ment Lok Sabha, Chief Secretary, DGP, Principal Secretaries and Secretaries from different departments, DC East and officials from the concerned departments.

School students and volunteers from the Association of Sustainable Water Conservation and Environment Protection (NGO) also participated.

## Kerala journalists slam 'stories' in UP chargesheet against colleague

**LUCKNOW, 02 OCT [NDTV]:** A journalists' union in Kerala has condemned the Uttar Pradesh Police for inserting stories written by a journalist from the southern state in a chargesheet against him for allegedly "trying to further the terror agenda" of the banned outfit Student's Islamic Movement of India (SIMI).

Kerala journalist Siddique Kappan was jailed last year when he was on his way to report the Hathras gang-rape case that triggered nationwide shock.

Thirty-six articles written by Mr Kappan - accused of having links to the Popular Front of India (PFI), an outfit the Yogi Adityanath government wants banned - have been cited in the chargesheet.

"Kerala Union of Working Journalists is shocked to learn that the Uttar Pradesh Police has included the reports and interviews done by Siddique Kappan as a journalist in the chargesheet filed against him. The action of the UP Police is nothing but treating journalism as a crime. This goes against the very spirit of freedom of expression guaranteed under the Constitution," the journalists' union said in a statement today.

The chargesheet - filed in April by the UP Police's Special Task Force and presented before a Mathura court - has still not been made available to Mr Kappan or his legal representatives, his lawyers

have claimed. They have petitioned the trial court, seeking "true copies of the document to the accused".

One of the articles is on the protests against the controversial citizenship law that started in December 2019 across the country and continued till the pandemic began. "The article talks about the firing by a Hindu man Kapil Gurjar during the Shaheen Bagh protests and compares this incident to the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi. The article also criticises the way the Delhi Police handled the protests," the chargesheet reads.

The chargesheet also cites another article on the controversy over the alleged role of the Nizamuddin Markaz in spreading the pandemic, saying "it has been presented as a ploy by the central government to defame the Muslim community."

In the statement, the Kerala Union of Working Journalists (KUWJ) requested the Supreme Court to intervene and "quash the shameful act of the UP Police."

"The KUWJ is also anguished to learn that the copy of the chargesheet has not been given to Siddique Kappan even though we are on the brink of completing one year of his arrest and subsequent incarceration in jail... The KUWJ would reiterate its support for Mr Kappan and his struggle against the false charges made by the UP Police," the journalists' union said.

## Gandhi Jayanti in Gangtok



**GANGTOK, 02 OCT [IPR]:** Governor Ganga Prasad and Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang offered floral tributes to the bust of Mahatma Gandhi at MG Marg today to mark the 152nd birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation.

Cabinet Ministers, Chief Secretary, DGP, Advisors, Chairpersons and Heads of Departments of the State Government also offered garlands and khada on the bust of Mahatma Gandhi.

To mark the occasion, artists of the Culture Department performed the 'Ram Dhun' and a bhajan. The

Sikkim Police Band played some patriotic tunes befitting the occasion.

After the formal event, the Governor and the Chief Minister visited the stall set up by the Urban Development Department and presented reusable cloth bags to students to reinforce the message of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

Thereafter, the Governor and the Chief Minister inaugurated an exhibition cum-sale of handicraft and handloom products displayed by NABARD and other agencies as a part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.

## Sikkim's Covid toll increases by one after 4 days

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 02 OCT:**

With Saturday morning arrived news that Sikkim's unbroken 4-day run of no Covid deaths, the longest in the second wave, had ended in the past 24 hours with the virus claiming one more life and taking Sikkim's Covid death toll to 388.

As per the Daily Report of COVID-19 in Sikkim issued by the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme of the Health Department, this fatality was reported from STNM Hospital here.

Meanwhile, the State's daily test positivity rate dipped under

6% over the same period when 25 new cases were picked up from the screening of 426 samples giving Sikkim a daily TPR of 5.8%. The tally of confirmed cases of COVID-19 reported in the State since testing began on 28 Feb, 2020, has reached 31,507.

17 of the new cases were detected in RT-PCR testing of 192 samples and eight in rapid antigen testing of 230 samples. 15 cases were registered in East District, 03 in West District, 06 in South District and 01 in North District.

On the other hand, 40 formerly Covid-positive people were discharged

from home and facility isolation after making full recoveries taking the number of fully recovered cases to 30,201.

At present, there are 602 active cases of Covid-19 in Sikkim, most of whom are recovering under home or facility isolation. Of those in hospital, nine COVID patients are currently admitted ICU facilities at STNM hospital and CRH-Tadong.

On the vaccination front, a total of 6,239 doses were administered in the State on Friday. While 339 people received their first dose, 5,900 others completed their vaccine schedule with the second dose.

## Ban on packaged mineral water in Sikkim from Jan 1

**GANGTOK, OCT 2 (PTI):** Sikkim Chief Minister PS Tamang on Saturday announced that packaged mineral water will be banned from January 1, 2022 in the Himalayan state, which is "blessed with natural resources that provide fresh and good quality drinking water".

Tamang, during his address here on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti, also said that people, after the ban is implemented, will opt for water from natural resources,

which is far healthier than that available in plastic bottles.

"Everyone in Sikkim would now have to do away with mineral water bottles and opt for natural water resources," he stated.

The CM further noted that a three-month buffer time is being given to deplete the existing stock of mineral water bottles available with business establishments.

Tamang, who was accompanied by Governor Ganga Prasad during a

cleanliness drive on the occasion, said that the state government is taking steps to stop supply of packaged drinking water from outside.

Notably, tourist hotspots like Lachen in North Sikkim have already banned packaged water bottles.

"Sikkim is rich in natural water resources and all requirements for water can be met within the state through environment-friendly initiatives," the CM added.

## India records 24,354 Covid cases, 8.8% lower than yesterday

**NEW DELHI, 02 OCT [NDTV]:** India reported 24,354 new COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours, a slight decrease of 8.8 per cent from yesterday, taking the overall caseload to 3,37,91,061. At least 234 deaths due to coronavirus were also reported in last 24 hours.

India's active caseload stands at 2,73,889, lowest in 197 days, which accounts for less than 0.81 per cent of total cases -- lowest since March 2020.

The national COVID-19 recovery rate was recorded at 97.86 per cent, highest since March 2020. At least 25,455 recoveries in the last 24 hours took the total number of recoveries to 3,30,68,599.

The daily positivity rate - number of positive cases identified per 100 - stands at 1.70 per cent, less than 3 per cent for last 33 days. The weekly positivity rate stands at 1.68 per cent.

A total of 89.74 crore vaccine doses have been administered so far under the Nationwide Vaccination Drive. The Centre has received over 65.25 crore Covishield doses from Serum Institute of India and 9.1 crore doses of Covaxin from Bharat Biotech till September 19, according to official documents.

Kerala reported majority of new cases in India, 13,834, and 95 deaths, taking the infection count to 46,94,719 and the death count to 25,182.

Delhi recorded 32 fresh COVID-19 cases and no death while the positivity rate in the city currently stands at 0.05 per cent. There are 409 active Covid cases in the national capital.

Tamil Nadu reported 1,597 new Covid-19 infections, pushing the overall tally to 26,65,386, while the death count has gone up to 35,603 with 25 more fatalities, the health department said.

## Petrol, diesel rise to new record highs as rates hiked again

**NEW DELHI, OCT 2 (PTI):** Petrol and diesel prices soared to new record highs across the country on Saturday after rates were hiked again by 25 paise and 30 paise a litre, respectively.

The price of petrol in Delhi rose to its highest ever level of Rs 102.14 a litre and to Rs 108.19 in Mumbai, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers.

Diesel rates too touched a record high of Rs 90.47 in Delhi and Rs 98.16 a litre in Mumbai.

Prices differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes.

The price hike follows in-



ternational oil prices soaring to near three-year high as global output disruptions forced energy companies to draw more crude oil out of their stockpiles.

The basket of crude oil In-

dia imports has averaged USD 78 per barrel in last few days.

The fourth increase in its rates this week has sent petrol prices above Rs 100 in most major cities of the country.

Similarly, the seventh in-

crease in prices in nine days has shot up diesel rates above Rs 100 mark in several cities in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

State-owned Indian Oil Corp (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corp Ltd (HPCL) resumed daily price revisions on September 24 after international oil prices neared a three-year high. Global benchmark Brent crude is trading above USD 78 per barrel.

In seven price increases since September 24, diesel rates have gone up by 1.85 paise

per litre. Petrol price has increased by Re 1 per litre in four instalments this week.

When international oil rates fell in July and August, retail prices of petrol and diesel in the Delhi market were reduced by Rs 0.65 and Rs 1.25 per litre.

Prior to that, the petrol price was increased by Rs 11.44 a litre between May 4 and July 17. Diesel rate had gone up by Rs 9.14 during this period.

India is dependent on imports to meet nearly 85 per cent of its oil needs and so benchmarks local fuel rates to international oil prices.



# AzadiKa Amrit Mahotsav in Namchi

**NAMCHI, 02 OCT(IPR):** As part of AzadiKaAmrit-Mahotsav (AKAM), Namchi Smart City Limited has organized various activities like freedom to cycle, Walkathon, marathon and painting competition at Namchi.

Walkathon for senior citizens (Age 50+) and Marathon which was Open for both men and women was held yesterday. Today, saw Cyclothon for men and women which commenced from Central Park to Helipad.

Today's sports event was flagged off by Vice Chairperson Namchi Municipal Council SabitriTamang, CEO ThupdenGyasto Bhutia, Joint Director, Sports Department (South)TsheringOngmu and other officials from



Namchi Smart City, Health, police and Sports Department.

The winners of Cyclothon (Men) are as

follows:1st BishalPradhan; 2nd SandeshSubba; and 3rd Gyasto Sherpa.

The winners of Cyclothon (Women) are as

follows:1st SabitriRai; 2nd Dhan Kala Rai; and 3rd AkshaThapa.

The winners of Marathon (women) are as

follows:1st PhurbaTamang; 2nd SigonrinaThapa; and 3rd BhartiGurung.

The winners of Marathon (men) are as follows:1st Position NimsangLimboo;

2nd BikashChettri; and 3rd Dhan Kumar Mangar.

There was a painting competition as well comprising of Inter school, college level, below 12, 12-18 and 18 above where the participants were provided with certificates and prizes.

The winners and the participants in marathon, walkathon, cyclothon were presented with certificates and prizes from Namchi Smart City Limited.

## SAU cleanliness drive in Kamrang



**SUMMIT REPORT NAMCHI, 02 OCT:**

On the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti, Sikkim Alpine University (SAU), Kamrang, organized a cleanliness drive at Govt Secondary School, Kam-

rang and PHSC, Kamrang in collaboration with Kamrang Youth Club today. SAU Registrar, Dr HK Rajput, explained the objective of the mission. More than 30 people participated in the drive.

## Carpet Craft training begins at Pureytar

**SUMMIT REPORT NAMCHI, 02 OCT:**

Handicrafts Service Centre, Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, began a 50-day Samarth Training on Carpet Craft at Pureytar in West Sikkim to mark Gandhi Jayanti today.

In order to meet the Skill gap, Ministry of Textiles Government of India has approved

Scheme for Capacity Building in Textiles Sector (SCBTS) also known as Samarth to promote skilling and skill upgradation in handlooms and handicrafts, sericulture and jute to enable provision of sustainable livelihood either by wage or self-employment to all sections of the society across the country, an officials press release informs.

## Water cannons used as farmers protest at Haryana Chief Minister's house

**CHANDIGARH, 02 OCT [NDTV]:** Over a thousand farmers - shouting slogans and waving flags in protest against the controversial farm laws - gathered outside Haryana Chief Minister ML Khattar's Karnal residence on Saturday morning and announced their intention to mount an overnight vigil. Visuals from the area show the farmers standing on top of a pile of yellow police barricades and shouting angrily, while a handful of security forces in riot gear look on.

The farmers were briefly doused with water cannons by police - with whom anti-farm law protesters have clashed several times this week alone - and who have been deployed in large numbers, with tear gas vehicles, at the spot.

Visuals of water cannons being used show a powerful jet of water fired at protesters, some of whom try to get up on their vehicles to escape. Farmers are also pro-

testing in grain markets in parts of the state, and outside the residences of MLAs from the ruling BJP-Jannayak Janata Party alliance in several districts.

Yesterday farmer leader Rakesh Tikait warned of protests, including at the headquarters of the district collectorate in Punjab, to press the centre to start paddy procurement on time.

This was after the centre postponed buying kharif, or monsoon, paddy from Punjab and Haryana till October 11. It said crop maturity had been delayed due to recent rains. Also yesterday, farmers and police in the state clashed yet again as protesters marched against an event attended by Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala in Jhajjar.

Water cannons were fired to stop them, but dramatic visuals showed scores of men and women fighting back as they braved the streams of water and pushed through barricades.

## Godse's photograph garlanded at Hindu Mahasabha event

**GWALIOR, OCT 2 (PTI):** Photographs of Mahatma Gandhi's assassins Nathuram Godse and Narayan Apte were garlanded at a seminar organized by the local unit of the Hindu Mahasabha here on Saturday.

Speaking to reporters after the event held on Gandhi's 152nd birth anniversary, a leader of the right-wing organization also blamed him for Partition.

We have nothing to do with Gandhi, but Gandhi and Mohammad Ali Jinnah were responsible for the partition of the country,

Hindu Mahasabha national vice president Jaiveer Bharadwaj said.

Partition led to the biggest genocide and more than 10 lakh Hindus were killed and another 50 lakh displaced. That is why Nathuram Godse and Narayan Apte had resolved to kill Gandhi and Jinnah," he said.

While they assassinated Gandhi, they could reach Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, he said.

The seminar on "Gandhi, and Hutatma (martyrs) Godse and Apte" was held at the Mahasabha's office in Daulat-

ganj area here. Photographs of Godse and Apte were garlanded and some workers shouted "Pandit Nathuram Godse and Narayan Apte Amar Rahe (Long live Pandit Nathuram Godse and Narayan Apte)."

In January this year, the Mahasabha had opened a study centre on Godse at its office here but closed it two days later following intervention by the district administration. In 2017, the Mahasabha had installed Godse's bust at the office which was seized by the district administration.

## Over 350 crimes against kids in India daily In 2020: Child Rights Body

**NEW DELHI, 02 OCT [PTI]:** A total of 1,28,531 crimes against children were recorded in India last year, implying that an average of 350 such cases were reported each day during the pandemic, according to an NGO's analysis of the NCRB data.

However, when compared with figures from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) in 2019, there has been a drop of 13.3 per cent in the total number of such cases, Child Rights and You (CRY) said in its analysis.

There were 1,48,185 cases of crime against children recorded in 2019 which meant that each day over 400 such crimes are committed in the country.

"Though there is a drop in total number of crimes against children, child marriage has increased 50 per cent and online abuse has increased 400 per cent in one year," the child rights organisation said.

Further analysis of the decadal trend suggests that crimes against children in India have increased steeply by 381 per cent in the last one decade (2010-2020) and over the same time, the number of overall crimes decreased by 2.2 per cent in the country.

"A state-wise analysis shows that Madhya Pradesh (13.2 per cent), Uttar Pradesh (11.8 per cent), Maharashtra (11.1 per cent), West Bengal (7.9 per cent) and Bihar (5.1 per cent) account for nearly half of total crimes against children (49.3 per cent) in India,"

the organisation said.

Compared to NCRB data 2019, in the list of top five states, West Bengal has replaced Delhi while seeing a sharp increase in cases by more than 63 per cent.

Priti Mahara, Director, Policy Research and Advocacy, CRY, said: "Experiences during humanitarian crises have revealed that issues of child protection tend to get exacerbated. School closures during Covid, mobility restrictions to contain the spread of the pandemic coupled with the economic slowdown disproportionately impacted livelihoods and household economic and food security of marginalised families.

"Therefore, it was highly likely that it contributed to increasing children's vulnerabilities to child labour, child marriage, child trafficking as well as cases of gender-based violence," she said.

According to CRY's analysis of NCRB data, cases under Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 saw an increase of nearly 50 per cent from 525 in 2019 to 785 in 2020.

However, the number of cases recorded under the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 saw a decline of around 38 per cent from 770 cases in 2019 to 476 cases in 2020.

This is in contrast to the recently released ILO global estimates on child labour 2020 report, which states that there were 16.8 million more children within the age-group of five to 11 years

in child labour in 2020 than in 2016, CRY said.

The COVID-19 crisis threatens to further erode global progress against child labour unless urgent mitigation measures are taken and new analysis suggests a further 8.9 million children will be in child labour by the end of 2022 as a result of rising poverty driven by the pandemic, it said.

"Therefore, this decline needs to be seen in the light of reporting and recording of cases before drawing conclusions regarding progress related to addressing child labour in India," it said.

Another important aspect related to child protection during COVID-19 has been the lack of avenues for recreation and socialisation, according to the organisation.

Since there were restrictions on socialising in-person, and teaching shifted online, there was a corresponding rise in time spent by children online, making them vulnerable to online abuse and exploitation, it said.

**CONTACT**  
**SUMMITTIMES REPORTERS**  
**SINGTAM**  
**8170070813**  
**MANGAN/ DIKCHU**  
**9832612485/**  
**9434011213**  
**GANGTOK**  
**9800571148**  
**8116388176**  
**9832424750**  
**8016270440**

## SGREWA Singtam elects new executive body



**SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 02 OCT:**

SGREWA Singtam Branch organized a general meeting at Nepali Dharamsala today to constitute a new executive body, a press release informs.

Present on the occasion were DT Bhutia[president, SGREWA], PL Sharma [general secretary, SGREWA], TP Koirala [financial advisor, SGREWA], GP Tiwari [president SGREWA Pakyong Branch] and members of SGREWA Singtam Branch.

The highlights of the meeting included constitution of the new executive body, discussion on memorandum presented to the government by the central committee and other welfare activities

of the organization.

It was decided to submit a memorandum to the government with the request of: establishment of dialysis centre at District Hospital, Singtam; enhancement of medical relief to the pensioners from Rs 2000 to Rs.5000; and construction of playground for Singtam SSS.

Speaking on the occasion, guests from the Central committee and Pakyong Branch appreciated the efforts of SGREWA Singtam for working towards the benefits of the retired employee's friends.

President Pakyong Branch shared different initiatives undertaken by the SGREWA Pakyong Branch for the upliftment of its members. Similarly, members of SGREWA

central committee also informed the status of different issues related to retired employees.

Outgoing president, TB Pradhan thanked his team for working towards the welfare of the organization for the last five years. RinzingLhamu Bhutia, General Secretary spoke about the prevention of dengue. Students from V-Matrix Dance Academy gave a dance performance on the day.

The new executive body of SGREWA Singtamcomprises of: LN Pradhan (president), HL Lamichaney&Sashi Kala Gurung (vice president), Bharat Pradhan (general secretary), Devi Tamang&Bhim Das Ghimeray (joint secretary), BimlaWaiba& Krishna Mokhtan (treasurer).

## 100 pc cut-offs of DU colleges leave aspirants dejected

**NEW DELHI, OCT 2 (PTI):** The cent per cent cut-offs of Delhi University colleges have left many aspirants who have scored above 90 per cent dejected and are now scouting for alternatives as they feel that their dream of getting admissions into DU might not become reality.

DU on Friday announced its first cut-off list for undergraduate admissions with prominent colleges like Shri Ram College of Commerce and Hindu College pegging the cut-offs at 100 per cent for various courses.

Bhavika, a Chandigarh-based aspirant, has 95.5 per cent in her best of four and wants to pursue BA (Honours) Economics from either Lady Shri Ram College or Shri Ram College of Commerce.

"Seeing the cut-offs, DU looks like a distant dream at the moment. I have applied under the ECA quota, for which the admissions will happen after seats under the various cut-offs are filled. There is a lot of time to go for that. As a backup plan, I have taken admission in Symbiosis Law School, Pune but DU is my first preference," she said.

Her friend Ishita Mehra, who has scored 93.6 per cent in best of four, has taken admission in SD College, Chandigarh as a backup option.

"They should have held the central univer-

sities common entrance test for aspirants. I didn't get enough marks and had there been exams, I am sure I would have scored 96 per cent or 97 per cent. I want to get into BCom(Honours) in a good North Campus college. I will wait for the remaining cut-offs but I won't settle for a lesser college in DU," she said.

Roshni Zahoor, a resident of Rataul in Uttar Pradesh, has 94.75 per cent in her best of four subjects and wishes to pursue BA(Honours) History at a prominent North Campus college.

"The cut-offs are quite high and I won't be able to make it in the first list in the campus colleges. However, I am meeting the cut-offs in Deshbandhu College and Aryabhata College. I will take admission in Deshbandhu College and then migrate to the college I want if I manage to meet the scores in any of the subsequent lists," Zahoor said.

Riya Sharma, who has scored 94.8 per cent in her Best of Four, wants to pursue BSc (Hons) Biomedical Science, which is offered in three colleges -- Acharya Narendra Dev, Bhaskaracharya College of Applied Sciences and Shaheed Rajguru College of Applied Sciences.

"At Bhaskaracharya, the cut-off for the course is 99 per cent while at Acharya Narendra Dev it is 97 per cent. I am meeting the eligibility at

Shaheed Rajguru where the cut-off is 94 per cent. I will take admission to that college and wait for the cut-off at Acharya Narendra Dev to come down," she said.

Another DU aspirant Prishya Jain, who has scored 98.25 per cent in best of four subjects, wants to pursue BCom Honours in Shri Ram College of Commerce and Lady Shri Ram College but the high cut-offs have put a spanner.

"I will wait for the subsequent cut-offs for these colleges. I have taken admission in a college in my hometown as a backup option," Jain said.

The Delhi University Teachers' Association treasurer Abha Dev Habib said students should not lose heart and wait for subsequent cut-offs.

Dr Babli Moitra Saraf, the principal of Indraprastha College For Women, said students should not be in despair even if they are not able to meet the cut-offs in the first list.

"The first and the second cut-offs are higher because colleges do not want to run the risk of excessive admissions. The rule is that everyone within the cut-off has to be accommodated irrespective of the number of seats," she said.

Saraf added that there are many colleges and universities in Delhi like the Indraprastha University and Ambedkar University.

**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



# West Sikkim joins Clean India campaign

**GYALSHING, 02 OCT [IPR]:** West district joined the month-long cleanliness "movement" being celebrated across the country from 01 to 31 Oct as 'Clean India' campaign under the aegis of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports with an inaugural programme held here at the Kyongsa Zilla Panchayat conference hall today. The function also included a comprehensive programme on 'Aatma Nirbhar Bharat' with the tagline, 'Future Generation Towards Better Tomorrow' under the flagship initiative 'Aatma Nirbhar Bharat' of NITI Aayog.

Additional District Collector [West], Agawane Rohan Ramesh, chaired the meeting as the chief guest.

The ADC informed the gathering about the 3-Day Inter-School Food Stall Competition among



the 29 Senior Secondary Schools of the district. The competition will be held from 08 to 10 Oct at the concerned Block Bazaar areas.

One student will then be selected to attend the 'Dubai World Expo 2020' which has already begun on and will continue till

31 Mar, 2022, through NITI Aayog.

The function was also held by District Lead, Pirmal Foundation, Kuntal Pal, Additional Director, Education Department, KC Gyatso, DE, Power Department, JP Subba, National Youth Officer, Nehru Yuwa Kendra, Dev

Nepal, School Principals, Heads and representatives from the concerned departments.

Mr Pal explained the core motive behind Pirmal Foundation and NITI Aayog's initiatives in the district and informed that mindset enhancement approaches

from students should be encouraged through creative interventions. He then urged the principals of the representing Schools to come together for collaboration since a team effort was needed to for student development and other correlated aspects.

## Gandhi Jayanti at Chungthang



**WANGCHUK BHUTIA CHUNGTANG, 02 OCT:** Gandhi Jayanti was celebrated in Chungthang sub division, North Sikkim, today with a cleanliness drive and launch of the People's Plan Campaign 2021.

The program was attended by Minister Roads and Bridges cum MLA Lachen Mangan constituency, Samdup Lepcha.

The program started at 8:30 AM with the Minister garlanding the portrait of Mahatma Gandhi followed by the clean-

liness drive. The drive started from ADC (Dev) office, and covered the PHC, SDM office and ended in Chungthang bazaar.

Thereafter, all officials, public and Panchayats watched the television broadcast of Prime Minister, Narendra Modi.

The People's Plan Campaign 2021 was launched by conducting a special gram sabha at Chungthang GPU, Lachen Dzumsa, Lachen Dzumsa and Shipgyer GPU which was attended by the Pipons,

Panchayats, ADC (Dev) and other officials of the BAC.

The program was also attended by RO (Dev) and staff, AD (LRDM) and staff, SDPO, SHO and Police personnel (Chungthang police station), OC and officials from Chungthang Fire Station, MO-IC and staff (PHC), teachers from schools, officials from Forest, Sikkim Krantikari Morcha CLC president Lachen Mangan, Lendup Lepcha, and the general public.

## South DIC cleans up for Gandhi Jayanti

**NAMCHI, 02 OCT (IPR):** On the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti, a cleanliness drive was taken up at South District Information Centre today. The staff mopped the rooftops and all waste materials in the office premises

were removed during the drive. The cleanliness drive has been undertaken under the Clean India Mission which aims to achieve universal sanitation coverage and to encourage hygienic sanitation practices.

## Safai Abhiyan at Manan Bhawan

Gangtok, 02 Oct (IPR): In compliance to Circular No: 02/Home/2021 dated: 28 Sept, 2021, on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti, the Culture Department, in collaboration with the Departments

and Offices housed in the Manan Bhawan carried out a cleanliness drive under the "Clean India" campaign in commemoration of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav in the office premises today.

## DAC Rabdentse celebrates Gandhi Jayanti with cleanliness drive

**GYALSHING, 02 OCT (IPR):** To mark the 152nd birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, District Administrative Centre, Rabdentse, organised a Safai Abhiyan at the premises and surrounding areas of the DAC today.

District Collector Karma R Bonpo, in his brief address, thanked the officers and staff for their presence and participation and informed that under the direction of

Central and State governments, Safai Abhiyans will be carried out in all official establishments. Further, he urged everyone to carry forward the ideals of the Father of Nation.

Later, ADC-West, in his concluding remarks, suggested that cleanliness drives be undertaken on the last Thursdays of every month to make it a continuing process.

## Rangit Power Station runs for AKAM

**SUMMIT REPORT RANGIT, 02 OCT:**

To make the campaign people driven, "Fit India Freedom Run 2.0" was organized by Rangit Power Station of NHPC on 01 Oct, a press release informs. General Manager (I/c), Ram Swaroop,

flagged off the run which forms part of the "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav." President NHPC Ladies Welfare Club, Kanchan Swaroop, and other family members residing at Rangit Power Station also attended the function, the release adds.

## Philippine President Duterte announces retirement from politics

**MANILA, OCT 2 (AP):** Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte says he is backing out of an announced plan to run for vice president in next year's elections and will retire from politics after his term ends.

Duterte announced the surprise decision Saturday after accompanying his former longtime aide, Senator Bong Go, who instead filed his own candidacy for the vice presidency at a Commission on Elections centre.

**HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?**  
email us: [news@summittimes.com](mailto:news@summittimes.com)

## Vermicomposting training for Takshang SHGs

Gangtok, 02 Oct [PIB]: A two-day training programme organized at ICAR-NRC for Orchids under a collaborative project with NABARD concluded today for 30 farmers from three SHG groups - Kasthuri, Durga and Sunnakari of Takshang village. The trainees were imparted skills on vermicompost bed, portray nursery and mushroom bed preparation with maintenance and caring procedures. Vermi worms, coco peat, water can and trichoderma for vegetable



nursery preparation and ropes for the mushroom houses were distributed to the selected beneficiaries for the demonstration. The training classes were handled by Nodal

officer (NABARD Project), Kalaivanan, NS. The valedictory session was presided over by Dr Rampa, Director and distributed the certificates and inputs for the trainees.

## Gandhi Jayanti at Rongli

**GANGTOK, 02 OCT [IPR]:** SDM Rongli, D.S. Subba along with various departments including SDPO Rongli, Motilal Pradhan and all other heads of offices along with their officers and staff observed Gandhi Jayanti at Rongli Sub-Division, today. The programme commenced with the lighting of the lamp at the portrait of Mahatma Gandhi followed by the National Anthem.

A cleanliness drive (Safai Abhiyan) in and around the office building premises was also conducted.

A temporary office room of Legal Aid Clinic under India awareness and outreach programme, as a part of "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav" organised by



District Legal Service Authority (DLSA) under the aegis of National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) in SDM office building Rongli was also inaugurated.

Later, Safai Abhiyan in the Sub-Division was conducted by all BDOs, SHOs GPUs and line departments in their respective office premises.

## German Greens leadership steel party for government

**BERLIN (AP):** The leaders of Germany's environmentalist Green party urged their members Saturday to seize the chance to join the country's next government so they can help tackle the challenge of climate change.

The Greens placed third in Germany's national election last week with 14.8% of the vote. They are in a strong position to form a governing coalition under the first-placed Social Democrats and the pro-business Free Democratic Party, which came in fourth.

A coalition between the Greens, the Free Democrats and outgoing German Chancellor Angela Merkel's center-right Union bloc is also possible, but currently regarded as less likely. Merkel's party placed second in the parlia-

mentary election with 24.1% of the vote, its worst-ever result. One hitch for either coalition is the left-leaning Greens' long-standing animosity toward the Free Democrats' free-market ideology. Some commentators have described an alliance of the two parties as one between hippies and yuppies.

Robert Habeck, co-leader of the Greens, sought to sweep away delegates' concerns Saturday at a post-election congress in Berlin. Habeck told them that alliances should be possible even between parties that don't "think the same, feel the same, eat the same and sing the same songs."

He acknowledged that debates in the coming months would strain the Greens but insisted

it was worth the effort if the party ends up with a share of power. "If we don't act in a really dumb way, then we won't just help carry the government in the next four years but have a decisive say in it," said Habeck.

Annalena Baerbock, who ran as the Greens' first candidate for chancellor in the Sept. 26 election, urged the party to be disciplined if it wants to join a government after its first stint with the Social Democrats from 1998 to 2005.

Back in 1998, the party was a "small partner" with a share of just 6.7% of the vote, she said. This time, Baerbock continued, the Greens are in a better position and will aim to "renew society" and help put Europe on course to become the first climate-neutral continent.

## Panel formed to draw framework for Assam accord

The sub-committee will submit its report within the next three months.

Guwahati: The Assam government has set up an eight-member committee to prepare a framework for implementation of all clauses of the 36-year-old Assam Accord, especially the Clause-6 report prepared by a central panel pertaining to protecting the cultural, social and linguistic identity and heritage of the indigenous people, officials said on Saturday.

The Commissioner and Secretary of the Implementation of Assam Accord Department, GD Tripathi, issued a notification announcing the formation of the sub-committee, which will submit its report within

the next three months.

"The Governor of Assam is pleased to constitute a sub-committee to examine and prepare a framework for implementation of all clauses of Assam Accord in general with special emphasis on Clause-6 (High Level Committee Report)," the notification said.

The latest panel will also lay emphasis on implementation of Clause 7, 9 and 10 along with update of National Register of Citizens, issues of flood and erosion, rehabilitation of families of martyrs and victims of Assam agitation, it added.

Besides, the sub-committee will consider various problems faced by the state and potential

for all-round economic development while preparing the report for implementation of the historic pact.

The sub-committee, headed by Implementation of Assam Accord Minister Atul Bora, has three ministers and five members from the All Assam Students' Union (AASU), the notification stated.

Other ministers on the panel are Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pijush Hazarika and Finance Minister Ajanta Neog, while the five from the AASU include its president Dipanka Kumar Nath, general Secretary Sankarjyoti Baruah, chief adviser Samujjal Kumar Bhattacharya, and advisers Prakash Chandra Das and Uddipjyoti Gogoi.

## UN agency for Palestinian refugees has urgent budget crisis

**UNITED NATIONS, OCT 2 (AP):** The UN agency helping Palestinian refugees is facing an existential budget crisis and appealing for urgent funding of USD 120 million to keep essential education, healthcare and other services running, the agency's chief said Friday.

We keep struggling, running after cash, Philippe Lazzarini told a small group of reporters.

The financial situation is a real existential threat on the organisation, and we should not underestimate this because it might force the organisation to decrease services, he added, and if that happens we risk to collapse very quickly.

At stake is the agency's ability to keep 550,000 children in school, provide health care for thousands, and pay the salaries for its 28,000 staffers in November and December, Lazzarini explained.

The UN Relief and Works Agency known as UNRWA was established to provide education, health care, food and other services to the 700,000 Palestinians who fled or were forced from their homes during the war surrounding Israel's

establishment in 1948. Lazzarini added that it wasn't clear for agency officials if yes or no we will be able to keep our activities in November and December.

He emphasised the importance of the United States returning as a major donor to UNRWA this year after former president Donald Trump stopped all funding in 2018.

The Biden administration announced in April it would provide a total of USD 235 million to projects in the West Bank and Gaza as well as to UNRWA.

But Lazzarini said the US funding has been offset by decreased funding from other donors as a result of the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and no information from potential donors in the Middle East.

He pointed to the United Kingdom's decrease in its overseas aid budget from 0.7 per cent to 0.5 per cent of GDP, and the decline in Arab support to UNRWA from USD 200 million in 2018 to about USD 89 million in 2019 and USD 37 million in 2020.

He said UNRWA's un-

certain funding has generated anxiety among Palestinian refugees that the lifeline provided by the agency could be weakened, and a feeling of being abandoned by the international community.

In an effort to reverse this trend, Lazzarini said Sweden and Jordan will be co-hosting a conference in mid-November in Brussels whose main aim is to ensure more predictable multi-year funding for the agency.

He said UNRWA is seeking USD 800 million a year for three years for its core activities education, health care, and social protection and safety nets.

UNRWA also has a separate emergency budget which provides humanitarian aid to Gaza and Syria, he said. This year that budget was around USD 500 million, and he said it will probably be similar in 2022.

There are now 5.7 million Palestinian refugees, including their children and grandchildren, but Lazzarini said UNRWA only helps the 550,000 in school and 2.8 million who have health benefits.



## Save the Young from Obscurity

*Demand better from education*

A little over a decade ago, an obscure man, then in his mid-30s, hailing from a nondescript Andhra village, blazed a trail with his apparently crazy move. This “obscure man” was one called Narasing Lal Butt, and his “crazy move” was to claim “damages” through the human rights commission from his village school for its failure to provide him quality education. Education of even reasonable quality could have established him in life, but in his 30’s he found himself ill-equipped and under-prepared for anything worthwhile, hence the claim for damages.

Google searches lead nowhere when it comes to ferreting out what happened of his petition. Most probably nothing. In all probability, Narasing has withdrawn into his obscurity only to be occasionally invoked in publications in distant Sikkim. But his petition was obviously never really about receiving damages, and was always about holding up the mirror. A decade since, the mirror still reflects the same image of a broken education system which is still as listless and continues to mass-produce mediocrity. The litigant had sued his school for making him so, well, ‘obscure’. And although his complaint most probably secured him no reprieve, he “blazed a trail” in that he went to the human rights commission and not the consumer redressal courts. Even his incomplete education informed him well enough to recognise that education was not a commodity, but a Right, a human right.

Education, whether free, subsidized or exorbitantly paid for, should be better regulated and any lapses on this front should be seen as a violation of a whole generation’s human rights. Fact remains that too few people are paying enough attention to education. Yes, there are huge budgets, there are many schools and literacy is on the rise, but what are the schools really churning out? The success stories of Indian academics [which are only a minuscule proportion of the studying population] are fuelled by individual drive and not institutional support or grooming. To blame the teachers would be too easy, they are only part players in a system which is failing, policy interventions have remained ineffectual and uninspiring. It is worrying that education and schools continue to be seen as readying people for employment when the first priority should always have been learning. In the more worrying trends, new policies have also been destructive, trying to dismantle institutions to suit new moulds.

What the nation now needs are more Narasing Lal Butts; more people from the masses to take the policy framers and deliverers to task; to demand better. May be then things will start improving.



## Sarah Everard: We Still Treat Indecent Exposure as Merely a ‘Nuisance’ Offence

JENNIFER GRANT  
*theconversation.com*

As a child, I was taught to laugh if I stumbled across a man who was indecently exposing himself.

My experiences growing up reflect a wider societal view that indecent exposure is not a serious sexual offence. The older stereotype is of a comical “flasher” in a long overcoat lurking in the bushes. These days, when women go online to try to make meaningful connections, they risk getting an unwanted dick pic. Whether the “flasher” is offline or online, we are encouraged to laugh about it.

Women are conditioned by society to see these experiences as funny and the men as pathetic. But it really isn’t something to laugh about. The reality is that these incidents make women feel vulnerable, violated and unsafe. Indecent exposure is therefore a serious issue for women.

It also becomes a serious issue for society if culprits go on to commit contact sexual offences and violence. The Independent Office for Police Conduct is investigating three allegations of indecent exposure made against Wayne Couzens prior to the night he kidnapped and murdered Sarah Everard. Of these, two related to incidents alleged to have taken place just three days before the murder. It appears that these incidents were not taken seriously or formally investigated by police at the time.

In the course of my research, I’ve

been reviewing all the available literature on indecent exposure from the last 30 years. I found a tendency to describe indecent exposure as a “nuisance” offence. When the Law Commission was trying to update the legal framework in 2015, its assessment included references to “flashing” – language that implies that legally we still aren’t viewing indecent exposure as a serious and sexual crime.

Indecent exposure was only formally classified as a specifically sexual offence in 2003. Before then, it was legally defined within the Vagrancy Act of 1824. This act suggested the offence was committed by “rogues and vagabonds”.

So, up until relatively recently, if you’d been a victim of indecent exposure, you wouldn’t have been seen as a victim of a sexual offence. This is surprising, given that indecent exposure involves the intentional exposure of the genitals. The slow shift in legislation reflects that indecent exposure is only just starting to be taken seriously.

And yet it is a prevalent offence. Although official statistics suggest that indecent exposure is not very common, studies undertaken with victims consistently suggest otherwise. A recent YouGov survey found that almost one in five participants had experienced indecent exposure.

### THE REALITY FOR VICTIMS

This contradiction between official statistics and victim studies can

be explained by the fact that women simply don’t report the crime. There are various reasons why they might not go to the police. They might be traumatised and unwilling to revisit the experience or they might fear for their future safety after reporting someone.

Crucially, victims might not believe the incident is serious enough to be reported, which wouldn’t be surprising given that we are all taught from an early age that indecent exposure is not a big deal.

There is evidence that some victims do not report indecent exposure because they lack confidence in the system. If society continues to view indecent exposure as a “nuisance”, then women will continue to feel reluctant to report their experiences to the police. This means they will carry around the psychological harm and fear that indecent exposure creates in silence.

### RE-OFFENDING AND ESCALATION

Despite under-reporting, the research tells us that men who indecently expose themselves have high rates of re-offending. The largest consolidation of relevant research suggested 25% of men go on to commit further offences of indecent exposure (on average).

These high re-offending rates also include some exhibitionists escalating into other sexual acts. Men who indecently expose themselves can escalate to sexual offending involv-

ing physical contact, as appears to have been part of the picture with Couzens.

I do want to be clear: Couzens is not representative of the typical man who indecently exposes himself. But he is a reminder of the worst-case scenario. What happened to Sarah Everard demonstrates why we should take this type of offending more seriously.

When we identify indecent exposure, we do not know exactly who will escalate to commit contact sexual offences. The current research base does not agree on how and why this escalation occurs. Men who indecently expose themselves are a varied group with a wide range of motivations. This lack of clear evidence makes the punishment and rehabilitation of men who indecently expose themselves more difficult. However, it does not detract from the need for indecent exposure to be properly investigated, punished and treated.

And as long as victims remain reluctant to report this type of offence to the police, we cannot get an accurate picture of how regularly indecent exposure occurs. Ultimately, society as a whole does not take indecent exposure seriously. This is in spite of the significant psychological impact it has on victims – and the potential for offenders to go on to commit other crimes. Perhaps it is time to stop laughing.

*[the writer is Teaching Fellow, University of Portsmouth]*

# Calling the latest gene technologies ‘natural’ is a semantic distraction — they must still be regulated

JACK HEINEMANN  
*theconversation.com*

Legislators around the world are being asked to reconsider how to regulate the latest developments in gene technology, genome editing and gene silencing.

Both the European Court of Justice and the New Zealand High Court have ruled that genome editing techniques should remain under the regulations specific to genetically modified organisms.

But a few other countries, including Australia, have exempted some uses of these techniques from their regulations, based on similarities to what occurs in nature. The main argument is that the biochemical processes of editing are like the processes that cause natural mutations.

The “equivalent to nature” narrative blurs the boundary between natural processes and technology.

Unfortunately, the risks from technology don’t disappear by calling it natural. The risk of harm from gene technology accumulates over time and scale of production. In our new research, we propose a framework that regulates technologies depending on their scale of use.

Proponents of deregulation of gene technology use the naturalness argument to make their case. But we argue this is not a good ba-

sis for deciding whether a technology should be regulated.

### RISK OF HARM GROWS WITH INCREASED USE

The notion of naturalness has been criticised as unscientific in the past, but now some scientists are using it to say that gene editing should be exempt from regulations.

Geneticists have long used the term “spontaneous” to refer to events that are outside of human control. Mutations can be either spontaneous or caused by people using gene technology. Differences in DNA sequences produced by either might give rise to a new trait.

In nature, if a new trait brings an advantage to the organism, it is amplified through reproductive fitness. When humans amplify a trait through selective breeding, we substitute our hands for the invisible hands of natural selection. We therefore create additional potential for harm through our interventions.

Some uses and outcomes of gene technology can be made to appear natural, but this is a diversion from how and why gene technology should be regulated. Instead we should recognise that gene technologies allow more people to produce and amplify modified organisms more quickly and in more environments.

Any potential harmful out-

comes of the use of gene technology increase as it is used more. What makes gene technology useful is also what makes it risky.



### COMPLEX RISK

Nobel laureate Sydney Brenner described gene technology as a biological Archimedian lever for doing what could occur spontaneously in a faster, more concentrated and very different manner.

“We now have the tools to

speed up biological change and if this is carried out on a large enough scale, then we can say that if anything can happen it certainly

will.”

Safety increases with the use of some technologies, such as car brakes. The more cars with brakes, the safer our roads. No tool of gene technology, including gene silencing and genome editing, becomes safer the more it is used.

Gene technologies can be improved incrementally, but that isn’t making them safer when used more. Any potential risks multiply as more people use them more frequently and on more species. Regulation is our least imperfect tool to manage this risk.

Imagine if other technologies with the capacity to harm were governed by resemblance to nature. Should we deregulate nuclear bombs because the natural decay chain of uranium-238 also produces heat, gamma radiation and alpha and beta particles?

We inherently recognise the fallacy of this logic. The technology risk equation is more complicated than a supercilious “it’s just like nature” argument.

### CRITICAL CONTROL POINTS

We proposed the use of critical control points in a governance framework to regulate technology consistently with its risk to cause harm.

One such critical control point is between the introduction of mutations and the release of the organism. Another is the decision to make genome editing and gene silencing reagents available for sale to nearly anyone.

Deregulation and tiered regulatory frameworks release important critical control points from oversight. That is a problem even

for what might be considered low-risk uses of genome editing and gene silencing because if they are used more without regulatory oversight, the likelihood of harm increases.

Critical control points tether governance to risk rather than downplay risk using metaphors that sound like science but are not. “No foreign DNA” or “just like nature” are slippery semantics — they are not measurable but make risk assessments sound quantitative and precise.

This approach raises misunderstanding of the underlying causes of harm from technology, inviting Brenner’s future where “if anything can happen it certainly will”.

Whether it is by sweeping or creeping deregulation, carefully chosen metaphors descale the risk of any kind of genetic engineering. By sleight of speech any technology can be made to sound like an extension of nature.

Critical control points instead inform both risk assessment and risk mitigation with precision. Regulated gene technologies can produce safe and possibly socially acceptable products, but we don’t get to them faster by taking short cuts.

*[the writer is Professor of Molecular Biology and Genetics, University of Canterbury]*



# Largest khadi national flag unfurled in Ladakh

**SRINAGAR, OCT 2 (PTI):** A 1,000 kg handwoven khadi tricolour, the largest in the country, was unfurled atop a high mountain overlooking the Leh valley on Saturday to commemorate Gandhi Jayanti and the 75th anniversary of India's Independence, a defence spokesman said.

Fire and Fury Corps organised a historic event at Leh Garrison where a monumental national flag was unfurled by Lieutenant Governor R K Mathur on a hill feature overlooking the Leh valley, Srinagar-based PRO Defence Col Emron-Musavi said.

He said Chief of Army Staff General M M Naravane and GOC-in-C Northern Command Lieutenant General Y K Joshi also attended the event. Lieutenant General PGK Menon, GOC, Fire and Fury Corps and senior military and civil officials were also present.

The grand ceremony was held to celebrate the 152nd birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi along



with 'Azadika Amrit Mahotsav', commemorating the 75th anniversary of India's Independence, the defence spokesman said.

He said the flag which was unfurled is the largest handwoven and handspun cotton Khadi flag ever manufactured in India and it measures 225 feet by 150 feet and weighs 1000 kg.

The flag is made by Khadi Dyers and Printers

based in Mumbai which is affiliated to the Khadi Village and Industries Commission.

The Sura-Soi Engineer Regiment was entrusted with the responsibility of bringing the national flag from Mumbai to Leh and also with the task of installing it at the top of the high mountains for the unveiling ceremony. The ceremony included a series of events to mark

the momentous occasion, Col Musavi said. The event commenced with the Brass Band of Ladakh Scouts Regimental Centre along with the students of Ladakh Ignited Minds performing the National Anthem when the flag was unveiled, he said.

The PRO Defence said advanced light helicopters of the Army Aviation Squadron carried out a fly past and showered flower petals over the tricolour,

followed by students of the Lamdon Model School singing a patriotic song symbolising the spirit of nationalism.

The chief guest addressed the gathering of about 500 people which included personnel of the Indian Army, Indian Air Force, Indo Tibetan Border Police, Vikas Battalion, besides veterans, veer naris, NCC cadets and school children, he added.

## Bhawika and Jharna leave with Team India for WBB&PSC

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 01 OCT:**

Two athletes from Sikkim, Bhawika Pradhan and Jharna Rai, left on Thursday to represent India at the 12th World Bodybuilding and Physique Sports Championship 2021 scheduled to be held from 01 to 07 October at Tashkent, Re-

public of Uzbekistan.

They are part of the 58-member Indian team. Sikkim's Tashi Ongmu Lepcha is also accompanying the squad as women's team manager.

Bhawika Pradhan will be contesting in junior category hile Jharna is part of the senior team.

## Arunachal reports 54 new COVID cases, 1 more death

**ITANAGAR, OCT 2 (PTI):** Arunachal Pradesh on Saturday reported 54 new COVID-19 cases and one more death, a senior health official said.

A 60-year-old man from Tirap district died at the dedicated COVID hospital at Chimpu due to acute respiratory distress along with COVID pneumonia, the official said.

The state has so far registered 54,680 COVID-19 cases and 277 deaths, he said.

Nineteen of the people who died of COVID in the state were fully vaccinated, while 45 deceased

persons got their first dose, he said.

In the last 24 hours, 43 more people recovered from the disease, taking the total number of recoveries in the Northeastern state to 53,974, the official said.

Arunachal Pradesh currently has 429 active cases.

Lohit district has the highest number of active cases at 80, followed by Lower Dibang Valley (71), Tawang (57), West Kameng (50) and East Siang (37).

The new cases were detected after testing 2,126 samples.

## Odisha logs 478 new COVID-19 cases, 7 fresh fatalities

**BHUBANESWAR, OCT 2**

**(PTI):**Odisha Saturday

registered 478 new COVID-19 cases, just one more than the previous day, taking the tally to 10,27,431 while seven fresh fatalities pushed the state's coronavirus death toll to 8,209, a health department official said.

The new infections include 57 people in the age group of 0-18 years. The rate of infection among children and adolescents now stands at 11.92 per cent against 15.57 per cent on Friday, he said.

Of the 478 new cases, 281 were from quarantine centres while the remaining 197 were local contacts. Khurda district reported the highest number of daily cases at 211 followed by Cuttack

(57).

Nine districts - Bargarh, Bolangir, Boudh, Deogarh, Kandhamal, Koraput, Nabarangpur, Nuapada and Rayagada, did not report any new case during the last 24 hours, he said.

The H&FW department said that seven COVID-19 deaths were reported from Khurda (2), Sundergarh (2) and one each from Jagatsinghpur, Jajpur and Kendrapara. Odisha's COVID-19 death toll is 8,209.

This apart, 53 other COVID-19 patients have died so far due to comorbidities, he said.

The state currently has 5,336 active COVID-19 cases while 10,13,833 patients including 691 on Friday, recovered from the disease, he said.

## Old-age pension passbooks distributed on Int'l Day of Older Persons



**BIKASH CHETTRI**

**NAMCHI, 01 OCT:**

Social Justice and Welfare Department Namchi, South Sikkim, handed over old-age pension passbooks to 34 senior citizens on the occasion of International Day of Older Persons.

Five persons above the age of 80 years and

29 persons above the age of 70 years were provided these passbooks in a program held in the conference hall of Namchi BAC today. All the beneficiaries belonged to the GPUs falling under Namchi BAC, South Sikkim.

A free health check was also provided to people above the age of

60 during the program.

NMC Vice-Chairperson, Sabitri Tamang, was the chief guest of the program.

Welfare Inspector, Sarita Subba informed that forms for old-age pension can be collected from the department of Social Justice and Welfare.

## Mizoram issues new COVID-19 guidelines effective tomorrow. Details here

**MIZORAM COVID-19 GUIDELINES:** The order issued on Friday night said that it has been felt necessary to give more focus on providing better treatment to COVID-19 patients than imposing stringent restrictions despite a spurt in COVID-19 cases.

Aizawl: The Mizoram government has issued new COVID-19 guidelines with a few more relaxations to ease economic and other activities in Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC) area and other parts of the state.

The new guidelines will come into effect on October 3 and will remain in force in the state till October 16.

According to news agency Press Trust of India, the order issued on Friday night said that it has been felt necessary to give more focus on providing better treatment to COVID-19 patients than imposing stringent restrictions despite a spurt in COVID-19 cases.

The new order allowed the re-opening of churches in COVID-19 affected AMC area and also in other parts of the state only on Sunday and Sabbath (Saturday) during daytime with 50 per cent seating capacity.

Churches in COVID-19 free towns and villages outside AMC area have been already re-opened on August 22.

School and other higher education institutions will continue to remain closed in AMC area but training institutes will be allowed to re-open with 50 per cent seating capacity in the state capital, the order said.

The government has already allowed re-opening of schools (KG to class 12) and Anganwadicentres in coronavirus free towns outside AMC area on August 15 and further allowed re-opening of all educational institutions, including

colleges, on September 5.

Re-opening of public parks is now allowed even in AMC area with 50 participants subjected to permission of local level task force of the locality where such park is located.

Social or public gatherings like anniversary or birthday celebrations and other gatherings are now allowed in AMC area with either 50 per cent of the seating capacity or 50 attendees, whichever is less, the order said.

The number of attendees in funerals and weddings in AMC area has been increased from 30 to 50 or 50 per cent of the seating capacity, whichever is less, it said.

The government has now allowed full re-opening of all business shops, market places, hawkers stalls, hotels, restaurants (with 50% seating capacity) and tourist lodges, among others, across AMC area.

All government offices in the state will now open with full staff, the order said.

Intra-state movement is allowed under exceptional cases, it said.

Night curfew will continue to be imposed in all district headquarters between 8 pm and 4 am.

In areas outside AMC, deputy commissioners will issue separate guidelines depending on the COVID-19 situation of their districts or areas, the order said. Meanwhile, Mizoram today reported 1,626 new COVID-19 cases pushing the state's tally to 96,456, a health official said.

The number of deaths rose to 314 as three more persons succumbed to the infection in the last 24 hours, he said.

At least 263 children were among the newly infected people, he said.

## South Police organize cyber security awareness

**NAMCHI, 01 OCT (IPR):**

A cyber security awareness campaign was organized by South District Police Department at Namchi Central Park today.

Advisor Skill Development Department, Satish Chandra Rai was the chief guest of the campaign. It may be mentioned that Mission SAFAI (Sikkim Against Fraud Action Initiative) for South District was officially launched today. This digital mission is an initiative of Sikkim Police and aims to educate the masses regarding different kinds of frauds and how the public can safeguard themselves.

During the course of the programme the resource persons spoke on various topics rang-



ing from Introduction to Cybercrimes and Cases, Preventive Action and Redressal to online banking frauds, overview of Mission SAFAI prevention and response to cyber and online frauds with real case studies.

Additionally, a short skit on cyber and online Fraud was also presented by The Voice Club. An interactive session by the

officials was also conducted at the premises.

Present amongst others were DC (South), M Bharani, SSP (South), Thakur Thapa, ASP (South), Rinzing Rai, SDPO (Namchi), Kesang D Bhutia, SHO (Namcho), Dawalhamu Pakhrinalong with officials from Police department as well as banks representatives and public at large.

## Rakdong-Tintek felicitates elders on Older People Day

**GANGTOK, 01 OCT [IPR]:**

On the occasion of the International Day of Older People, a programme was conducted in the Conference hall of BAC Rakdong Tintek, under the aegis of the Social Welfare Department, to felicitate senior citizens availing Old Age Pensions and also new Pensioners above the age of 70.

A total of 12 existing pensioners and seven

new OAP Pensioners were felicitated and handed their new pension books. Masks and Sanitizers were also distributed to all the elderly guests.

The meeting was chaired by the BDO, Rakdong Tintek along with the Panchayat Presidents and Panchayat from different GPUs under Rakdong Tintek block, Panchayat

Inspectors, Inspector, Social Welfare Department and Compounder, Samdong PHC.

Later in the day, a team from the BAC and Health Department visited the Lee All Old Age Home at Raksay Kedangthang and felicitated the occupants with khadas and distributed masks while also providing medical check-up at the Home.

## Vivid Kala Akademi to organize two-day Kalakar Diwas

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 01 OCT:**

Vivid Kala Akademi [VKA] has announced that it is going to organize Kalakar Diwas in collaboration with Sushma Production and Journalists Union of Sikkim on 25 and 26 October in the capital.

The event marks two important days, International Artist Day falls on 25 October and the birth anniversary of the Chogyal Sir Tashi Namgyal falls on 26 October. The main highlight of the event would be a painting exhibition of national and international artists.

Addressing a press conference this afternoon, VKA president, Kiran Rasaily mentioned that Sikkim now has art-

ists in all areas that have been doing well in their respective fields. He stated that organisations like VKA and Sushma Foundation have been continuously working to motivate and support local artists of Sikkim.

Kalakar Diwas will celebrate the International Artist Day 2021 with various activities to encourage local artists, he added.

The event will also celebrate the 126th birth anniversary of the Chogyal Sir Tashi Namgyal on 26 October.

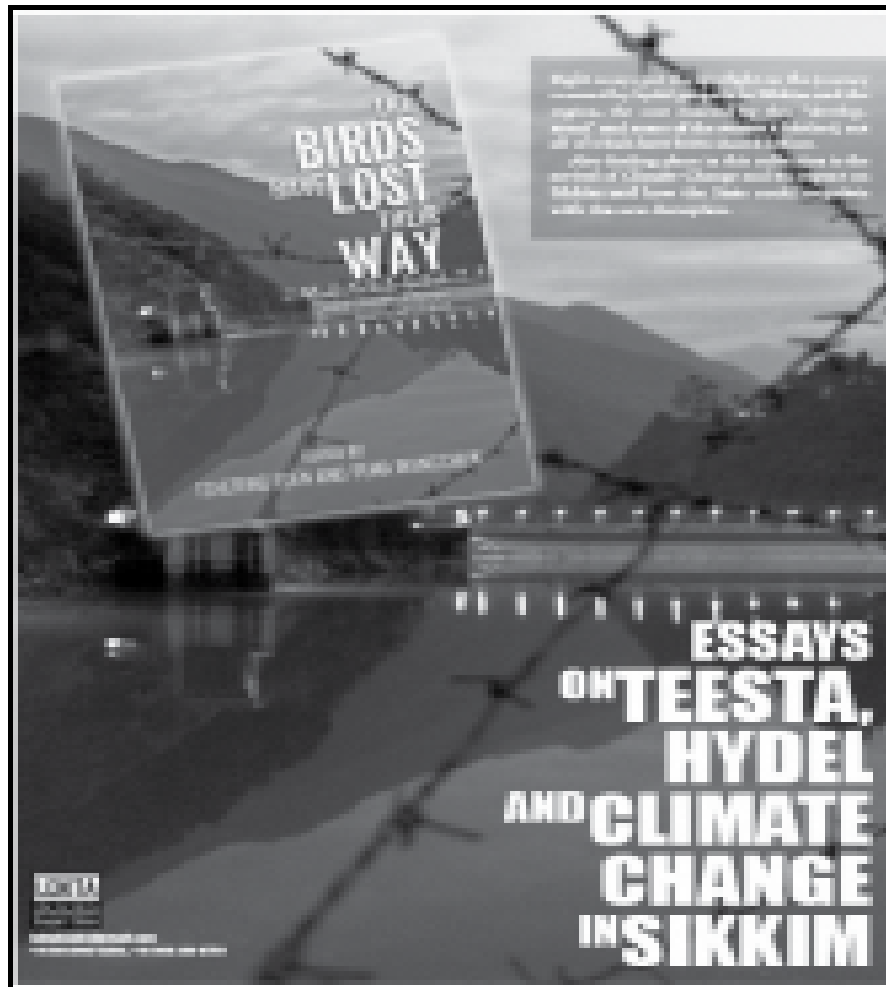
Mr Rasaily said that Chogyal Sir Tashi Namgyal had not only taken up public welfare and developmental initiatives during his reign but was also a very good artist, and a

lot of development took place in the field of art.

"We are celebrating the birth anniversary of Chogyal Sir Tashi Namgyal to pay rich homage for his contribution towards the field of art. We will also try to display his paintings during the Kalakar Diwas," Mr Rasaily said.

He also invited articles and poems on Chogyal Sir Tashi Namgyal especially from the perspective of art.

Likewise, Sushma Foundation's Sushma Gurung expressed her happiness at being a part of the event. She also shared the objectives and activities of the foundation to promote local artists of Sikkim.





## India reach 359/7 at dinner, Sharma scores fifty

**GOLD COAST, OCT 2 (PTI):** India dug in deep, instead of going for quick runs, to reach 359 for seven at dinner on the third day of the rain-marred day/night women's Test against Australia here on Saturday.

Resuming at their overnight score of 276 for five after rain and lightning had brought a premature end to the second day's play at the Carrara Oval, the Indians scored 83 runs for the loss of Taniya Bhatia and Pooja Vastrakar's wickets in the long first session.

Taniya made 22 off 75 balls, while Vastrakar made 13.

At the dinner break, Deepti Sharma was batting on 58.

Taniya's dismissal brought to an end a 45-run stand for the sixth wicket with Sharma that came at a much slower pace than Thursday as the two teams seemed like they would be contend with a draw rather than forcing a result after a significant part of the match was wiped out by inclement weather.

The duo of Taniya and Sharma consumed more than 28 overs to get those 45 runs.

It was Stella Campbell, who dismissed Taniya, caught behind by Alyssa Healy off a back-of-a-length delivery on off stump that moved away, for her first Test wicket.

While they did not lose many wickets, what did not help India's cause was that the batters could not capitalise on the loose balls on a pitch that looked pretty flat.

Meanwhile, Sharma, who started the day on 12, got to her second Test fifty with a sweep behind square, reaching the landmark in 148 balls with the help of five boundaries.

Ellyse Perry gave the team another breakthrough when she had Pooja Vastrakar brilliantly caught by Beth Mooney at gully as the batter looked to drive through covers.

This was Perry's 300th international wicket, even as Sharma went past her previous best Test score of 54.

Brief scores: India 1st innings 359/7 in 142.3 overs (Smriti Mandhana 127, Deepti Sharma 58 batting; Sophie Molineux 2/45, Ellyse Perry 2/67).

## Lahiri has a tough day on greens, exits early at Sanderson Farms



**JACKSON, OCT 2 (PTI):** A late bogey on the back nine cost Anirban Lahiri dearly as he missed the cut in his opening outing on the 2021-22 season at the Sanderson Farms Championship on the PGA Tour. Lahiri, who shot three-under 69 on the first day, added one-under 71 but it fell short of the cut by one shot.

The Indian was four-under 140 for two days and the cut fell at five-under 139.

It was a tough day on the greens for Lahiri, who missed a bunch of putts inside 10-12 feet, including a five-footer and two others less than eight feet. He had three birdies against two bogeys. Meanwhile, Sahith Theegala, an Indian-American, kept a share of the lead even as Will Zalatoris set a course record with an 11-under 61.

Theegala, Zalatoris and Nick Watney share the lead at 13-under.

Zalatoris, voted the PGA TOUR rookie of the year despite not having full status last year, made it look so simple at the Country Club of Jackson that his longest putt for par was 3 feet.

Theegala held his own after opening with a 64, new territory for the California rookie in just his second start as a PGA TOUR member.

He chipped in for eagle on the par-5 third hole to get right back in the mix. Theegala finished with a 30-foot birdie putt for a 67.

Among those who missed was Sergio Garcia, the defending champion playing a week after a draining Ryder Cup at Whistling Straits.

Former US Open champion Gary Woodland took two shots from behind the ninth green on his final hole and made bogey for a 73 to miss the cut by one. Cameron Young and Hayden Buckley each shot 65 and were one shot out of the lead. Roger Sloan of Canada shot 67 and was two behind.

Among the Asians, CT Pan (68-67) was the best at nine-under and he was followed by Sungjae Im (67-69) at eight-under. Si Woo Kim (66-71) was seven-under.

# I need some wins to regain my confidence: Praneeth

**NEW DELHI, OCT 2 (PTI):** Struggling with form and a nagging back issue, India's B Sai Praneeth is desperate to get some wins under his belt to regain his confidence as he gears up for next week's Thomas Cup and Uber Cup Finals.

The rescheduled men's and women's team tournaments will be held from October 9 to 17 at Aarhus, Denmark.

Praneeth had clocked a lot of hours to prepare for the Olympics, but his campaign didn't go according to plan as he failed to win a single group match in Tokyo, returning empty handed.

He also suffered a loss in the only singles match that he played at the Sudirman Cup in Vantaa, Finland.

Up against China's Shi Yuqi, Praneeth lost in straight games as India suffered a 0-5 defeat in their Group A match to crash out of the quarterfinals race.

"I am training well but I really don't know what is happening on court. I just need a couple of wins to get that confidence back ahead of the important events," Praneeth, the 2019 World Championships bronze medalist, told PTI.

Talking about India's campaign at the Thomas Cup, Praneeth said: "India has a strong team for Thomas Cup. Earlier, we used to depend on three



singles for a win. It was tough to make it if we lose one but we have good doubles team now, so till quarterfinal it looks good."

The Hyderabad shuttler revealed that he had developed a back stiffness few days before the Tokyo Games, but he didn't put the blame on his fitness for the losses.

"I had developed a back pain just four days before the

Olympics due to overload, so I played with a bit of pain but that is not the reason why I lost. I lost mostly because of pressure," Praneeth made an honest assessment.

"I was positive, very confident and fit ahead of the Olympics but then some things kept happening, which affected me negatively. I could feel the tension on the court.

"I am fine now but I need to

keep doing strengthening exercises for my back or else it will become stiff again. Working hard on my game, training and taking care of my body -- that's what is in my hands, so really need some wins."

While P V Sindhu excused herself after a hectic Olympic campaign, Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy also missed out after the former pulled his abs muscle, leaving

Praneeth as the only shuttler from the Olympic team to play in Finland.

"Sudirman Cup and Thomas Cup are important team events, then there is Denmark Open and French Open. Many events have been cancelled due to COVID-19, so we hardly played individual tournaments, so I am looking forward to some match time."

The Thomas and Uber Cup Finals will be followed by Denmark Open (October 19-24) and French Open (October 26-31). Praneeth said he can't afford to skip events as he needs to maintain his ranking ahead of next year's Commonwealth Games.

"You can't miss events as there are no events happening later. If you miss then later it could be a problem. We have Commonwealth Games and everything is related to ranking," said the 29-year-old, who is currently ranked 15 in the world.

After the French Open, there is a two-week window before he heads to Indonesia for back-to-back events, and will end the season with the World Championships in Huelva, Spain in December.

"The schedule is hectic as I will have to play back-to-back tournaments but will have to manage," he signed off.

## SRH aim to dent KKR's play-off prospects

**DUBAI, OCT 2 (PTI):** Out of the play-offs race, bottom-placed Sunrisers Hyderabad will look to dent Kolkata Knight Riders' chances of making it to the knockout stage when they face off in an IPL game here on Sunday.

With nine defeats from 11 matches, SRH are languishing at the bottom, while KKR still have hopes of qualifying for the knockout stage as they are at fourth place with 10 points from 12 matches.

SRH have won just one match out of the four that they have played since the resumption of the IPL in the UAE.

While SRH had returned to winning ways after five losses on the trot with a convincing victory over Rajasthan Royals, they lost their last game by six wickets at Sharjah, allowing Chennai Super Kings to qualify for the play-offs.

The Sunrisers had dropped their only IPL-winning (2016) skipper David Warner after axing him from captaincy but that didn't change the fate of the team as Kane Williamson has not been able to revive the fortunes of the Orange Army.

For SRH, batting remains their weakest link, especially in the absence of Jonny Bairstow.

While English opener Jason Roy sizzled on his debut with a quick-fire 60 and Williamson too scored a 51 in their successful chase of 165 against RR, both came a cropper against CSK in their last game.

Wriddhiman Shah held the innings together with a 46-ball 44 but



SRH could not accelerate in the death overs and only managed 37 runs in the last five overs against CSK.

Their India players such as Priyam Garg, Abhishek Sharma and Abdul Samad will have to step up if SRH are to salvage some pride and end the season on a positive note.

In the bowling department, Jason Holder has time and again given them the breakthroughs, but senior India pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Siddarth Kaul have disappointed.

Leg-spinner Rashid Khan remains SRH's biggest weapon against any opposition, but he didn't have enough runs to play with most times.

For KKR, the UAE leg of the IPL has been a topsy-turvy affair as they have won three games, while losing two so far.

The two-time former champions have impressed with their performance in the second half, and even their two defeats were narrow, where they lost in the last over.

Venkatesh Iyer has

been the star performer with the bat in the second leg for KKR, while Rahul Tripathi has scored the maximum runs for the team this season.

The decision to move Nitish Rana up the order has also paid dividends but Shubman Gill has not been able to capitalise on the starts.

In bowling, Varun Chakravarthy has been their go-to man as he picked up six wickets in the second leg, while Sunil Narine too has been among the wickets.

But they have concerns in the pace department with Andre Russell and Lockie Ferguson missing games following injuries, forcing skipper Eoin Morgan to make changes.

Even the KKR captain needs to get some runs under his belt.

Tim Southee and Shivam Mavi is the new pace bowling pair for KKR and they will need to step up. Pacer Prasidh Krishna did well to snap four wickets in the matches that he had played, before being dropped for conceding 22 runs in the 19th over, against CSK.

Teams (from):

Kolkata Knight Riders: Eoin Morgan (captain), Dinesh Karthik, Gurkeerat Singh Mann, Karun Nair, Nitish Rana, Rahul Tripathy, Shubman Gill, Harbhajan Singh, Kamlesh Nagarkoti, Kuldeep Yadav, Lockie Ferguson, Pawan Negi, M Prasidh Krishna, Sandeep Warrier, Shivam Dube, Tim Southee, Vaibhav Arora, Varun Chakravarthy, Andre Russell, Ben Cutting, Shakib Al Hasan, Sunil Narine, Venkatesh Iyer, Sheldon Jackson, Tim Seifert

Sunrisers Hyderabad: Kane Williamson (captain), David Warner, Manish Pandey, Sherfane Rutherford, Wriddhiman Saha, Shreevats Goswami, Rashid Khan, Vijay Shankar, Mohammad Nabi, Abhishek Sharma, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Siddharth Kaul, Khaleel Ahmed, Urman Malik, Basil Thampi, Sandeep Sharma, Shahbaz Nadeem, Abdul Samad, J Suchith, Jason Holder, Virat Singh, Priyam Garg, Kedarjadhav, Mujeeb-ur-Rahman, Jason Roy. Match starts at 7:30PM IST.

## Women's day/night Test: India declare first innings at 377/8

**GOLD COAST, OCT 2 (PTI):** India declared their first innings at 377 for eight on the third day of the rain-marred women's day/night Test against Australia here on Saturday. The visitors declared their innings shortly after Deepti Sharma's dismissal for 167-ball 66-run knock at the Carrara Oval.

Sharma struck eight boundaries to notch her best Test score, a day af-

ter opener Smriti Mandhana grabbed the headline with a magnificent maiden century in the format.

All-rounder Sharma got out shortly after the dinner break.

Brief Scores: India 1st innings 377/8 declared in 145 overs (Smriti Mandhana 127, Deepti Sharma 66; Sophie Molineux 2/45, Ellyse Perry 2/76, Stella Campbell 2/47).

## Plan needed to tackle "man-made flood", will urge centre: Mamata Banerjee

"This is a man-made flood. I will request Jharkhand to prepare a plan in consultation with us. Will request the Centre to prepare a master plan to prevent recurrence of floods. Had the dams in Jharkhand been dredged, Bengal would not have faced such a situation," Mamata Banerjee said.

Arambagh, West Bengal: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee today said she would urge Jharkhand to prepare a plan in consultation with her government to mitigate floods in the region.

Speaking to reporters at a flood relief camp in Arambagh in the Hooghly district, Mamata Banerjee said she will request the Centre to prepare a master plan to prevent floods.

"This is a man-made flood. I will request Jharkhand to prepare a plan in consultation with us. Will request the Centre to prepare a master plan to prevent recurrence of floods. Had the

dams in Jharkhand been dredged, Bengal would not have faced such a situation," she said.

After an aerial survey of a few flood-hit areas, Mamata Banerjee said discharge of more than 5 lakh cusec water by PSU DVC over the past two days without informing the West Bengal government has caused the flood in the state.

The situation in parts of East and West Midnapore, Bankura, Hooghly, Birbhum, Howrah and East and West Burdwan was grim due to excessive discharge of water by DVC, following rains in Jharkhand, the Chief Minister said.

Four lakh people of the state have been affected by the floods and the state government was providing them relief, she said.

Fifty rescue and relief teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and SDRF were working in the affected areas, Mamata Banerjee said. "Hope the water will recede quickly," she added.



*China investigates ex-official who led major corruption case*

**BEIJING, OCT 2 (AP):** A former Chinese justice minister has become a target of President Xi Jinping's anti-corruption campaign.

Fu Zhenghua, who was also a former vice minister of public security, is under investigation for severe violations of party discipline and law, the ruling Communist Party's Central Commission for Discipline Inspection said Saturday. It did not provide any details in a one-sentence statement posted online.

It's unclear why Fu, 66, would become a target of the campaign. He was the longtime head of public security for Beijing and vice minister of public security from 2013 to 2018. He then served as justice minister from 2018 to 2020.

When he was vice minister for public security, Fu led the probe of Zhou Yongkang, one of the most senior officials convicted in the anti-corruption campaign. Zhou, a former public security minister, was one of nine members of the Politburo Standing Committee, the Communist Party's top body, under Xi's predecessor, President Hu Jintao.

Zhou was sentenced to life in prison in 2015 on charges of taking bribes, abusing power and leaking state secrets.

Xi has been accused of using the anti-corruption drive to drive out political adversaries, and Zhou's downfall was seen as burying a once-powerful faction in the Communist Party.

The announcement of the investigation into Fu comes two days after the party's discipline commission said it had expelled another former vice minister of public security, Sun Lijun, citing accusations of corruption and abandoning his post during the COVID-19 outbreak.

*West Bengal records 13 new deaths, 708 fresh cases*

**KOLKATA, OCT 2 (PTI):** West Bengal's Covid death toll reached 18,806 on Friday with 13 new fatalities, while 708 fresh cases pushed the tally to 15,69,778, a bulletin released by the state Health Department said. Kolkata and North 24 Parganas recorded four deaths each, the bulletin said. The number of active cases in the state was 7,571, it said.

The discharge rate in West Bengal stood at 98.32 per cent with 694 more people recovering from the disease, the bulletin stated. The percentage of positive cases out of the samples tested stood at 1.79 per cent, it said. A total of 15,43,401 patients have been discharged so far, the bulletin said.

Kolkata recorded the highest number of cases on Friday at 146, followed by 116 in neighbouring North 24 Parganas district, it said.

# Africa internet riches plundered, contested by China broker

**KAMPALA, OCT 2 (AP):** Outsiders have long profited from Africa's riches of gold, diamonds, and even people. Digital resources have proven no different.

Millions of internet addresses assigned to Africa have been waylaid, some fraudulently, including through insider machinations linked to a former top employee of the nonprofit that assigns the continent's addresses.

Instead of serving Africa's internet development, many have benefited spammers and scammers, while others satiate Chinese appetites for pornography and gambling.

New leadership at the nonprofit, AFRINIC, is working to reclaim the lost addresses. But a legal challenge by a deep-pocketed Chinese businessman is threatening the body's very existence.

The businessman is Lu Heng, a Hong Kong-based arbitrage specialist. Under contested circumstances, he obtained 6.2 million African addresses from 2013 to 2016. That's about 5 per cent of the continent's total more than Kenya has.

The internet service providers and others to whom AFRINIC assigns IP address blocks aren't purchasing them.

They pay membership fees to cover administra-



tive costs that are intentionally kept low. That left lots of room, though, for graft.

When AFRINIC revoked Lu's addresses, now worth about USD 150 million, he fought back. His lawyers in late July persuaded a judge in Mauritius, where AFRINIC is based, to freeze its bank accounts. His company also filed a USD 80 million defamation claim against AFRINIC and its new CEO.

It's a shock to the global networking community, which has long considered

the internet as technological scaffolding for advancing society. Some worry it could undermine the entire numerical address system that makes the internet work.

There was never really any thought, particularly in the AFRINIC region, that someone would just directly attack a foundational element of internet governance and just try and shut it down, try and make it go away, said Bill Woodcock, executive director of Packet Clearing House, a global nonprofit that has

helped build out Africa's internet.

Lu told The Associated Press that he's an honest businessman who broke no rules in obtaining the African address blocks. And, rejecting the consensus of the internet's stewards, he says its five regional registries have no business deciding where IP addresses are used.

AFRINIC is supposed to serve the internet, it's not supposed to serve Africa, Lu said. They're just bookkeepers. In revoking Lu's address

blocks, AFRINIC is trying to reclaim internet real estate critical for a continent that lags the rest in leveraging internet resources to raise living standards and boost health and education. Africa has been allocated just 3 per cent of the world's first-generation IP addresses.

Making things worse: the alleged theft of millions of AFRINIC IP addresses, involving the organisation's former No. 2 official, Ernest Byaruhanga, who was fired in December 2019. It's unclear whether he

was acting alone. The registry's new CEO, Eddy Kayihura, said at the time that he'd filed a criminal complaint with the Mauritius police. He shook up management and began trying to reclaim wayward IP address blocks.

Lu's legal gains in the case have stunned and dismayed the global internet-governance community. Network activists worry they could help facilitate further internet resource grabs by China, for starters. Some of Lu's major clients include the Chinese state-owned telecommunication firms China Telecom and China Mobile.

It doesn't seem like he's running the show. It seems like he's the face of the show. I expect that he has got quite a significant backing that's actually pulling the strings, said Mark Tinka, a Ugandan who heads engineering at SEACOM, a South Africa-based internet backbone and services provider.

Tinka worries Lu has access to an endless pile of resources.

Lu said allegations he's working for the Chinese government are wild conspiracy theories. He said he's the victim of ongoing character assassination.

While billions use the internet daily, its inner workings are little understood and rarely subject to scrutiny.

## Antibody tests for COVID-19 remain popular in Russia

**MOSCOW, OCT 2 (AP):** When Russians talk about the coronavirus over dinner or in hair salons, the conversation often turns to anti-tela, the Russian word for antibodies the proteins produced by the body to fight infection.

Even President Vladimir Putin referred to them this week in a conversation with his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan, bragging about why he avoided infection even though dozens of people around him caught the coronavirus, including someone who spent a whole day with the Kremlin leader.

I have high titers, Putin said, referring to the measurement used to describe the concentration of antibodies in the blood. When Erdogan challenged him that the number Putin gave was low, the Russian insisted, No, it's a high level. There are different counting methods.

But Western health experts say the antibody tests so popular in Russia are unreliable either for diagnosing COVID-19 or assessing immunity to it. The antibodies that these tests look for can only serve as evidence of a past infection, and scientists say it's still unclear what level of antibodies indicates protection from the virus and for how long.

The US Centre for Disease Control and Prevention says such tests should not be used to establish an active COVID-19 infection because it can take one to three weeks for the body to make antibodies. Health experts say tests that look for the virus's genetic material, called PCR tests, or ones that look for virus proteins, called antigen tests, should be used to determine if someone is infected.

In Russia, it's common to get an antibody test and share the results. The tests are cheap, widely available and actively marketed by private clinics nationwide, and their use appears to be a factor in the country's low vaccination rate even as daily deaths and infections are rising again.

In Moscow and the surrounding region, millions of antibody tests have been done

at state-run clinics that offered them for free. Across the country, dozens of chains of private labs and clinics also offer a wide variety of antibody tests for COVID-19, as well as tests for other medical conditions.

In some cities I went to, I needed to take a PCR test and it wasn't possible, but I could take an antibody test it was much easier, said Dr. Anton Barchuk, head of the epidemiology group at the European University in St. Petersburg and an associate professor at the Petrov National Cancer Centre there.

Antibody tests for COVID-19 were first widely publicised in Moscow in May 2020, shortly after Russia lifted its only nationwide lockdown, although many restrictions remained in place. Mayor Sergei Sobyanin announced an ambitious program to test tens of thousands of residents for antibodies.

Many Muscovites greeted this enthusiastically. Contrary to Western experts, some believed antibodies represented immunity from the virus and saw a positive test as a way out of restrictions.

The test looked at two different types of antibodies: ones that appear in one's system soon after infection, and ones that take weeks to develop. To their surprise, some of those who tested positive for the former were handed a COVID-19 diagnosis and ordered to quarantine. Irina Umarova, 56, spent 22 days confined to her studio apartment, without experiencing any symptoms. Visiting doctors took six PCR tests that came back negative. But they also took more antibody tests, which continued to show a certain level of antibodies.

They kept telling me I was infected and needed to stay home, she said.

More interest in antibody testing came this summer when Russia had a surge of infections. The demand for tests spiked so sharply that labs were overwhelmed and some ran out of supplies.

That's when dozens of re-

gions made vaccinations mandatory for certain groups of people and restricted access to various public spaces, allowing in only those who were vaccinated, had had the virus, or had tested negative for it recently.

Daria Goryakina, deputy director at the Helix Laboratory Service, a large chain of testing facilities, said she believed the increased interest in antibody testing was connected to the vaccination mandates.

In the second half of June, Helix performed 230 per cent more antibody tests than in the first half, and the high demand continued into the first week of July. People want to check their antibody levels and whether they need to get vaccinated, Goryakina told The Associated Press.

Both the World Health Organisation and the CDC recommend vaccination regardless of previous infection.

Guidance in Russia has varied, with authorities initially saying that those testing positive for the antibodies weren't eligible for the shot, but then urging everyone to get vaccinated regardless of their antibody levels. Still, some Russians believed a positive antibody test was a reason to put off vaccination.

Maria Bloquert recovered from the coronavirus in May, and a test she took shortly after revealed a high antibody count. She has put off her vaccination but wants to get it eventually, once her antibody levels start to wane.

As long as my antibody titers are high, I have protection from the virus, and there is no point in getting injected with more protection on top of it, the 37-year-old Muscovite told AP.

High-profile officials, like Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov and Valentina Matviyenko, speaker of the upper house of parliament, both have been quoted as saying they didn't need to get vaccinated due to having high levels of antibodies, but they eventually decided to get their shots. Contradicting

guidelines may have contributed to Russia's low vaccination rate, said Dr. Anastasia Vasilyeva, leader of the Alliance of Doctors union.

People don't understand (what to do), because they're constantly given different versions" of recommendations, she said.

Even though Russia boasted of creating the world's first vaccine, Sputnik V, only 32.5 per cent of its 146 million people have gotten at least one shot, and only 28 per cent are fully vaccinated.

Critics have principally blamed a botched vaccine rollout and mixed messages the authorities have been sending about the outbreak.

Dr. Simon Clarke, an associate professor in cellular microbiology at the University of Reading in England, said antibody tests shouldn't influence any health-related decisions.

Getting an antibody test "is for your own personal satisfaction and curiosity, he added.

Barchuk, the St. Petersburg epidemiologist, echoed his sentiment, saying there are too many gaps in understanding how antibodies work, and the tests offer little information beyond past infection.

But some Russian regions disregarded that advice, using positive antibody tests to allow people access to restaurants, bars and other public places on par with a vaccination certificate or a negative coronavirus test. Some people get an antibody test before or after vaccination to make sure the shot worked or see if they need a booster.

Dr. Vasily Vlassov, an epidemiologist and a public health expert with the Higher School of Economics, says this attitude reflects Russians' distrust of the state-run health care system and their struggle to navigate the confusion amid the pandemic.

People's attempt to find a rational way of acting, to base their decision on something, for example the antibodies, is understandable the situation is difficult and bewildering, Vlassov said.

## Pondy registers 82 new cases of COVID-19

**Puducherry, Oct 2 (PTI):** Puducherry clocked 82 fresh cases of coronavirus during the last twenty-four hours ending 10 a.m. on Saturday, raising the overall tally to 1.26 lakh.

The new cases identified at the end of examination of 5,012 samples were spread over Puducherry 50, Karaikal 21, Yanam 3 and Mahe 8.

The active cases were 767 of whom 110 were undergoing treatment in hospitals while the remaining 657 patients were in home isolation.

While 106 patients were discharged after recovery during last

twenty-four hours the total recoveries stood at 1,23,906.

Director of Health Department G. Sriramulu said no fresh fatality was reported from any of the four regions of Puducherry, Karaikal, Mahe and Yanam in the last 24 hours. The toll remained 1,840. The test positivity rate was 1.64 percent while fatality and recovery rates were 1.45 percent and 97.94 percent, respectively.

Sriramulu said the Department of Health has tested so far 18.02 lakh samples and found 15.29 lakh out of them to be negative.





# For first time, Dubai Expo 2020 says 5 workers died on site

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP): Dubai's Expo 2020 on Saturday acknowledged that five workers had been killed on site during construction of the massive world's fair, revealing for the first time overall statistics for worker fatalities.

Expo previously said that its 200,000 laborers who built the site worked some 240 million hours in its construction. It had not offered any overall statistics previously on worker fatalities, injuries or coronavirus infections despite repeated requests from The Associated Press and other journalists.

The admission comes after the European Parliament last month urged nations not to take part in Expo, citing the United Arab Emirates' "inhumane practices against foreign workers" that it said worsened during the pandemic. Ahead of Expo, businesses and construction companies are "coercing workers into signing untranslated documents, confiscating their passports, exposing them to extreme working hours in unsafe weather conditions and providing them with unsanitary housing," the resolution said.

At a press conference a day after the event's opening, Expo spokesperson SconaidMcGeachin said the information about fatalities was previously available to journalists and referred reporters to a press release about a monument honoring the laborers who built the site from scratch, which offered no additional de-

tails. She said authorities would offer more information about casualties at a later, unspecified time.

McGeachin also acknowledged that authorities were aware of cases involv-

ing criticism from human rights groups for treating those workers poorly. But officials have battled to present a positive image for Expo, the first world's fair in the Middle East that seeks to show off



ing contractors "withholding passports" and engaging in suspect "recruitment practices" and workplace safety violations on site.

"We have taken steps to ensure those have been addressed and very much intervened in cases on that," she said, without elaborating.

The UAE, an oil-rich sheikhdom that relies on low-paid migrant labor from Africa, Asia and Arab countries to keep its economy humming, faces long-stand-

Dubai's pride and draw millions of foreign visitors.

Laborers in the UAE are barred from unionization and have few protections, often working long hours for little pay and living in substandard conditions.

Dubai's searing early autumn heat proved hazardous even for those visiting the site on its opening day Friday, with some tourists fainting in the 40 degree Celsius (104 degree Fahrenheit) humid weather.

## Kangana Ranaut named brand ambassador of UP's "One District-One Product" scheme

The UP government has launched the one district-one product (ODOP) programme with the aim to create product-specific traditional industrial hubs across 75 districts of the state.

Lucknow: The Uttar Pradesh government on Friday named actor Kangana Ranaut as the brand ambassador of its ambitious "one district-one product" programme. The actor met Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at his official residence.

The UP government has launched the one district-one product (ODOP) programme with the aim to create product-specific traditional industrial hubs across 75 districts of the state.

In a tweet, Additional Chief Secretary (Information) Navneet Sehgal said, "Famous actress Kangana Ranaut met...Chief Minister of UP, who presented her with an ODOP product. Kanganaji will be our brand ambassador for the ODOP." According to a senior official, the actor praised the works being done by the chief minister during the meeting.

## Kelly Clarkson is awarded the \$10.4 Million Montana Ranch in divorce from Brandon Blackstock

A judge determined that Kelly Clarkson has full control over her sprawling Montana ranch, where her estranged husband Brandon Blackstock had been planning to become a "fulltime rancher."

A judge gave Kelly Clarkson the reins to the \$10.4 million Montana ranch where her estranged husband, Brandon Blackstock, has been living since their split.

The court rejected Blackstock's position that the Montana ranch is marital property and should be shared equally by both exes, according to the Sept. 30 order obtained by E! News. Instead, the judge upheld their premarital agreement.

The decision means Clarkson takes control of the farm since she purchased the home, according to a source.

"The Court further finds that the Montana Ranch and the other two Montana properties are not titled in both of the Parties' names either as joint tenants with right of survivorship or as tenants by the entirety, as required under the PMA to create marital property," reads the decision. "The Court therefore rejects Respondent's position that the Montana Ranch and other Montana properties are marital property owned 50/50 by the Parties."

The situation appears to be complicated for the pair: While Clarkson owns the property, Blackstock is the one living there.

After separating from The Voice coach, Blackstock made a "deliberate choice" to "change his life" and become a full-time rancher, according to an August filing obtained by E! News. At the time, he was "exclu-

sively using" the Montana ranch as his "residence and business."

Clarkson previously requested permission to sell the ranch because of the "financial burden" of maintaining a property that



was only being used by her ex-husband. The costs of maintaining the ranch are \$81,000 per month, the court determined.

However, the judge initially rejected her request to sell the Montana site. Blackstock was ordered to pay the hefty property fees beginning in April 2021.

For her part, Clarkson is required to pay nearly \$200,000 per month to Blackstock, a former music manager, in spousal and child support. He is responsible for "100% of the cost" of transporting their two children (River, 7, and Remington, 5) to and from Montana. He has a 25 percent custodial timeshare.



**GETTING INVOLVED!** Model Cara Delevingne cleaned up the beach in Hawaii.

## Aishwaryaa R Dhanush to direct bilingual thriller



**MUMBAI, OCT 2 (PTI):** Filmmaker Aishwaryaa R Dhanush will next direct a bilingual thriller film, the producers announced on Saturday.

The yet-untitled movie will be backed by producers SubasKaran and Mahaveer Jain for Lyca Productions.

Aishwarya, the daughter of megastar Rajinikanth, made her directorial debut with 2012 movie "3", which featured her husband, actor Dhanush in the lead.

She followed it up with the critically-acclaimed 2015 feature "Vai Raja Vai".

The 39-year-old director said she is excited about her new film and is looking forward

to collaborating with Lyca.

"I'm so excited to direct this film and with Lyca backing this project, our collective endeavour will be to bring a much needed, family entertainer for our pan-India audiences," Aishwaryaa said in a statement.

Aashish Singh, CEO of Lyca Productions, said they are thrilled to work with the director on the project.

"We are thrilled to have Aishwaryaa on board to direct our first Telugu production. We are confident that this film will captivate and entertain audiences across the country," he said.

Aries:

The thing about retrogrades is that they can bring up unresolved issues from the past. Pay attention to what's coming resurfacing in order to be healed, Aries. Now is not the time to shy away from having 'the talk'. Yes, the truth will ruffle a few feathers. It will shift the dynamics in your closest relationships too. Remember, it's better to put everything on the table than to suppress your emotions, which will only add to the pain.

Tip: Have 'the talk'.

Taurus:

Uh-oh! We sense trouble in paradise, Taurus. For some of you, the scene of crime could be your place of work. It will be easy for you to go into a non-confrontational space for the sake of maintaining harmony. However, this will only add to the chaos. So, don't be afraid to play the role of the space-holder. To start a dialogue about what's going wrong here and how you can work towards positive change as a collective.

Tip: Start a dialogue about what needs to be fixed here.

Gemini:

Not all love stories lead to a happily-ever-after. Some come into our lives for a reason, and others for a season. Today, without getting too attached to the outcome of what you are creating, bask in the romance that you're being offered at this moment. Let the butterflies at the pit

of your stomach remind you of the magic that is being weaved all around you. Something tells us this is going to be a weekend to remember, Gemini.

Tip: Let the butterflies at the pit of your stomach remind you of the magic that is being weaving all around you.

Cancer:

This is a tricky time in the Cancer HQ. Retrograde season is bringing all kinds of unresolved trauma to the fore. Repressed emotions that you haven't had the chance to look at for a while now. Instead of denying yourself the healing process, lean into it. Sign up for therapy. Get the support you need at this moment. You will get through this as a stronger and more resilient person. Trust that and dedicate yourself to the inner work, beautiful.

Tip: You're being to look closely at all that is unhealed within.

Leo:

There are times we have to do-do-do and dedicate ourselves to the hustle, but now is "not" such a time in your life. You are at a point where you're being asked to hit the pause button and refuel your reserves in preparation for the next chapter of your life. So, don't underestimate the importance of filling your own cup, Leo. Remember to put your big expenses on hold while you're at it. Creating a reserve will serve you well in the future, beautiful.

Tip: Energy conservation mode on!

Virgo:

It's easy to live somebody else's dream, Virgo. There's not much to lose when you trip and fall. Following your true passion, on the other hand, can be a risky choice, because you will have to pour "all" of you into it. But you wouldn't know any other way, would you now? So tap into your inner warrior and take that first step towards re-alignment. You are being propelled in the direction of your higher purpose. Don't shy away from serving in the way that you are being called to serve, beautiful.

Tip: Realign with your path and purpose.

Libra:

The past few months have been a rollercoaster ride, Libra, but not because the Universe was punishing you but because it was preparing you. This is the ultimate metamorphosis. A time of breaking the old cycles and coming into your own. Remember who you are, beautiful. Remember your power and why you chose to experience life here on earth. The more you come into a space of alignment within yourself, the better you will be able to serve the world.

Tip: This is the ultimate metamorphosis, beautiful!

Scorpio:

There comes a point in everybody's life when they can continue to live a mundane existence or follow their true path. Three words, Scorpio: Answer the call. Embody courage. Get ready to dance the dance of life. The butterflies in your

stomach are reminding you that some risks are worth taking. Some of you may feel like you have to let go of all things familiar in order to step into the change, and that's okay too. Letting go is a part of the process, one that will ultimately liberate you from the old cycles.

Tip: Get ready to dance the dance of life.

Sagittarius:

To quote a famous internet meme 'If it doesn't bring you income, inspiration or orgasms, it doesn't belong in your life'. Take charge of your vibe, Sagittarius. Be mindful of who and what you are letting into your sacred space. Enforcing certain boundaries will provide you with the protection you need at this point. As such, confrontation is also coming up as a big theme. Have the talk that you have been avoiding. Get it out of the way. Don't let the fear that you may be perceived differently by those you love keep you from standing up for what you believe.

Tip: Take charge of your vibe.

Capricorn:

What's unfolding right now is the dance of Destiny, Capricorn. Great change has been stirred up. Change that will bring forth many, many blessings. So, open your arms and stay in the energy of receiving. Know that you deserve that many miracles that you are now attracting. For some of you, this may be a time of nurturing your romantic relationship and taking it to the next level. Yes, you will

have the support of your families too, despite how things may have been in the past. So, make yourself vulnerable and ask them to hold space for you in the way that you want them to, beautiful.

Tip: Your tribe is here to support you.

Aquarius:

The trouble is, we've grown up in a Society that has convinced us that we need to do everything on our own and that asking for help is a sign of weakness. Have you been living your life under this illusion too? It's time to shake things up a little. To recognise how you are a part of a Divine Matrix. Call upon your fellow warriors for the support you need at this moment as you show up for them in the manner that you feel called to. We're all in this together, Aquarius, and we'll get through it as one!

Tip: Call upon your tribe to assist you!

Pisces:

Uh-oh! What you're dealing with right now is a case of wonky signals. It's time to admit that you cannot think straight. Instead of fighting this feeling, lean into it. Learning not to resist the flow will prove to be a big gamechanger for you, Pisces. When it comes to decision-making, you're being asked to hit the pause button. It's best to choose the direction you need to move into once clarity prevails.

Tip: Lean into the discomfort, beautiful.