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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Wai Wai factory workers go on strike, call it off later



AARON RAI
GANGTOK, 16 OCT: Workers at the Wai Wai factory near Rangpo went on strike on Friday with several demands. They said that they have not got their bonus or yearly increment, and also demanded that they be paid salary in advance since Da-

sain is approaching. Following a meeting between the workers' representatives and the management, it was announced that the bonus will be paid on Monday, increment from April 2020 will be provided but the date of disbursement is yet to be decided, those who want salaries

in advance can apply for it. The management also said that salaries will be deducted of those who have not reported for duty on 15 and 16 Oct. It was further informed that workers will have to get the management's permission before going on strike in the future.

Teacher arrested for molesting student 23 years ago

KOLKATA, OCT 16 (PTI) :A 37-year-old woman has managed to put her "molester" behind bars 23 long years after the alleged abuse, having found out that the accused continues to sexually prey on children. The woman, now a well-settled lawyer in Hong Kong, had filed a complaint in 2019 against her private tutor, who, she alleged, had molested her at her Darjeeling home when she was 14. The accused, in his late 40s, was arrested earlier this month in Siliguri.

Woman said she was "scared and confused" and had no knowledge how to cope with her trauma, she said. "It can be really difficult to come forward with details of sexual assault and molestation, especially after burying it in some corner of the mind. I decided to file a complaint after I found out that the accused, a teacher in Siliguri, continues to sexually abuse kids," she said. The lawyer maintained that she still struggled to talk about her experience. "The abuse had spanned for a month, and the nightmare haunts me to date. I want to stop other kids from going through the trauma," she said. Darjeeling deputy SP (Town) Rahul Pandey said the police had swung into action immediately after receiving the complaint, and arrested

the accused, a school teacher in Siliguri, earlier in October. "We have got proper evidence against this person. There are at least four victims we have spoken to and got hold of circumstantial evidence. The accused, who teaches chemistry, has been moving from one school to another. In the last 20 years, he has changed at least five schools," Pandey said, adding that he has been remanded in judicial custody till October 23. The quadragenarian "admitted to his crime", when evidence was produced before him, the SP claimed. He has been booked under various sections of the IPC for outraging modesty, criminal intimidation and word, gesture or act intended to insult modesty of a woman, the police officer said.

Meghalaya orders probe into alleged toxic waste leakage

SHILLONG, OCT 16 (PTI): The Meghalaya government on Friday ordered an inquiry into the alleged leakage of toxic waste from tanks containing uranium effluents in the South West Khasi Hills district. Speaking to reporters, Deputy Chief Minister Prestone Tynsong said that the government has decided to immediately appoint an expert agency to probe the alleged leakage of the tanks in Domiasiat. Several NGOs and environmentalists have claimed that a high-level of radioactive emission has been recorded in areas close to the storage tanks. Asked about the expert agency, Tynsong said, "The matter has been entrusted to the

chief secretary but it should be an expert agency and should submit a detailed report about the incident." The deputy chief minister said that an inspection was done by the district administration and according to them, there was no leakage. However, NGOs and environmental experts who went to the place said there is leakage and that radiation has crossed the limit, he noted. "In view of this, we thought the government should engage an expert team for a detailed investigation into the matter," he said. NGOs have claimed that four effluent storage tanks and two other reservoirs at the Nongbah-jynrin area have de-

veloped wide cracks. The Hynniewtrep Youth Council (HYC) has threatened to petition the National Green Tribunal (NGT) if the state government fails to address the concern over radiation. India's largest and richest sandstone-type uranium deposits are located in Domiasiat and Wakhyn areas.

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With 31 new cases, Sikkim's COVID count reaches 3,531

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 16 OCT: Sikkim's tally of the confirmed COVID-19 cases reached 3,531 with 31 fresh cases of novel coronavirus reported in the last 24 hours on Friday.

Meanwhile, 48 more patients were discharged from isolation facilities on Thursday, taking the cumulative number of discharged COVID-19 patients to 3,096. There are now 295 COVID patients either in hospital or under home isolation while three are currently admitted in the ICU facility of STNM Hospital, the only COVID Hospital in Sikkim. Today was also the third consecutive day that no COVID deaths were reported in the State. This is a relief coming in the wake of nearly a fortnight when lives were lost every day. In the RT-PCR testing at VRD lab on Thursday, 18 of 124 samples returned positive for COVID-19, while two



samples came positive in TruNat testing of 17 samples. Eleven persons were also found positive for COVID-19 in rapid antigen testing of 38 samples. In the daily health bulletin on Friday, Health Department State IEC Officer, Sonam G Bhutia informed that out of the 31 new cases, 25 were detected in East District, one in West Sikkim, four in South District and one in North District. While giving the

break-up of new cases found in RT-PCR testing, he mentioned that a staff member from Central Referral Hospital residing at 6th Mile-Tadong, a lab staff from Singtam and two health personnel from Rangpo tested positive for COVID-19. He added that five persons from the containment zone in Lower Sichey, three from Pani House Deorali, two from below SNT Colony at Daragaon Tadong, one from Sisa Golai, one from MG

Marg, one from the containment zone in DPH area and one from near the gas distribution centre at Bye-pass were also found positive for COVID-19 in RT-PCR testing. A person from Rongneck and one from Sichey were found COVID-19 positive in TrueNat testing. Likewise, samples of a person from Housing Colony at 6th Mile Tadong, one from below Convoy ground area and one from Chandmari

near Decheling taken at CRH tested positive for COVID-19 in the rapid antigen testing, Mr Bhutia said. He added that a person from Mangalbaria, one from Rabongla, one from Daragaon and one from Middle Kitam were also found COVID-19 positive in RAT screening, as did a person from Soreng in West Sikkim, one person from Sang Bazaar, one from Mamingring and one from Mangang in North Sikkim.

DC West calls meeting with Panchayats that have banned entry of tourists

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 16 OCT: DC West, Tushar Nikhare has directed Panchayats of 3 GPUs which have banned entry of tourists - Bermiok-Berthang, Yuksam and Thingling-Khecho-peri - to attend a meeting on 21 Oct at the chamber of the DC. The Additional Director, Tourism Dept (West), SDM Yuksam and Dentam, and president Pelling Tourism Devel-

opment Association have also been directed to attend the meeting. In the letter to the Panchayats dated 16 Oct, the DC West has said, "It has been reported from several quarters that the above mentioned Gram Panchayat Units have barred the entry of Tourists (Foreign, Indian and Local) from entering in your respective GPUs which contradicts the policy of the State Government."

West Bengal reports record 3,771 new COVID-19 cases

KOLKATA, OCT 16 (PTI): West Bengal on Friday reported the highest single-day spike of 3,771 new COVID-19 cases, taking the state's tally to 3,13,188, according to a bulletin issued by the Health Department. The state's toll rose to 5,931 after 61 more people died due to the

disease, it said. In the last 24 hours, 3,194 people recovered from the disease, it added. There are 32,500 active cases in the state at present. Since Thursday, 43,227 samples have been tested for COVID-19 in West Bengal, the bulletin said.

Gujarat govt warns against fake ad about jobs

AHMEDABAD, OCT 16 (PTI): The Gujarat government on Friday warned job-seekers not to fall prey to a fake advertisement in newspapers about employment opportunities in various government departments. The ad, which appeared in newspapers on Thursday in the name of 'Gujarat Employment Service', sought applications for 2,520 vacancies. Applicants should pay Rs 300 as application fee, it said, adding that successful candi-

dates will have to work from home due to the coronavirus pandemic. The government said in a release that the advertisement was fraudulent. "The Employment and Training Department has learnt that attempts are being made to cheat job-seekers. A fake ad has been published in various newspapers about direct recruitment in government departments," it said. "Job-seekers are advised not to fall prey to such fraud," the release further said.

Govt appoints ADCs as Administrators of Urban Local Bodies

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 16 OCT: The state government has appointed Administrators for 7 urban local bodies of Sikkim as the tenure of the existing heads of these bodies has ended and the municipal elections have been postponed due to the COVID-19 situation. Secretary, Urban Development Deptt, is Administrator of Gangtok Municipal Corporation; Additional District Collector East is Administrator of Singtam Nagar Panchayat and Rangpo Nagar Panchayat; Additional District Collector North is Administrator for Mangan Nagar Panchayat; Additional Dis-

trict Collector South is Administrator for Namchi Municipal Council and Naya Bazaar Jorethang Municipal Council; Addition District Collector West is Administrator for Gyalshing Municipal Council. A press release issued by the Urban Development Department informs that, "During the interim period of the Administrators, all the properties vested in the Municipalities shall remain vested in the State Government." The appointment of Administrator comes into effect from 16 Oct 2020. It may be recalled that the Sikkim Municipalities (Amendment)

Bill, 2020 was passed in the Sikkim Legislative Assembly on 21 Sept. The amendment provided for postponement of the Municipality election due to the COVID-19 pandemic and also to provide for making the Municipalities elections apolitical. As per the amendment, Municipality election can be deferred for a period not exceeding 6 months in one spell beyond the stipulated date and for not more than a year beyond stipulated date. The amendment also sought to make municipality elections non-political party based while it also removed the provision for nominated Councillors.

COVID-19 caseload in India climbs to 73,70,468

NEW DELHI, OCT 16 (PTI) India's COVID-19 caseload rose to 73,70,468 with 63,371 new infections being reported in a day, while the number of people who have recuperated from the disease crossed 64 lakh, according to the Health Ministry data updated on Friday. The recovery rate stands at 87.56 per cent. The coronavirus death toll climbed to 1,12,161 with the virus claiming 895 lives in a span of 24 hours, the data updated at 8 am showed. For eight days in a row, the active cases of COVID-19 remained below 9 lakh. There are 8,04,528 active cases of coronavirus infection in the country which comprises 10.92 per cent of the total caseload, while the recoveries have surged to 64,53,779, the data stated. The COVID-19 case fatality rate due to COVID-19 was recorded at 1.52 per cent. "India continues to have one of the lowest COVID-19 deaths per million population globally, currently pegged at 80," the ministry said. India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh

on August 23 and 40 lakh on September 5. It went past 50 lakh on September 16, 60 lakh on September 28 and crossed 70 lakh on October 11. According to the ICMR, a cumulative total of 9,22,54,927 samples have been tested up to October 15, with 10,28,622 samples being tested on Thursday. The 895 new fatalities include 337 from Maharashtra, 85 from Karnataka, 62 from Tamil Nadu, 10,283 from Chhattisgarh, 38 from Andhra Pradesh, 36 from Uttar Pradesh, 29 from Punjab, 27 from Odisha and 26 from Delhi. A total of 1,12,161 deaths have been reported so far in the country, including 41,196 from Maharashtra followed by 10,472 from Tamil Nadu, 10,283 from Karnataka, 6,543 from Uttar Pradesh, 6,357 from Andhra Pradesh, 5,924 from Delhi, 5,870 from West Bengal, 3,954 from Punjab and 3,606 from Gujarat. The health ministry stressed that more than 70 per cent of the deaths occurred due to comorbidities. "Our figures are being reconciled with the Indian Council of Medical Research," the ministry said on its website, adding that state-wise distribution of figures is subject to further verification and reconciliation.

SDF holds first youth cell meeting post elections

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 16 OCT:

A state-level meeting of the youth cell of Sikkim Democratic Front party was held here at the party head-office at Bye-Pass road on Friday. The meeting, which was conducted following social distancing norms, was chaired by youth in-charge and chief spokesperson of the party, MK Subba and attended by vice-president, BB Rai, vice president [administration] RD Bhutia and youth leaders and workers from all four districts, informs an SDF press release.



leaze.

The release informs that this was the first meeting of the youth cell of the party after the 2019 elections which was held mainly to ex-

pand the organization of the party.

The meeting thanked Dr Smriti Gurung from Lower Arithang, who is doing her post doctorate in South Korea, for

contributing 2000 testing kits for COVID-19 to Sikkim which is worth around Rs 40 lakh.

SDF chief spokesperson, MK Subba mentioned that SDF is a

youth-centric party and youth workers of the party need to be active. He also passed the message of the party president Pawan Chamling for the youth to get united by following the policies, principles and programmes of SDF.

Mr Subba alleged that the rights and security of Sikkim and its people are in danger due to weak and irresponsible activities of SKM. He also accused SKM of not fulfilling any of its election promises and not being able to provide economic relief to the people of Sikkim.

PIB webinar on Covid-appropriate behavioural awareness for NE youth

GUWAHATI, 16 OCT (PIB): Communication and Covid-19 Awareness among Infrastructure and Tertiary sector vital, experts opined in a Webinar organised by Press Information Bureau, Guwahati on the topic here today. Experts from Medical fraternity, Government sector along with academicians deliberated and discussed about the potential way to tackle the Covid situation from medical and policy perspective.

Anaesthesiology, Dr Rakesh Garg, Pain and Palliative Department, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, AIIMS, New Delhi emphasised on Covid precautionary measures to tackle the infection involves maintaining personal hygiene, following strictly the guidelines/norms/information by health authorities such as staying at home, maintaining adequate social distancing at the public places, conforming to government orders and guidelines and avoiding rumours, would help tackle Covid situation. Dr Garg urged



the student community to be catalysts and ambassadors of awareness, whereby they could play a pivotal role in communicating to their friends in schools and colleges. He said that information communication and awareness is vital for tackling the Covid situation. Dr Garg urged that parents should talk with their child about their fears and help them to tackle the issues with a constructive behaviour and attitude.

Regional Executive Director, DK Kamra, Airport Authority of India, New Delhi said that Airports are playing a vital role in awareness among passengers about Covid.

He said that Communication and Covid-19 Awareness among Infrastructure and Tertiary sector is pivotal so that the message and awareness about Covid has its desired result. Shri Kamra said that posters at various places of Airport have an add-on effect on communication and information dissemination.

Mentioning about Central Government initiatives on 'Poshan Abhiyaan', Principal, Dr Lopamudra Datta, Guru Nanak Institute of Pharmaceutical Science and Technology, Kolkata said that that for proper nutrition-iron deficiency among new born should form the vital aspect of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) messages dissemination by media and nutrition agencies. With emphasise on leafy green vegetables and seasonal fruits, she said that healthy disciplined routine in daily activities could help to tackle most of the Covid issues.

Deputy Technical Adviser, Nagendra Nath Tiwari, Food and Nutrition Board, Eastern Region,

Kolkata said that this webinar and programme is an apt occasion to create awareness about Covid, importance of nutrition, hygiene and Swachhata. He said that these are just some of method in that endeavour to bring about perception change in society for tackling pertinent issues related to Covid, food nutrition and hygiene. He urged the participants to develop a plan of action for better hygiene, environmental sanitation and nutrition to be healthy and to tackle Covid situation.

Senior Journalist, Amita Gariya, during the deliberation said that the health infrastructure and health care is becoming robust and proactive and the private sector has to work in tandem with the public sector so that awareness and medication facilities are further strengthened to tackle the situation. Advocate, Sanyuk Banerjee, District Judges Court, Purbo Bardhaman and Abdur Rahman Mallick, Advocate, Delhi High Court said that the emergent

Covid situation provides fresh challenges and opportunities for youth. Faculty, Anumita Mallick, Department of Nutrition, Belda College, Purbo Medinipur said that leading a disciplined life is the best way to address the issues.

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

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

Gold halts three-day fall, jumps Rs 324

NEW DELHI, OCT 16 (PTI): Halting its three-day fall, gold in the national capital rose Rs 324 to Rs 51,704 per 10 grams on Friday, supported by strength in the global precious metal prices, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the precious metal had closed at Rs 51,380 per 10 grams.

Silver also gained Rs 1,598 to Rs 62,972 per kilogram from Rs 61,374

per kilogram in the previous trade.

In the international market, gold was trading with gains at USD 1,910 and silver was flat at USD 24.35.

"Gold prices traded higher on current market uncertainty over rising coronavirus cases amid fear of fresh lockdown measures in Europe," HDFC Securities Senior Analyst (Commodities) Tapan Patel said.

Village Level Children's Parliament formed in Toong-Naga GPU



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 16 Oct [IPR]: District Child Protection Unit, North in coordination with Village level Child Protection Committee of Toong-Naga GPU, Mangan Block organised the formation of Village Level Children's Parliament in Toong-Naga GPU for children from Naga and Manul Government Secondary Schools today.

The program started with the welcoming address along with the role of Child Welfare committee (CWC) in the protection of children by Chairperson, Mingma Doma Bhutia, CWC, North, ORW, Eeptisha Rai, DCPU (N) introduced the child protection scheme under Social Justice & Welfare Dept and various other acts made

for the protection of children. Then the Rights of Children were explained through an interactive space game conducted by Counsellor DCPU (N), Phuphu Doma Bhutia.

Thereafter DCPU, Wendy Lepcha, North explained the roles and responsibilities of each Minister of the Village level Child Parliament and the purpose of forming the Parliament and facilitated the elections in a Sociocracy method for the various posts of Ministries based on the Sustainable Development Goals. She also informed the gathering on how A Prime Minister of Village level Child Parliament of Hee Gyathang GPU, Pemkit Lepcha is now the PM of National Inclusive Children's Parliament. Then after the election

and formation of the Parliament, the Panchayat President-cum-Chairperson, Village level Child Protection Committee of the GPU, Sonam Tshering Lepcha, administered the oath and also informed the children of the child friendly room in the GPK and invited the Parliamentarians to participate in the upcoming Gram Sabha.

The program concluded with the vote of thanks by Bikash SW, Mangar, DCPU (N). The program was conducted with due adherence to the COVID-19 guidelines with hand sanitizers and masks provided at the entry of the GPK and also they were informed of the importance of hygiene, sanitation and social distancing during the pandemic.

Meeting on conservation of local seeds at Kameray

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 16 OCT:

A meeting cum group discussion was held at CP Bhattarai's model farm in Kameray, East Sikkim today regarding the conservation of local seeds for future use, a press release informs. The program is supported by National Mission on Himalayan Studies (NMHS), MOEF & CC Govt of India.

Implemented by Sikkim University, the seeds of various local germs plasma collected from different vil-



lages of Sikkim were tagged as per their nomenclature and stored at the seed bank.

The meeting cum group discussion was conducted in the pres-

ence of JRF, Karan Luitel, PhD Scholar, Hishey Palmu Sherpa, Project Assistant, Dawa Sherpa and VLW Agriculture Department, C Bhutia.

House upgradation and repairing cheques handed over

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 16 OCT: House Upgradation/Repairing cheques were handed over to beneficiaries from Gnathang Machong constituency at a function held at the Pakyong Community Hall today, a press release informs.

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha's area in-charge, Tshering Bhutia, was present as chief guest accompanied by advisors Inchung Bhutia and JB Basnet, chairperson Sonam Sherpa, SKM general secretary Boom Tshering Yonzon, and SHO Pakyong, Jigme Bhutia as



special guests.

The chief guest expressed gratitude towards the Chief Minister for providing the constituency with 100 SGAY projects, 400 house upgradation beneficiaries and GCI sheets for

100 families.

The programme was jointly organized by BDOs of Pakyong and Parkha BAC, Nilkhanta Bhandari and Pradeep Gurung and ADC (Dev), Tenzing Denzongpa, the release adds.

Virus curbs widen England's north-south rift, stir animosity

LIVERPOOL, ENGLAND (AP): Liverpool, the English port city that gave the world the Beatles, weathered decades of industrial decline before becoming a celebrated symbol of urban renewal. Now, the coronavirus is putting the city's hard-won revival in jeopardy, and raising tensions between the north of England and the wealthier south.

Scarred by abandoned buildings and government neglect during the 1980s, Liverpool made itself vibrant again by promoting local culture, nightlife, soccer and ties to the Fab Four. However, Liverpudlians retained their mistrust of London politicians, and the virus pandemic has brought it to the surface.

As the first area in England slapped with strict

new restrictions to curb the resurgent coronavirus that have shuttered pubs and imperiled thousands of jobs, Liverpool again feels it's being punished by policies made in Britain's capital, 180 miles (290 kilometers) to the south.

"At the beginning, when we all went into lockdown, it made sense. We were all doing it for a reason, and that was fine," said pub owner Fiona Hornsby, who reluctantly shuttered her Bridewell bar in accordance with new curbs on business and socializing the government imposed this week.

With the complex localized restrictions, "it's almost like we're being separated, divided. It just doesn't feel right at all," she said.

Liverpool is not alone. As a patchwork of city- and region-specific measures replaces Britain's nationwide lockdown, the pandemic has highlighted the gap in wealth and health between the relatively affluent south of England and the post-industrial north that also includes the cities of Manchester, Newcastle and Leeds.

Manchester — once an engine of the Industrial Revolution and now a hub for Britain's music and creative industries — also is likely to fall under the government's new restrictions. Mayor Andy Burnham is holding out for more financial support before consenting.

Burnham, a member of the left-of-center Labour Party that is in the opposition at the

national level, accused the government Thursday of treating people in northern England as "second-class citizens" by imposing "a punishing lockdown without proper support for the people and businesses affected."

When the coronavirus first hit the U.K. this year, the government told all but essential workers to stay home and ordered most businesses to close. The wide lockdown slowed the spread of the virus, but not before the country racked up Europe's highest COVID-19 death toll. It currently stands at more than 43,200, though all such official figures are likely an underestimate.

The surge in new confirmed cases since shops, restaurants and other businesses reopened

during the summer and students returned to schools and universities in the fall is more uneven than the U.K.'s first wave; infection rates currently are much higher in northern England than they are in the south.

In response, the U.K. government this week adopted a three-tier system that ranks cities and regions in England as medium, high or very high risk. Only the Liverpool region of 1.6 million people was immediately placed in the top tier, which requires pubs to shut and bars households from mixing.

Authorities in northern England agree on the need to act. With more than 600 cases per 100,000 people and its intensive care units 90% full, Liverpool is one of Europe's worst-hit cities

at this stage of the pandemic.

But there is also resentment over what many see as the government moving too quickly to lift the national lockdown restrictions and failing to create an efficient test-and-trace system to contain new outbreaks.

"The embers of the infection here were never extinguished and they burned brighter up here than they did elsewhere in the country," Paul Brant, a Labour Party member of the Liverpool City Council, said.

"Unfortunately, policy in this country is too often directed as a result of what happens in the capital rather than the local conditions that are taking place here in the north," Brant said.

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LAND FOR SALE

Two plots available – 30X40 sq ft and 50X30 sq ft
Junkeri Dara, Samlik Marchak

Price negotiable

Contact : 6296366498,
9641878315, 9593262407

LAND FOR SALE

A land measuring an area for 50x32 1/2 at Road-side just below housing colony is for sale. It is just a one minute walking distance from Namchi bazaar taxi stand. Interested party may contact 9593373387 and 9434406761

LAND FOR SALE

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

FOR RENT

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

GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

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

Building for sale

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

Marathon Man is ambassador for Unity Run



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 16 OCT:

Sikkim's Marathon Man, Amar Subba has been nominated as Ambassador of Sikkim by a Bangalore-based event management company, NEB Sports for

a virtual run called Unity Run to be held on 31 Oct on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

The organizers have been organizing the event under Fit India with the theme 'In Honour of the Man who

Forged the United India'. Amar Subba is a long-distance runner from Darap in West District. He is also participating in this virtual run.

Mr Subba expressed gratitude to the organizers for recognizing him as an Ambassador.

Noida Haat reopens Saturday with 'Vijay Utsav'

NOIDA (UP), OCT 16 (PTI): With the festive season beginning, Noida Haat will re-open from Saturday and showcase a host of handicrafts, handloom, khadi, jute and coir products, according to officials.

After a hiatus due to the COVID-19 outbreak, Noida Haat, located in Sector 33A of the city, is celebrating 'Vijay Utsav' from October 17 to 25, the Noida Authority said.

"Coinciding with the pious Navratras, Durga Puja and Vijay Dashami, the Noida Haat is launching its first event of the season titled 'Vijay Utsav' 2020. More than 80 artisans and craftsmen from different states, especially Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, and Jammu and Kashmir, and rural India including Khadi and Village Industries are participating in the event," it said.

"Among other items, the event will showcase a host of handicrafts, handloom, khadi, jute and coir products, while Uttar Pradesh, Telangana

and Jammu and Kashmir are the focus partner states at the Vijay Utsav," the Noida Authority added.

According to the officials, the Noida Haat (Shilp Haat and Bunkar Bhawan) is an iconic building having state-of-the-art facilities with 146 shops, 25 food courts, seven emporium shops, an amphitheatre with a capacity of 800 people, and a parking space for 1,080 cars.

The exhibition timings for visitors are 11 am to 8 pm and entry is free, they said, adding all government guidelines and standard operating procedures for safety against COVID-19 will be followed at the venue.

"This includes regular sanitising of the area, social distancing, wearing of masks, regular use of hand sanitisers at multiple points, thermal scanning at entry and other precautions will be strictly followed and implemented," the officials said.

Flood situation remains grim in Karnataka

BENGALURU, OCT 16 (PTI): The flood situation in many parts of Karnataka remained grim on Friday as well due to torrential rains and release of water from the major dams in the state.

North Karnataka remained the worst affected as this was the third time floods hit the region in the last three months.

Belagavi, Kalaburagi, Raichur, Yadgir, Koppal, Gadag, Dharwad, Bagalkote, Vijayapura and Haveri were the worst hit.

An overflowing river Bhima wreaked havoc in Kalaburagi and Yadgir districts inundating many villages and destroying standing crops.

Reports said water gushed into food storage

warehouses and lentil mills destroying food grains and goods stored there.

Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa said the Centre was aware of the situation in Karnataka.

"The Centre is aware of the prevailing situation. I have just now spoken to the (Union) Home Minister who has assured us of every assistance," he said.

Stating that his government was committed to carry out relief work, Yediyurappa said Revenue Minister R Ashoka has started visiting flood-hit regions.

Meanwhile, the Karnataka Disaster Management Authority gave a presentation

to the state Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai about the flood situation.

According to the KDMA officials, the monsoon rains this year were much above normal.

"While the average rainfall by the end of September in the state is approximately 800 mm, this year it has reached about 1,000 mm. This trend is across all the four divisions of South Interior, North Interior, Malnad Region and Coastal Karnataka," a KDMA official said.

The KDMA in association with the district authorities has opened 41 relief camps, including 36 in Kalaburagi alone where 4,864 people have been given shelter, the official said.

Gold halts three-day fall, jumps Rs 324

NEW DELHI, OCT 16

(PTI): Halting its three-day fall, gold in the national capital rose Rs 324 to Rs 51,704 per 10 grams on Friday, supported by strength in the global precious metal prices, according to HDFC Securities.

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the precious metal had closed at Rs 51,380 per 10 grams.

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and silver was flat at USD 24.35.

"Gold prices traded higher on current market uncertainty over rising coronavirus cases amid fear of fresh lockdown measures in Europe," HDFC Securities Senior Analyst (Commodities) Tapan Patel said.

Odisha by-election: Polling personnel will carry COVID kit

BHUBANESWAR, OCT 16 (PTI): Apart from EVMs, indelible ink and other election-related materials, the polling personnel this time will also carry COVID kit for conducting by-elections in two assembly segments of Odisha on November 3.

This was decided at the meeting of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), S K Lohani with the district magistrate-cum collector of Balasore and Jagatsinghpur districts on Thursday, an official said.

The COVID kit consists of masks, sanitizer, face shield, PPEs and hand gloves.

"The CEO has instructed the collectors to ensure sanitisation of polling stations prior to the poll to ensure clean and hygienic environment for the polling staff as well as for voters," the official said, adding that the special COVID kits will be provided to each polling personnel as per the guidelines of the Election Commission of India.

Accordingly, 675 IR thermometers, 4,313 PPE kits, 6.5 lakh gloves, 7,830 face shields as well as sufficient quantity of hand sanitizer, sodium hypochlorite solution, bleaching powder, soaps, paper napkins and others are being supplied for election purpose, he said.

The collectors have also been asked to engage sufficient numbers of vehicles for deployment during the poll process keeping in mind

the social distancing norms for safe travel of polling personnel.

"District collectors have been specially asked to take care of all the polling personnel deployed on election duty to ensure their safety and wellbeing during the COVID pandemic," CEO S K Lohani said.

This time two additional personnel including one ASHA worker are being engaged outside each booth to conduct thermal scanning of each voter, dispensing sanitizer and distributing gloves to voters and also for maintaining a queue to ensure social distancing.

As per the ECI guideline, any person deployed in the election process has to always wear a face mask. All the entries to halls/rooms/premises used for election purpose will have thermal scanning, sanitizer, soap and water for cleaning.

The premises used for election purposes will be regularly sanitised in addition; all the election related activities would be carried out in large halls to ensure social distancing. ECI has also advised that large halls/spaces have to be identified for distribution and collection of election materials, the official said.

The by-polls have been necessitated following the demise of sitting BJP MLA of Balasore Sadar Madan Mohan Dutta and BJD legislator from Tirtol, Bishun Charan Das.

Passenger vehicle sales in India rise 26 pc in Sept: SIAM

NEW DELHI, OCT 16 (PTI): Passenger vehicle wholesales in India increased by 26.45 per cent to 2,72,027 units in September as against 2,15,124 units in the same month last year, auto industry body SIAM said on Friday.

According to the latest data by the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM), two-wheeler sales also rose 11.64 per cent to 18,49,546 units, compared with 16,56,658

units in the same month last year.

Motorcycle sales were at 12,24,117 units as against 10,43,621 units in September 2019, up 17.3 per cent.

Scooter sales were also up marginally at 5,56,205 units from 5,55,754 units in the same month last year.

In the July-September 2020 quarter, passenger vehicles sales increased 17.02 per cent to 7,26,232 units from 6,20,620 units in the same period of last fiscal.

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GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM WEST DISTRICT ZILLA PANCHAYAT

Zilla Panchayat Bhawan,
Gyalshing, West Sikkim-737111



No. 334/WDZP

Dated: 15/10/2020

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tenders are invited from interested persons/parties for renting/leasing out the below mentioned property of West Zilla Panchayat, Gyalshing.

Sl. No	Property	Address	Base lease value
01	Zilla Guest House	Kyongsa	Rs. 43,817/- p.m.
02	Meat Stall (Ground Floor)	Sabzi Mandi, Gyalshing	Rs. 3759/- p.m.
03	Meat Stall (1 st Floor)	Sabzi mandi, Gyalshing	Rs. 1600/- p.m.
04	Meat Stall (Two Nos)	10 th Mile Turning, Kyongsa	Rs. 3029/ p.m
05	Cafeteria	Sikkim, Legship-Jorethang Highway	Rs.10,622/- p.m.

The terms and condition of tender are as follows:-

- The tender form may be obtained from this office on production of **Deposit Receipt of Rs. 250/- from the HDFC Bank, Gyalshing deposited in the A/c No. 50100359380391** for the cost of tender from during office hours. The tender received without TDR shall not be accepted.
- The tender duly accompanied by temporary deposit of Rs. 1,000/- (Rupees One Thousand) only each refundable as security deposit from State Bank of Sikkim in favour of Accounts Officer, West District Zilla Panchayat should reach the office of the undersigned on or before **03.11.2020 from 10 AM to 12 NOON**.
- The bids shall be opened at 2 PM** the same day in the office of the undersigned in presence of the bidders. The bidders have to abide by the terms and conditions laid down on the bid form.
- The successful bidders shall deposit the full amount of one (01) year in **Advance in HDFC Bank, Gyalshing in favour of West District Zilla Panchayat, Gyalshing in A/c No. 50100359380391**.
- Interested parties can inspect the above property on or before **03.11.2020** with the permission of the undersigned during office hours.
- The tender should be accompanied by valid trade license. COI/RC documents to be eligible.
- Quotations below base lease value will not be entertained.

Upa-Sachiva cum District Planning Officer
West District Zilla Panchayat

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THE SIKKIM CO-OPERATIVE MILK PRODUCERS UNION LIMITED
TADONG, SIKKIM-737102

NO.SCMU/G/ADM-40/20-21/543 **Date: 07.10.2020**

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to all concerned that the 24th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Sikkim Co-operative Milk Producers' Union Limited will be held as per the details below.

Date: - **21.10.2020**
Time: - **10.00 a.m.**
Venue: **Conference Hall of Buddha Park Ravangla, South Sikkim.**

The agenda for the meeting are as under:

- To confirm the minutes of the 23rd Annual General Meeting held on 20.9.2019
- To consider and approve the Audited Annual Accounts of the Sikkim Co-operative Milk Producers' Union Limited for the year 2019-20.
- To consider and approve the milk price difference payments for societies ex-gratia for the employees of the Union for the year 2019-20.
- To consider and approve the Budget and Business Development Plan for the year 20-21
- Any other business for which due notice has been given or with the permission of the Chair.

All the members/invitees are requested to kindly make it convenient to attend the Annual General Meeting as per above schedule along with proper ID card issued by Managing Director.

(Dr. A.B.Karki, SCS)
Managing Director
Sikkim Co-operative Milk Producers' Union Ltd.
Tadong, Gangtok

What is Novel Coronavirus - nCoV?

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

Symptoms of nCoV

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

Precautions to Prevent nCoV

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

Treatment

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

If you seek help, you may call :

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

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

Pending Issues

Difficult Delhi or poor follow-up?

Any time the Chief Minister or other leaders, whether from the government or outside of it, visit Delhi and call on Ministers and leaders there, a pilgrimage which the pandemic has made less frequent, they submit memorandums which reiterate a substantial list of “pending issues” with the Centre.

The list of demands has remained unchanged for a while, and this not because Sikkim is unimaginative, but because the demands have remained pending and hence continue to be petitioned for. Delhi has acquiesced to Sikkim’s demands/ requests in too piecemeal a fashion – IT exemption for the Sikkimese and ST status for Limboos and Tamangs – are the only major demands that have been granted in a long while now, and these too after too many years of dithering and delaying. The list of demands and its follow-up has been so static that one does not even need to await an official communiqué any more before putting out a report on what Delhi was reminded about and received a patient hearing. That is how routine the pending nature of Sikkim’s demands has become!

One understands that the wheels turn slow in Delhi, and now that the current dispensation in office there is trying to reinvent the wheel itself, Sikkim will need to learn afresh how to get things moving in the Capital. But even as Sikkim and its representatives try and find their way around the new Delhi, a question that still needs to be asked is why Sikkim needs to keep returning to Delhi with “pending issues”. At one level, the reason is simple - because Delhi needs to constantly be reminded about them since concerns of a State that sends only one MP each to the two Houses of Parliament are rarely a priority. There is nothing that Sikkim can do about that “tyranny” of slim representation. But there must be more reasons behind Delhi’s easy amnesia on Sikkim’s pending issues, for one the possible fact that Sikkim still does not have officers diligent enough to follow up on proposals which have even the PMO’s backing. Once the politicians raise a demand with Central leaders and the same gets forwarded to the respective ministries, the bureaucracy comes into play and the files start moving. Files don’t however move if there is no one pursuing them, and experience bears out that Sikkim officials rarely do so. What is worse, sometimes, they don’t even respond to queries from the Centre. There have been enough instances even in the recent past when recalcitrance has underlined follow-up from Sikkim’s departments.

Sikkim should have figured out by now that Delhi lacks the capacity and the time to figure out Sikkim’s “issues”. Most of the pending issues, however, need to be resolved by Delhi which lobs the ball back to Sikkim’s court and expects a neatly packed and formatted solution to be recommended by Sikkim for enforcement by Delhi. In complicated matters, the State also needs to provide the supporting arguments and watertight justifications and a ready-reckoner on Sikkim’s special status and the leeway it allows. For more routine issues, sometimes it is as simple as placing the right proposal on the right table. Since this is clearly not happening as fluidly and as professionally as is required for new demands to be framed (since the old have been granted), what else can the elected representatives do but keep trooping down to Delhi to raise issues that are still pending even after everyone has cleared them in principle?

Sikkim needs a bureaucratic machinery at home to troop through the doors that its leaders open in Delhi. Till that happens, an annual Delhi pilgrimage with a dusted list of pending demands will remain and constant feature.

WRITE US:

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

Exposure to man-made chemicals influences genes controlling aging, immune system and metabolism

ALEXANDER SUVOROV
THECONVERSATION.COM

Today humans are exposed to thousands of man-made chemicals. Yet the effects on people’s health are still not fully understood. In 2020 the number of registered chemicals reached 167 million. Every day people are exposed to them through food, water, contaminated air, drugs, cosmetics and other man-made substances. Less than 1% of these chemicals were tested for toxicity, and those that were tested demonstrate ability to disrupt almost every biological process in our body. Can we infer how cumulative exposures shape our health?

I am an environmental toxicologist studying effects of man-made chemicals on our health. I decided to develop a computational approach to objectively compare sensitivity of all genes to all chemicals and identify the most vulnerable biological processes.

UNBIASED APPROACH

For our study, my research colleagues and I used data from the Comparative Toxicogenomic Database. The Comparative Toxicogenomic Database collects information from thousands of published studies on how chemicals change the activity of genes. Genes are sections of DNA that encode proteins which perform a broad range of functions in cells, from building tissues to metabolizing nutrients. When chemicals affect genes, that results in increased or decreased production of proteins.

Modern methods of molecular biology can detect changes in activity of all genes in the genome in response to a chemical insult. I developed an approach that overlays lists of altered genes from different studies to calculate how many times each gene was affected. The resulting numbers reflect sensitivities of genes to chemicals generally.

Using 2,169 studies on mice, rats, humans and their cells, my research group ranked the sensitivity of 17,338 genes to chemical exposures. These studies tested the impact of 1,239 diverse chemicals ranging from prescription drugs to environmental pollutants.

At the next step we ran tests to



ensure that this sample of over 1,000 chemicals was large enough to reliably represent all classes of man-made chemicals people are exposed to. To do so, we measured sensitivity of genes for one half of this list and then for another to test if even a smaller number of chemicals can reliably identify sensitive genes. The results were encouraging – the values of gene sensitivities were almost identical in the two trials.

CELLULAR DEFENSE SYSTEM RESPONDS TO CHEMICALS

Our cells are not completely helpless when exposed to chemical insults. In fact, they possess strategies for dealing with stress and damage induced by chemicals. Our data confirm that these safeguards become active in response to exposures.

This line of defense includes enzymes that eliminate toxic chemicals, alleviate oxidative stress (the accumulation of reactive radicals in cells), repair damaged DNA and proteins, and identify highly damaged cells to trigger their death and prevent them from turning cancerous.

METABOLISM OF LIPIDS AND CARBOHYDRATES IS VULNERABLE

Surprisingly, we found that molecular networks involved in the regulation of cellular metabolism are most sensitive to chemical exposures. One of them is PPAR signaling. PPARs are a group of proteins that regulate energy balance and metabolism of lipids and glucose.

Rises or falls in PPARs activi-

ty contribute to obesity, metabolic syndrome, diabetes and fatty liver disease. The ability of some environmental chemicals to affect PPARs was shown before. However, we didn’t expect to see sensitivity of PPARs to a very broad range of compounds.

We also discovered that genes involved in the development of pancreatic beta cells, which secrete insulin and play a key role in glucose metabolism, are suppressed by a majority of chemicals in our list. Dysfunction of beta cells results in diabetes. Thus, cumulative chemical exposures may be a significant risk factor for diabetes.

Today an epidemic of metabolic disease is a major public health issue. The prevalence of obesity nearly tripled between 1975 and 2016. Approximately 40% of Americans will develop Type 2 diabetes during their lives, and 33%-88% have fatty liver. Connection between exposures and metabolic diseases was shown before for some chemicals with endocrine disruptive properties. However, the role of a broad range of man-made chemicals in this epidemic was not recognized before but can be significant.

GROWTH, AGING AND THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

Two hormones involved in growth – growth hormone (GH) and insulin-like growth factor (IGF1) – are also affected by exposure to chemicals.

IGF1 is a hormone secreted mostly by the liver. It is recognized as a

major regulator of body growth. Additionally, multiple mouse experiments show that decreased GH-IGF1 signaling results in longer lifespan. This pathway also determines if cells will use energy to build new molecules the body needs, or if they will break down existing molecules to release energy for the organism to use. The ability of chemicals to affect this central regulator of growth and aging is a novel finding. What health problems may be due to the sensitivity of GH-IGF1 is yet to be uncovered.

Our analysis indicates that genes that control the immune response are also highly sensitive to chemicals.

Two major outcomes of a dysfunctional immune system are allergy and autoimmunity. Prevalence for both conditions follows upward trends. Food allergies increased from 3.4% to 5.1% between 1997 and 2011 among children in the U.S. Skin allergies increased from 7.4% to 12.5% during the same period. Another study showed a 5% increase in blood marker of autoimmune disease in Americans during the period 1988-2012.

ALL MOLECULAR PATHWAYS ARE SENSITIVE TO CHEMICALS

Overall we found that almost every known pathway may be affected by chemicals. That finding has significant implications for regulatory toxicology.

With ever-increasing numbers of man-made chemicals, society needs to develop rapid and cost-efficient methods of toxicity testing.

One important question that remains unanswered is what pathways should be covered by testing to ensure that regulators do not approve chemicals that harm or disrupt critical molecular circuits. Our data suggests that we need to develop tests that cover every known molecular pathway without exception.

Our study outlines new priorities for toxicological research, including the role of chemical exposures for metabolic health, immune system, development and aging.

[The writer is Assistant Professor, University of Massachusetts Amherst]

Distance learning makes it harder for kids to exercise, especially in low-income communities

KATELYN ESMONDE & KESHIA POLLACK PORTER
THECONVERSATION.COM

This fall hasn’t felt much like “back to school” for many children. Instead, many are staying at home and attending virtual classes indefinitely. According to the Center on Reinventing Public Education, a nonpartisan research center, about 25% of U.S. school districts have started the year fully remote. This means that children will miss out on vital opportunities for educational, social and emotional development. And, as is familiar during this pandemic, the impact will be unequal: Children in underresourced districts are more likely to be remote learners. These children are hardest hit by school closures as they are more likely to lack access to necessary technologies and are less likely to receive parental help with their learning. They will also lose out on easy access to school meals.

But there’s another harm done by school closures: a child’s ability to be physically active. We are researchers at Johns Hopkins University studying physical activity and its impact on public health. Based on our research, we believe the pandemic is exacerbating health disparities among children and having significant impacts on their physical, social and cognitive development.

NO GYM CLASSES, NO TEAM SPORTS

Children not in school don’t have recess or physical education classes. They aren’t walking to school or to a bus stop. Generally, they can’t participate in school teams or clubs that promote physical activity either (although in some school districts, team sports may go ahead even while in-person education does not).

What’s more, children have traditionally been less physically active in the summer than during the school year, with notable differences by race and ethnicity. And given the punishing trajectory of the pandemic, it is not clear when those prospects for physical activity will be available again.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends that children between ages 6 and 17 engage in one hour of moderate to vigorous physical activity per day. That can improve a child’s physical and mental health and prevent the onset of chronic disease, including Type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some cancers.

Physical activity and active play can also be a



source of joy for children. As they socialize with peers, they find pleasure in moving their bodies and developing their strength and physical literacy. Many of us look back fondly on childhood memories of soccer games and running around until we tire ourselves out, a delight every child deserves.

Schools, of course, are not perfect when it comes to meeting children’s physical activity needs. Physical education is chronically underfunded, and Black and Latino children typically lose out the most. Even so, schools provide some opportunities for children to be well and healthy.

LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES ARE HURT THE MOST

A child’s decrease in physical activity is not only a public health issue. It’s also a matter of fairness.

Prior to the pandemic, children from low-income communities and communities of color already experienced greater challenges in accessing physical activity opportunities. They were already less likely to meet physical activity recommendations because of a lack of affordable options. There are also safety issues, challenges to parental support and a neighborhood environment that doesn’t foster play and physical activity.

As more activities have moved outdoors to decrease the risk of virus spread, these inequities are felt more than ever before. In many cases, the parents of children in low-income communities are essential workers who can’t be home to support either learning or physical activity. Private backyards for play are frequently missing, and public spaces are often inadequate.

The weather poses additional barriers. Because of less green space and tree canopy, low-income neighborhoods tend to be hotter in the summer, sometimes significantly so, than higher-income

neighborhoods in the same city. They also have poorer air quality. In the winter, many families can’t afford a warm coat, which makes outdoor play more difficult.

PROMOTING OUTDOOR PLAY

These are not intractable problems. Solutions exist to promote a child’s active outdoor play. Some strategies work in all settings, although urban, suburban and rural environments will have to vary approaches. But in all cases, it’s essential that children have the clothing and nourishment they need to play outside through all types of weather.

First, supervised play can take place on unused school yards through policies like joint use agreements. This should not be a heavy lift, as schools are usually in centralized locations and they already support active play.

Second, many cities worldwide have increased access to public spaces during the pandemic. They have closed down entire streets and driving lanes and replaced them with activity areas. These efforts can be expanded to focus on children by creating specialized spaces for child-friendly games. This was already happening before the pandemic: Initiatives such as Play Streets, where neighborhood blocks are shut down to promote play, were becoming popular. This can be a model, albeit with additional safeguards built in to promote physical distancing.

The pandemic has created previously unimaginable challenges for so many of us. Children’s health and well-being, particularly for those facing significant barriers, must be a priority.

[Katelyn Esmonde is Postdoctoral Fellow, Johns Hopkins University; Keshia Pollack Porter is Professor of Public Health, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health]

Arsla Organic Tea -- Innovation of Khasi Tribes of Meghalaya

Dr ABDUL HANNAN

The Arsla Organic Tea Growers and Producers Co-operative Society Limited is situated 33 kms away from Shillong at Nongjri village near Umshning in Meghalaya. It is located in Ranikor block of West Khasi Hill and the village has 142 houses. The total population is 879 persons of which 429 are males and 450 are females and 760 persons belong to schedule tribe (Census, 2011). The sex ratio of the village is 1049 which is above the state average of 989. The literacy rate is 40.21 percent as compare to 74.43 percent of Meghalaya. The female literacy is 29.36 percent and male literacy is 50.90 percent. The name Arsla is derived from khasi words Ar means two and sla means leaves. The total workers in the village are 240 persons of which 178 are males and 62 are females and the distribution of main and marginal workers is 229 persons and 11 persons respectively. There are 30 farmers with 70 hectares started planting tea bushes way back in 1990s. Some of the growers planted tea bushes promoted by Tea Development Centre (TDC) established in 1978 at Umshning under the Department of Horticulture, Government of Meghalaya. Plant saplings were supplied to the farmers by TDC and a cash incentive of fifteen thousand rupees per hectare was given to grow tea. Currently, green leaves are harvested during the period from first week of April to first week of November and the rest of the months are lean season and no harvesting activity takes place during the lean period. Farmers practice fine plucking standards of two leaves and a bud and the quality of made tea produced by Arsla Co-operative is appreciated by all corners in the market. It is often said by experts that quality of tea is made in farm with good cultivation practices and fine plucking standards. The Arsla Organic Tea is known for its strict farm management practices. Tea is purely grown organic cultivation methods in the field and used to be sold to Nalari tea factory yesteryears for conventional CTC processing located at nearby Nongpoh of Assam-Meghalaya border. Over the years, the Anderson tea factory has come up to fulfill the need of farmers at Umshning which produces CTC and Orthodox variety of teas.

The Arsla Co-operative Society has 61 members and started with a shared capital of 25 lakhs. As per the bye-laws of the Society, a single share can be a maximum of five percent of authorized capital of 50 lakhs. Therefore, the upper limit of a share is fixed at 2.5 lakhs and out of 61 members, only 4-5 members have upper limit. The lowest share of individual members varies from 2-3 thousand. Initially, the farmers were passing through pillar to post to set up the mini factory due to financial shortcomings. The project value of Arsla Tea Factory was estimated at 1.36 crores. The Meghalaya Rural Co-operative Bank came forward and extended financial support of 1.08 crores with an interest rate ranging from 12.5-13.5 percent per annum. They have received one time financial grant of 68 lakhs as one time grant from Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India under the Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North-Eastern Region (MOVCNDR). They are yet to receive any support from the Tea Board of India till date though there are promises of providing them for setting up Office building, Reception and other infrastructure. In 2019, they were told to be given pruning machines for bush management in their gardens. They might be provided in future by Tea Board of India.

The Meghalaya has announced the Mission Organic approach of all cultivation and production system in the whole state as planned development in 2015-16. The Department of Horticulture and Agriculture is entrusted to implement it and one thousand crore ru-



Private Sale of Packet Teas					
Tea Variety	Rate (Rs./Per Kg)		Tea Variety	Rate (Rs./Per Kg)	
Green Tea	2019	2020	Black Tea	2019	2020
First Grade	2000	1000	First Grade	1000	800
Second Grade	1200	800	Second Grade	800	600
Third Grade	800	600	Third Grade	600	400

pees is allocated for the mission. All the horticulture crops like Zinger, Cashew, Turmeric, Vegetables etc. are covered under the programme. Earlier the chemicals and fertilizers were available in open market in the state to farmers before the declaration of Mission Organic, now it is absent. Since the state is in transition, people buy and procure chemicals and fertilizers from Guwahati with high prices and cost of production is increased again. The problem of standalone crops like tea is different. After switch over to organic in 2013, farmers are running at loss. Crop production (Green Leaf) is reduced to 10-15 thousand kg from 30-33 thousand kg earlier from a patch of land of 3-4 hectares. On the other side, the made tea (Processed Tea) which is organic certified is sold to the market in throwaway price in auction currently.

The Arsla Co-operative Tea Factory started its tea production on trial basis in July 2018 and the formal permission of Tea Board of India under TMCO is granted in May 2019. It produces approximately 150-160 kg tea/per day and the production activity remain operational five days in a week during April to September and two-three days in a week during October to November in a year. Factory employs labourers from the Nongjri village itself. The labourers are hired on hourly basis and paid thirty rupees per hour depending on green leaf availability from the gardens. There are two salaried staff in the factory and they supervise the entire management and production and packaging of tea and paid rupees twelve and ten thousand per month respectively. The entire tea production during 2019 estimated at seven tons of the Co-operative was unsold and it was in stock due to their inexperience to market it. Here the Sub-Regional Office (SRO) of the Tea Board has failed to provide their critical role to provide extension services of the regulatory agency like Tea Board of India which is mandatory as per the Tea Act and its guidelines. It is only in February 2020, the factory started selling their old stock of made tea in Guwahati Tea Auction Centre (GTAC). Unfortunately, the global pandemic and lockdown since March 2020 has again affected the Arsla Co-operative and its members financially. During pandemic, all the tea of the co-operative is sold at GTAC under distress sale. Finding no way, they have represented their case to the Department of Horticulture, Government of Meghalaya for financial help and requested for minimum support price during the pandemic to overcome the

situation. It is also discouraging fact to know that the Tea Board of India has SRO at Umshning, Meghalaya headed by Development Officer. But the Arsla Co-operative Society is failed to receive any kind of technical and advisory support till today. In January 2019, the Society applied for funding to purchase pruning machines through SRO, Meghalaya. It was communicated in March 2019 that there is no fund available but assured that next year they would receive which SRO is yet to deliver their promise so far. It has also brought to notice that the Arsla Co-operative Society has applied for Office set up, Reception Chair and other furniture with an estimated budget of twelve lakhs in 2019. The proposal has been sent through SRO Umshning to the Regional Office at Guwahati which is still pending. During pandemic the Arsla Co-operative is facing crisis to survive and to sell their teas and SRO and regional office of Tea Board Guwahati is yet to visit and inspect the financial health of the Society. Unfortunately, the extension services of the SROs of Tea Board of India remain only in paper but in practice on ground the tea farmers found them ineffective throughout. The same experiences are noticeable in other states too and the Tea Board Head Office should be vigilant of periodic monitoring of SROs.

There are two types of tea are produced and marketed by Arsla Organic Tea i.e. Green Tea and Black Tea and have three Grades of First, Second and Third. They are sold locally in packets of 100 gms. The Arsla Co-operative Society has reduced the unit price of all varieties of teas in 2020 as they did not receive good market response last year (2019). The Society lowered the plucking standard from two leaf and bud to three leaves and a bud and the green leaf price paid to farmers is reduced from rupees thirty-four to twenty per kg to survive in market. Normally, labourers pluck 8-10 kg green leaf in a day and paid wages of Rs.250-300 per day. They have stock of seven tons of made teas of last year production which they could sold beginning of this year at GTAC roughly Rs.250-260 per kg. Currently, they are receiving Rs.350-380 per kg during August-September. This year CTC variety of teas prices are increased in auction but Orthodox variety remains almost same as compare to the last year. At times, they are at margins of profit and sometimes no profit at all. Moreover, global pandemic has pushed the entire economy in bad shape and tea industry is

also experiencing the crisis this year.

The Arsla Organic Tea garden is certified in 2013 by the Control Union Inspection India Pvt. Ltd. It was facilitated by the Department of Horticulture, Government of Meghalaya. They have been passing through all odds during their journey starting from planting tea bushes to formation of co-operative and establishment of Arsla Organic Tea Factory with an expectation of good harvest, access to market, remunerative returns and sustainable livelihoods. They have faced and travelled through crop reduction during the process of conversion of their farms from conventional to organic production and faced the challenges of pest and disease management. The support of SRO of Tea Board is inadequate to guide the farmers in the field and promote their tea business. At the same time, they have been receiving continuous support of the Department of Horticulture, Government of Meghalaya. In September 2019, the Arsla Co-operative Society represented in Food Show at Pragati Maidan organized by SIAL, Paris and Government of India and Arsla Organic Tea was demonstrated. Again in December 2019, they campaign the Arsla Organic Tea at North-East Expo at Guwahati. The Arsla Co-operative is trying to establish their credential in tea marketing. Recently they have received online orders from Kolkata and Gujarat for 10 kgs and 40 kgs respectively and sold at Rs.800 per kg. It is also sold locally in 100 gms packets and have two varieties of Green and Black. The blank packets are procured and purchase from M/s Swiss Pack of Gujarat at a price of rupees 8-10 per piece. The local sale of first grade of Green variety is sold at one thousand rupees this year. The Society also provides 10-15 percent as service charges to the shop owners who sell their teas in the open market.

The tea farmers in the state have formed an apex body in 2014-15 named Meghalaya Small Tea Growers (STGs) Federation. It consists of three regional units and these are Ri-Bhoi Small Tea Growers (STGs) Association, West Garo Hills Tea Farmers Federation and Mawlyngot Integrated Village Co-operative Federation, Upper Shillong. All three regional units joined together and produce organic teas and have their brands namely Arsla Organic Tea, Durama Tea and Urlong Tea (means happened what was thought) respectively. There is one more brand named Meg Tea produced and marketed by Tea Development Centre with garden area on 9.27 hectares which is promoted by Department of Horticulture, Government of Meghalaya. It is also experienced that there are 400 farmers which planted tea bushes in Ri-Bhoi area but now most of them abandoned their gardens and only 100 farmers remain today and continue tea farming. If there is concerted effort by SROs of Tea Board, farmers may be again pick up their farming and feel optimistic to gain confidence of agencies of state. In nutshell, it could be outlined that extension services of SROs of Tea Board is not sufficient enough on the ground and farmers are demotivated of their hard earned investments on tea farming and marketing over the years. An effective coordination of regulatory bodies and farmers associations are expected in coming days to restore the livelihoods of tea farmers in the tea value chain and promote inclusive measures to augment the current crisis of market access particularly when we are passing through a rough patch of global pandemic.

[The writer is working as Assistant Professor, Sikkim Central University, Gangtok and the facts stated above based on field survey and interactions with the members of Arsla Organic Tea Growers and Producers Co-operative Society Limited, Meghalaya. The comments and views may be sent at ahannan@cus.ac.in / ahannansku@gmail.com]

Mumbai City FC ropes in forward Farukh Choudhary

MUMBAI, OCT 16 (PTI): Indian Super League side Mumbai City FC on Friday announced the signing of national team forward Farukh Choudhary on a three-year contract ahead of the upcoming season.

The 23-year-old, a native of Mumbai suburb Ambernath, can play on either left or right side in attack as well as down the middle.

"The feeling of repre-

senting your own hometown is unmatched, and I want to thank Mumbai City for giving me the opportunity to do the same at the highest level of football in the country," Choudhary was quoted as saying in a statement issued by the club.

"The vision in place at Mumbai City was a key factor and I am confident this is the right step for me and my development at this stage of my career.

I'm excited to start this new chapter of my life.

Head Coach Sergio Lobera, on his part, said Choudhary will add a new dimension to Mumbai City attack.

With his dynamism and versatility, Farukh adds a new dimension to our attack and we were keen on bringing him to the club. He's young, he's hungry and has the ability to influence the game on his own, said Lobera.

All of us at Mumbai City are confident that Farukh has a big future ahead of him and we hope he can help us as much as we want to help him grow.

Choudhary started his youth career with the Diamonds Football Club, and moved on to Air India's U-15 side and Central Bank of India in the Mumbai District Football Association. After a stint with the Pune FC U-19

side, Farukh made the switch to senior football with Lonestar Kashmir in 2015-16.

In 2016, he made the move to Kerala Blasters and subsequently featured for Mumbai FC on loan in the I-League before joining Jamshedpur FC in the 2017 ISL Draft.

Choudhary plied his trade with Jamshedpur FC for three seasons, making 44 appearances and scoring three goals.

162 new COVID-19 cases, 4 more deaths in Tripura

AGARTALA, OCT 15 (PTI): At least 162 people tested positive for COVID-19 in Tripura on Friday, pushing the tally in the state to 29,193 a health department official said.

The death toll rose to 320 with four more persons succumbing to the infection, he said.

West Tripura district, of which state capital Agartala is a part, has accounted for 171 of the 320 COVID-19 deaths.

Tripura currently

Eight cases were recorded in Lower Subansiri, seven each in Upper Subansiri and Upper Siang, six in Lohit, five in Lower Dibang Valley, three each in Lepa Rada and Kamle, two each in Longding and Siang and one in Shi-Yomi.

"Four personnel of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), three state police constables and an Army jawan are among the new patients. Nine personnel of Border Roads Organisation (BRO) were also found to have contracted the disease," the SSO said.

Arunachal reports 203 new COVID-19 cases, one more death

ITANAGAR, OCT 16 (PTI): The COVID-19 tally in Arunachal Pradesh rose to 12,971 on Friday, with 203 more people, including eight security personnel, testing positive for the infection, while one fresh fatality pushed the northeastern state's toll to 30, a senior health official said.

Barring 42, all patients are asymptomatic and have been shifted to COVID care centres, State Surveillance Officer (SSO) Dr Lobsang Jampa said.

A 56-year-old wom-

an, who had contracted COVID-19, died at Rama Krishna Mission Hospital here on Thursday, following a sudden cardiac arrest. The woman suffered from diabetes and had arrived at the emergency department with severe respiratory distress.

Of the 203 new cases, 58 were reported from the Capital Complex region, 19 from Changlang, 18 from East Siang, 16 from Papumpare, 15 from West Siang, 12 from Tirap, 11 from Namsai and 10 from West Kameng.

16 new cases push COVID-19 tally of Andamans to 4,062

PORT BLAIR, OCT 16 (PTI): The COVID-19 tally of Andaman and Nicobar Islands rose to 4,062 on Friday as 16 more people tested positive for the infection, a health official said.

Thirteen fresh cases were detected during contact tracing, while

three patients have travel history, he said.

Twenty-one more people have been cured of the disease, taking the total number of recoveries in the archipelago to 3,817, the official said.

The Union territory now has 190 active

COVID-19 cases, while 55 patients have succumbed to the infection so far, he said.

The administration has so far sent 72,525 samples for COVID-19 tests, of which 72,375 reports have been received and 150 are awaited, the official added.

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Garhwal, ARA share spoils after end-to-end battle

KALYANI, OCT 16 (PTI): Garhwal FC looked set to sign off their I-League Qualifiers 2020 campaign with a win but ended up sharing points with ARA FC following a 1-1 draw here on Friday.

Defender Neeraj Bhandari gave Garhwal FC an early lead but a late penalty from Surajit Seal saw both teams walk off the field at the Kalyani Stadium with honours even. Ahmedabad-based ARA FC missed a first-half penalty.

Garhwal made three changes to the starting line-up from the previous game, chief among them being the inclusion of Afdal Varikkodan, who broke their goal-scoring duck after coming on as a substitute in their previous outing.

Varikkodan proved to be a constant threat and had plenty of opportunities in the game but this time the striker simply couldn't find his scoring boots.

ARA were struggling to cope with the early pressure and soon found themselves behind, courtesy a set-piece. Muhammed Shafeer won the foul in the opposition half after being hacked down by Cedric Fernandes just as Garhwal were upping the tempo in the 17th minute.

Captain Bala Alhasan sent in a beautifully floated ball into the area and defender Bhandari timed his run to perfection before connecting with a powerful diving header from close range to open the scoring.

ARA had a couple of good opportunities after they delivered long balls to their forwards.

Shoaib Ahmed, who was coach Vivek Nagul's only change from the previous game, was sent through in the 22nd minute but Garhwal custodian Sayak Barai showed good presence of mind, lobbing the ball over the onrushing forward with his right hand before collecting safely.

Goal-scorer Bhandari was at hand to fulfil his primary responsibility as a defender in the 35th minute when ARA winger Pratik Swamy skipped past Rahul Das to break into the area. However, Bhandari was attuned to the danger and snuffed it out with a last-ditch tackle.

Pratik however, looked to have the better of Das, and four minutes later skipped past him again, this time inside the area and was brought down by the defender's trailing foot, winning a penalty.

Ahmed took the spot-kick but saw his effort fly high over the top right corner.

The missed penalty ensured Garhwal went into the breather with a slender one-goal advantage, but well aware of the threat the team from Ahmedabad possessed.

Garhwal started the second half brightly with Mahip Adhikari rattling the crossbar in the 50th minute with a first-time volley from the edge of the area.

ARCHIE BLAND LONDON, 16 OCT [THEGUARDIAN]: In one chess tournament, five of the top six were disqualified for cheating. In another, the doting parents of 10-year-old competitors furiously rejected evidence that their darlings were playing at the level of the world No 1. And in a third, an Armenian grandmaster booted out for suspicious play accused his opponent of "doing pipi in his Pampers".

These incidents may sound extreme but they are not isolated – and they have all taken place online since the start of the coronavirus pandemic.

Chess has enjoyed a huge boom in internet play this year as in-person events have moved online and people stuck at home have sought new hobbies. But with that has come a significant new problem: a rise in the use of powerful chess calculators to cheat on a scale reminiscent of the scandals that have dogged cycling and athletics. One leading 'chess detective' said that the pandemic was "without doubt creating a crisis".

The problems are not confined to chess, with similar issues reported in poker, bridge and even backgammon, but they are perhaps most disruptive for a game with a reputation for gravitas and class.

"The pandemic has brought me as much work in a single day as I have had in a year previously," said Prof Kenneth Regan, an international chess master and computer scientist whose

model is relied on by the sport's governing body, Fide, to detect suspicious patterns of play. "It has ruined my sabbatical."

Fide's general director, Emil Sutovsky, described it as "a huge topic I work on dozens of hours each week", and its president, Arkady Dvorkovich, said "computer doping" was a "real plague".

At the heart of the problem are programmes or apps that can rapidly calculate near-perfect moves in any situation. To counter these engines, players in more and more top matches must agree to be recorded by multiple cameras, be available on Zoom or WhatsApp at any time, and grant remote access to their computers. They may not be allowed to leave their screens, even for toilet breaks. In some cases they must have a "proctor" or invigilator search their room and then sit with them throughout a match.

Sutovsky has also suggested eye-tracking programmes may be a way to raise a red flag if a player appears to be looking away with suspicious frequency.

Chess.com, the world's biggest site for online play, said it had seen 12 million new users this year, against 6.5 million last year. The cheating rate has jumped from between 5,000 and 6,000 players banned each month last year to a high of almost 17,000 in August.

Gerard Le-Marechal, the head of the site's fair play team, said he had brought in three new members of staff to deal with the problem.



"I think it's to do with people being cooped up. It's just so easy to do, so alluring, and it's without doubt creating a crisis."

The growth in cheating and a corresponding explosion in social media discussion of the problem has created a new atmosphere of suspicion and recrimination. "Paranoia has become the culture," said Le-Marechal, whom a friend declared "the cyber chess detective" when he got the job. "There is this very romantic vision of the game which is being scuppered."

While chess.com is reluctant to reveal details of its system, Regan describes his as "a model that detects cheating as the deviation from the proclivities of an honest human player". With enough evidence, such models produce a high level of confidence that a given player could not possibly have played a particular set of moves unaided.

The most prominent of the recent disqualifications came in the PRO Chess League when the St Louis Arch Bishops, a team made up of top American players, lost in the final to the underdog Armenia Eagles.

The Eagles' victory rested on the perfor-

mance of Tigran Petrosian, an Armenian grandmaster and the world No 260, who stunned commentators with his victory over Fabiano Caruana, ranked second in the world.

Petrosian attributed his play to the gin he sipped during the game. But suspicious observers suggested he seemed to be glancing away from his screen frequently, and chess.com later overturned the team's wins and banned him for life.

Petrosian later called the claims "idiotic, invented allegations". He posted a lengthy rant addressed to another opponent, the world No 8 Wesley So: "You are a biggest loser [sic] I ever seen in my life! You was doing PiPi in your pampers when I was beating players much more stronger than you!... you are like a girl crying after I beat you!"

So, for his part, told the Guardian in an email that he felt sorry for Petrosian. Perhaps thinking of Lance Armstrong, he added: "I was a big fan of a certain cyclist and a part of me understands the pressure to succeed at all costs. At the same time I feel pain for other competitors ... Who will restore what was taken from them?"

Conrad Schormann,

who has covered the cheating crisis as news editor of chesstechnology.com, notes that Petrosian did not appear to get help on every move, making the suspicious behaviour even harder to spot. "In his games there were abnormalities, sequences that he played godlike, but there were blunders as well," he said.

Such controversies have been replicated even in the lower-stakes world of junior play. Sarah Longson, a former British ladies' champion who runs the Delancey UK Schools' Chess Challenge, said at least 100 of 2,000 online participants cheated.

The cheating was blatant, she said, with mediocre preteens at the level of the world champion, Magnus Carlsen. "But only three of them admitted it, which is pretty disgusting." After realising the night before the final that the top three qualifiers had all been cheating, she said, "we stayed up til 3am deciding what to do" and nearly cancelled altogether.

"It's the children from the private schools, sadly," she said. "When I ring their parents they just get angry with me. They're under such pressure to succeed."

Without a significant culture change, most say, the cheats are unlikely to go straight. Regan is realistic but determined. "If you cheat on a single move I will disclaim any ability to catch you," he said. "You can fly under the radar. But if you keep going at the same rate, you will come into the radar in the end."

Srikanth sails into Denmark Open quarters

ODENSE, OCT 15 (PTI): Ace Indian shuttler Kidambi Srikanth stormed into the Denmark Open quarterfinals with a straight-game win over Canada's Jason Anthony Ho-Shue here on Thursday.

The fifth seeded Indian took 33 minutes to get the better of his Canadian opponent 21-15 21-14 in the men's singles second round of the USD 750,000 Super 750 tournament, the only world tour event happening this year in a calendar thrown haywire by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The BWF was forced to cancel multiple tournaments and postpone the Asia leg and the World Tour Final to January next year due to the pandemic.

"It was close until 11 in both games. I'm just happy that I could continue that form throughout the match. I had to be alert to get back his shots," Srikanth told BWF.

The 27-year-old is likely to face world no.2 Chou Tien Chen of Chinese Taipei, who meets Ireland's Nhat Nguyen later in the day.

Talking about Chou Tien Chen, Srikanth said: "He's been playing well the last few years. It's definitely a match where I can understand where I'm at. That's the whole idea of playing this tournament."

"He hits hard, he's someone who has an

overall game, he has a hard smash, he knows when to attack and when to defend. He has matured. It's always good when you play a top 4 player."

In the opening game, Srikanth zoomed to a 9-4 lead before grabbing a three-point advantage at the break.

The Indian then reeled off six points to create a huge gap, which Jason couldn't bridge.

Srikanth fell behind 5-8 in the second game but bounced back with six straight points to reach 11-8 at the interval. The Canadian made it 10-11 after resumption.

Srikanth then stepped up the pace and was immediately rewarded as he opened up a 15-10 lead.

He constructed the rallies well to quickly jump to 19-11. Srikanth soon garnered 8 match points but sent one to the net and couldn't reach the shuttle next to concede two.

But his opponent went wide next and Srikanth sealed it comfortably.

The other Indian in the competition, Lakshya Sen, will be up against local challenger Hans-Kristian Solberg Vittinghus in his second round match later in the day.

Subhankar Dey and Ajay Jayram were also in the fray but made first round exits on Wednesday.

Teófilo López eyes star turn against imperious Vasiliy Lomachenko

BRYAN ARMEN GRAMHAM LONDON, 16 OCT [THEGUARDIAN]: From the time Teófilo López turned pro as a teenager after the 2016 Olympics, the heavy-handed Brooklyn native was billed not only as a future world champion but as boxing's next major star.

After taking the express lane from prospect to contender with one highlight-reel knockout after another, López made the first part look easy in December when he demolished the rugged veteran Richard Commey inside two rounds to capture the IBF lightweight championship. The second part is where it may get more complicated.

On Saturday night, the 23-year-old López will climb through the ropes at the MGM Grand Conference Center for a lightweight title unification showdown with Vasiliy Lomachenko, the three-weight champion from Ukraine widely regarded as boxing's pound-for-pound best, in the most anticipated fight since the Tyson Fury-Deontay Wilder rematch back in the beforetimes.

The scheduled 12-round encounter has been grandiloquently framed as a clash of experience v youth, impeccable skill v weapons-grade power, a storied legacy v a future of limitless promise. But the breathless promotional bluster can be condensed to a simple topline: Lomachenko, the two-time Olympic gold medalist who holds the WBA and WBO titles at 135lbs, represents the hardest test in boxing today. And López, after a scant 15 paying fights, might just be the type of

rare generational talent with the skills to meet it.

"It's everything," said López during Wednesday's final press conference, where the ill temper and trash talk that had marked the nearly two-year build-up gave way to a more subdued tenor. "It's the best fighting the best, and that's what it comes to. All the belts. Everything's on the line in Vegas, just like everything else. All in."

Born to Honduran parents in the Brooklyn neighborhood of Sunset Park before the family moved to south Florida, López took up boxing when he was six and embarked on a decorated amateur career that included a national Golden Gloves title in 2015. He won the lightweight division at the US Olympic trials, but was forced to compete for Honduras at the Rio Games when he was left off the American team on a technicality. By the end of the year he'd signed with Top Rank, drawn in by the promotional giant's track record of developing Olympians into professional stars, including Oscar De La Hoya, Floyd Mayweather and Miguel Cotto.

López, whose formidable combination of speed, skill and concussive punching power is matched only by his charisma and sense of showmanship, rapidly scaled the ranks with a series of crowd-pleasing knockouts on televised cards. The whole package was on display in December when he detonated a right hand on Commey's jaw to win the title with a second-round stoppage before a hometown crowd in the big room at Madison Square Garden, punctuating the triumph with his trademark celebratory backflip.

Situation influenced decision to change AB De Villiers' batting order: Kohli

SHARJAH, OCT 16 (PTI): Royal Challengers Bangalore's decision to push AB de Villiers down the order backfired but skipper Virat Kohli said it was a well-thought-out strategy that somehow did not work against Kings XI Punjab.

De Villiers, who had smashed a 33-ball 73 against Kolkata Knight Riders in their last match, was expected to come in at his usual number four spot but with two leg-spinners in operation, left-handed batsman Washington Sundar was sent ahead of the South African.

RCB couldn't accelerate in the death overs and if it wasn't for the 8-ball 25 by Chris Morris in the last over, the total would have been below 160.

Kohli said the move did not yield the desired result but his bowlers should have been able to defend 171 against Punjab on Thursday. They lost by eight wickets.

"We had a chat, a message from outside about left-right combination and we wanted to go with it because they had two leggies. Sometimes things don't come off. We're pretty happy with the decisions we took, but it didn't come off," Kohli said after the match.



"Having 170 was a decent score. The idea was to let them (Shivam Dube and Sundar) get their eye in. They bowled well. It's not a great ground for bowlers but that's not an excuse."

"We take pride in our bowling. Tonight it didn't come off and we have to accept it and take responsibility. There's always something to learn to go back and understand."

Chasing the total, KL Rahul (61 not out) and Chris Gayle (53) went on a six-hitting spree to bring the equation down to seven in last two overs with nine wickets in hand.

But KXIP somehow managed to take the game to the last ball with Nicholas Pooran

finally hitting the winning six.

"It was quite surprising, we thought the game might finish in the 18th. A bit of pressure at the back end can confuse you, anything can happen in this game," Kohli said.

KXIP captain KL Rahul heaved a shy of relief after the win, admitting it got too close for comfort in the end.

"I don't even have words. We knew that we had to scrap and get over the line once and that would give us the confidence. We're a far better side than bottom of the table. Towards the end it got too close for comfort but happy that we made it."

It was only KXIP's second win in the tournament and Ra-

hul admitted it has been frustrating for the team to lose some close matches.

"Our skills were very good, probably didn't capitalise in the big moments starting with the first game at Delhi. It's part of the IPL, it's part of cricket. There are ups and downs and this has been the kind of roller-coaster that's been crazy but on a positive note we needed this win."

Rahul has been in sensational form with four fifties and a massive hundred so far in the tournament.

However, he said his personal form hasn't been on his mind as he had to manage the team as captain.

"At the moment, my first time as captain,

you kind of don't reflect on your own performance. As a leader you need to think of everybody and how to keep the 15 or the 25 balanced and hungry to do well. That's been the challenge so personal performances haven't been on my mind so much."

Rahul praised Chris Gayle, who blasted a 45-ball 53 in his first match since January.

"Chris has not been feeling well but he's always been hungry. Anyone who saw him, he was training hard like he's probably never done. It was a tough call to make not to play someone like that," he said.

"I won't take credit but it's important to keep the lion hungry sometimes. Wherever he bats, he's still the same player and it worked."

Azerbaijan claims Armenian strike outside Nagorno-Karabakh

BAKU, AZERBAIJAN (AP): Azerbaijani authorities on Friday accused Armenia of expanding the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh by shelling a different region in Azerbaijan, a claim rejected by Armenian officials.

The mutual accusations come amid intense fighting that has raged for nearly three weeks despite a Russian attempt to broker a truce, marking the largest escalation of hostilities between the South Caucasus neighbors in more than a quarter-century.

Azerbaijan's Defense Ministry said a missile fired by Armenian forces hit the area near Ordubad, in Azerbaijan's Nakhchivan region, on Thursday, causing no ca-



sualties.

Armenian Defense Ministry spokeswoman Shushan Stepanian dismissed the Azerbaijani statement, saying that no missiles were fired at the Nakhchivan region.

Nagorno-Karabakh lies within Azerbaijan

but has been under the control of ethnic Armenian forces backed by Armenia since a war there ended in 1994. The latest outburst of fighting began on Sept. 27 and has involved heavy artillery, rockets and drones, killing

hundreds.

Russia, which has a security pact with Armenia but also has cultivated warm ties with Azerbaijan, hosted top diplomats from Armenia and Azerbaijan for more than 10 hours of talks that ended with Satur-

day's cease-fire deal. But the agreement immediately buckled, with both sides blaming each other for breaching it.

The Kremlin said that Russian President Vladimir Putin chaired a meeting of his Security Council Friday to discuss the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh among other issues.

Azerbaijan has insisted it has the right to reclaim its land by force after efforts by the so-called Minsk group of international mediators that comprises Russia, the United States and France failed to yield any progress. It has actively pushed for its ally Turkey to take a prominent role in future peace talks.

Kyrgyzstan's prime minister becomes acting president



MOSCOW (AP): Kyrgyzstan's prime minister became the acting head of state Friday in the wake of the president's resignation amid turmoil sparked by a disputed parliamentary election.

Supporters of newly appointed Prime Minister Sadyr Zhaparov, rallied in the capital, Bishkek, and threatened to storm government buildings, forcing President Sooronbai Jeenbekov to step down Thursday. Under the constitution, the speaker of parliament would be next in line, but he refused to serve as caretaker leader under protesters' pressure, allowing Zhaparov to claim the top office.

The fast-moving developments mark the third time in 15 years that a leader of the Central Asian country has been forced out by a popular uprising. The unrest that gripped the country of 6.5 million people on the border with China was triggered by the Oct. 4 parliamentary election that was swept by pro-government parties.

Supporters of opposition groups dismissed the results, pointing at

vote-buying and other irregularities, and took over government buildings hours after the polls closed. The protesters freed several opposition leaders, including Zhaparov, who was serving an 11-year jail term.

The Central Election Commission nullified the election results and rival regional clans begun jockeying for power, their supporters swarming the capital and occasionally clashing with each other, hurling stones.

President Jeenbekov, who had introduced a state of emergency in Bishkek and deployed troops in the capital, first dismissed calls to resign, but he announced Thursday that he was stepping down to avoid bloodshed.

Zhaparov's supporters quickly besieged the parliament to discourage its speaker, Kanat Isayev, from taking over as acting president.

Isayev formally announced during Friday's parliament session that he wouldn't take the top office, clearing the path for Zhaparov to take the helm.

Zhaparov said the

country must quickly hold the new parliamentary and presidential elections, but specific dates haven't been set yet.

The parliament on Friday lifted the state of emergency in Bishkek that Jeenbekov introduced earlier this week amid the unrest that fueled fears of the violence and looting that accompanied previous uprisings. Such concerns subsided as the troops deployed around the capital and the situation has stabilized, Stores and banks that were closed last week have reopened.

As in the uprisings that ousted presidents in 2005 and 2010, the current unrest has been driven by clan rivalries that dominate the country's politics.

Kyrgyzstan, one of the poorest countries to emerge from the former Soviet Union, is a member of Russia-dominated economic and security alliances, hosts a Russian air base and depends on Moscow's economic support. It formerly was the site of a U.S. air base that was used in the war in Afghanistan.

New Zealand to vote on legalising marijuana and euthanasia

AUCKLAND (NEW ZEALAND), OCT 16 (AP): New Zealanders are poised to decide on two landmark social issues during an election on Saturday: whether to legalise recreational marijuana and whether to legalise euthanasia.

A yes vote on both referendums would arguably make the nation of 5 million one of the more liberal countries in the world. Polls indicate the euthanasia referendum is likely to pass while the result of the marijuana measure remains uncertain.

The two referendums are being held at the same time as people cast votes for lawmakers and political parties. As a result, the referendums have been somewhat overshadowed both by

the political campaigns and this year's coronavirus outbreak.

In the political race, popular Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern appears set to win a second term in office, with her liberal Labour Party polling far ahead of the conservative National Party led by Judith Collins.

The euthanasia measure, which would also allow assisted suicide, would apply to people who have terminal illnesses, are likely to die within six months, and are enduring unbearable suffering.

Countries that allow some form of euthanasia include The Netherlands, Luxembourg, Canada, Belgium and Colombia.

The marijuana measure would allow people to buy up to 14 grams

(0.5 ounce) a day and grow two plants. Other countries that have legalised recreational marijuana include Canada, South Africa, Uruguay, Georgia plus a number of US states.

Lara Greaves, a lecturer in New Zealand politics at the University of Auckland, said she thinks the marijuana referendum is destined to fail.

I think the problem is that we would be going from criminalisation, and a bit of medicinal use, to full-on recreational use, she said. Probably what needed to happen to get the public on board was to have a phase of decriminalisation.

She said a large turnout of younger voters would be necessary for

the measure to have any hope of passing but that was far from certain.

Another factor is that Ardern has declined to say how she intends to vote, saying she wants to leave it for people to decide. Greaves said that made a big difference, as people tend to follow their leaders. The prime minister did admit during the campaign to smoking marijuana when she was younger.

One vocal proponent of the marijuana referendum has been former Prime Minister Helen Clark. A position paper from her foundation argues that indigenous Maori have faced disproportionate and excessive punishment from the legal system when caught with the drug.

Putin proposes yearlong extension of nuclear pact with US

MOSCOW (AP): Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday made a strong call to save the last existing nuclear arms control pact between his country and the United States, proposing to extend it at least for one year.

Putin's statement comes amid conflicting signals from Russian and U.S. diplomats about the fate of the New START treaty that is set to expire in February unless Moscow and Washington agree on its extension.

Speaking at a meeting of his Security Council, Putin said that "it would be extremely sad if the treaty ceases to exist without being replaced by another fundamental document of the kind."

"All those years, the New START has

worked, playing its fundamental role of limiting and containing an arms race," he noted.

The New START treaty was signed in 2010 by U.S. President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev. The pact limits each country to no more than 1,550 deployed nuclear warheads and 700 deployed missiles and bombers, and envisages sweeping on-site inspections to verify compliance.

After both Moscow and Washington withdrew from the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty last year, New START is the only nuclear arms control deal between the two countries still standing.

Russia previously

offered its extension for five years without any conditions, while the U.S. administration pushed for a new arms control agreement that would also include China. Moscow has described that idea as unfeasible, pointing at Beijing's refusal to negotiate any deal that would reduce its much-smaller nuclear arsenal.

Putin on Friday proposed to "extend the existing treaty without any conditions for at least one year" to allow for "substantive talks." He emphasized that Russia is ready to discuss the new weapons it deployed in future arms talks with the United States.

Earlier this week, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov voiced skepticism

about reaching a deal on New START, noting that Russia can't accept the conditions put forward by the United States for its extension.

Lavrov specified that Russia can't agree to the U.S. proposal to limit battlefield nuclear weapons alongside nuclear warheads that arm strategic missiles and bombers until the U.S. agrees to withdraw its tactical nuclear weapons from Europe.

He also noted that Moscow wouldn't accept the U.S. demand to have intrusive verification measures like those that existed in the 1990s when inspectors were positioned at missile factories.

Lavrov's pessimistic view contrasted with statements from U.S. diplomats, who said that Moscow and

Washington were close to a deal.

"We would welcome the opportunity to complete an agreement based on understandings that were achieved over the last couple weeks about what the range of possibilities look like for an extension of New START and an outcome that benefits the entire world, increased stability of the most dangerous weapons in the world," U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Wednesday.

Pompeo said that "I am hopeful that the Russians will find a way to agree to an outcome that, frankly, I think is in their best interest and in our best interest," and voiced hope that China will eventually join the talks too.

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"सरंगीमा गाँउदै हिँड्दा मलाई मान्ने भन्छ आफ्नै दाजु भाइले मलाई नचिने झैं गर्छ।"
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COOL GIRL! The actress, Suki Waterhouse looks effortlessly chic sporting a pink puffer jacket, denim jeans and combat boots while out in London.

Max Ehrich Releases Song About Ex-Fiancee Demi Lovato Less Than 1 Month After She Called Off Their Engagement

Musical healing. Max Ehrich released a new song about his ex-fiancée, Demi Lovato, on Friday, October 16, following their split last month.

"Afraid," which is available on all streaming platforms, includes the lyrics: "I'm afraid to give up my heart / I'm afraid to lose against love / I'm afraid, afraid to be broken apart / So I play, I play safe / Holding my guard."

The Young and the Restless alum's single came after Lovato, 28, performed her new song "Commander in Chief" at the 2020 Billboard Music Awards on Wednesday, October 14.

The politically charged track is the Sonny With a Chance alum's second release since calling off her engagement to Ehrich, 29, last month. She dropped "Still Have Me" on September 30, which is inspired by their breakup.

"I hope the song is No. 1," the Daytime Emmy nominee said in an emotional livestream at the time, throwing shade at his ex. "Because you know what? If that's what someone wants in the material world, here you go, you have it."

Us Weekly confirmed on September 24 that Lovato ended things with Ehrich two months after he proposed. The Southern Gospel star asked the former Disney Channel actress to marry him in July after dating for just

four months.

Following the breakup, the pair both wiped their social media accounts clean of memories of one another and turned to music.

While Lovato put out her two new tracks, a source told Us this month that Ehrich "has written so many love songs about [Demi] when they were in a relationship, so he is figuring out plans for those as well."

He has also teased his music on Instagram while dealing with the heartbreak.

"I've played it in the movies.. But never felt it move me.. til you came through.. now I believe in love again.. thanks to you." —original," he wrote alongside a clip of himself singing on October 4.

The same day, the Grammy nominee went to the Halloween drive-through experience Nights of the Jack in the Calabasas neighborhood of Los Angeles with friend Matthew Scott Montgomery.

A source told Us at the time that Lovato "has been surrounding herself" with friends, while Ehrich "is in shambles about the whole situation."

The Camp Rock actress "has been acting as though she was never engaged to Max and that their relationship never happened," the insider added.

You can continue doing things the way you have been and that will be enough, or you can change things up a little and experiment in a way you never have before. This week is all about taking chances, Cancer. Pushing your own limits will change the game for you permanently. You won't come to regret a thing—we promise!

LEO:

You've taken the reactive approach for a while now and that hasn't changed a thing. Let's try 'responding' to the given situation, shall we? The cards want you to know there is a way to find an amicable solution. So move into that space of deep wisdom within you as you master the art of keeping your ego aside. The world of myths and mysteries is also opening up for some of you. Mediumship is where the magic is right now, and it requires you to move beyond the limitations created by your logical mind.

VIRGO:

At any given point of time, there are two ways to get what you want. The former involves waging a war. The latter? Using your wit and charm. Find a way to work with, rather than against people, Virgo, and know that in doing so, you will win their hearts. You'll find that this trick will come in especially handy on the interpersonal front. PS: Your family could do with some extra TLC from you in the days to come.

John Legend Says He's in "Awe" of Chrissy Teigen's "Strength" After Pregnancy Loss

One day after John Legend's powerful performance at the Billboard Music Awards, the singer applauded Chrissy Teigen for her resilience after she experienced pregnancy loss.

John Legend and Chrissy Teigen are turning their pain into purpose.

One day after dedicating his powerful performance at the 2020 Billboard Music Awards to his wife, John took to Instagram with a heartfelt message applauding Chrissy for her resilience in the face of grief.

In late September, the 34-year-old shared a deeply personal post announcing her pregnancy loss.

"This is for Chrissy," he wrote on Oct. 15. "I love and cherish you and our family so much. We've experienced the highest highs and lowest lows together. Watching you carry our children has been so moving and humbling. I'm in awe of the strength you've shown through the most challenging moments."

The Voice coach continued, "What an awesome gift it is to be able to bring life into the world. We've experienced the miracle, the power and joy of this gift, and now we've deeply felt its inherent fragility."

John, 41, also detailed his inspiration for "Never Break," the song he performed at last night's BBMAS.

"I wrote this song because I have faith that as long as we walk this earth, we will hold each other's hands through



every tear, through every up and down, through every test," he explained. "We promised each other this on our wedding day seven years ago, and every challenge we've faced has made that promise more powerful, more resilient. Our love will remain. We will never break."

Understandably so, Chrissy's typically active social media accounts have gone mostly dark as she takes time to be with her loved ones. The endless love and support from the famous couple's fans and celebrity friends, however, has not gone unnoticed.

John added, "Thank you to everyone who has been sending us prayers and well wishes, flowers, cards, words of

comfort and empathy. We feel and appreciate your love and support more than you know."

The Grammy winner also said they've found comfort in knowing they're not alone in their suffering.

"More than anything," John's post concluded, "we've heard so many stories about how so many other families have experienced this pain, often suffering in silence. It's a club no one wants to be a part of, but it's comforting to know we're not alone. I'm sure Chrissy will have much more to say about this when she's ready. But just know we're grateful and we're sending love to all of you and your families."

Tan France Gifts Gigi Hadid and Zayn Malik's Baby Girl Adorable "Zigi" Onesies

New parents Gigi Hadid and Zayn Malik received a sweet gift from their pal Tan France. Scroll on to see the cute onesies for the couple's daughter.

If there's one thing we know about Gigi Hadid and Zayn Malik's daughter, it's that she's going to be one fashionable girl.

Since welcoming their daughter in September, the super-model and the former One Direction star have shared a few details about their life as new parents. Though they haven't publicly revealed their baby girl's name, Gigi has been posting small glimpses of her daughter and the sweet presents the newborn has already received.

On Thursday, Oct. 15, Gigi took to her Instagram Story to post a photo of the adorable onesies her pal Tan France sent for her baby. The cute outfits are adorned with the moniker "Zigi's Girl," which, as fans of the stars may know, is a nod to Gigi and Zayn's couple name.

"omg @tanfrance," Gigi captioned the post, "love so much."

It was just a few weeks ago, in late September, that Gigi showed off a few more presents for her daughter. "Auntie" Taylor Swift sent the couple's daughter a pink blanket, which she made herself! The baby girl's other "auntie"—Donatella Versace—also sent over a Versace outfit for the newborn to wear.

On Thursday, Gigi also posted that she and Zayn were having a "date night," their second since becoming parents. For the special occasion, the 25-year-old made cheesy garlic pull

apart bread. Yum!

On Oct. 8, Gigi revealed that she and Zayn were having their first official date night since welcoming their daughter. And, although their baby girl was just in the other room with grandma Yolanda Hadid, Gigi admitted she was missing her so much.

Gigi and Zayn, 27, have been staying at the Hadid family farm in Pennsylvania while adjusting to life as parents. "They feel peaceful staying there for now," a source recently told E! News. "Gigi wants the most privacy for their baby and wants to be able to raise her privately."

"Gigi is very tired but is already an amazing mom," the insider also shared. "The first couple of weeks have been a hard transition but she hasn't complained and is very elated to be a mom."

Zayn announced the arrival of the couple's first child on Sept. 23. "Our baby girl is here, healthy & beautiful," he told his Twitter followers. "To try put into words how i am feeling right now would be an impossible task. The love i feel for this tiny human is beyond my understanding. Grateful to know her, proud to call her mine, & thankful for the life we will have together x."

Gigi also shared the news on her social media page later that same day. "Our girl joined us earth-side this weekend and she's already changed our world," she wrote on Instagram. "So in love."

Vivek Oberoi's wife served notice in connection with Sandalwood drug case

A day after raiding Vivek Oberoi's Mumbai residence, the City Crime Branch officials have now served a notice to the actor's wife in connection with the Sandalwood drug case.

Priyanka Alva, Vivek Oberoi's wife, has been served a notice by the Bengaluru Central Crime Branch, a day after the Bollywood actor's Mumbai residence was raided in search of his brother-in-law in the Sandalwood drug case.

Vivek Oberoi's wife Priyanka Alva has been summoned by the crime branch at 12 pm.

This comes a day after the

Bengaluru police raided Bollywood actor Vivek Oberoi's residence in search of his brother-in-law Aditya Alva.

"Vivek Oberoi is his relative and we got some information that Alva is there....So a court warrant was obtained and the Central Crime Branch team has gone to his house in Mumbai," a police officer was quoted as saying by news agency PTI.

Police felt that the actor might be aware of his whereabouts and so the searches were carried out. However, they did not divulge the outcome of the raid.

WHO IS ADITYA ALVA?

Aditya Alva is the son of



former minister late Jeevaraj Alva. According to sources, Aditya Alva has been absent for the past one month ever since the police launched a crackdown against drug peddlers, suppliers and rave party organisers.

More than 15 people have been arrested in this case including Kannada film actress-

es Ragini Dwivedi, Sanjjanaa Galrani, rave party organiser Viren Khanna, realtor Rahul Thonse, and a few Nigerians.

Police launched a crackdown on the drug traffickers, peddlers and consumers after the Narcotics Control Bureau arrested three people from Bengaluru two months ago with drug haul.

ARIES:

Sometimes we hold onto memories long after the people in question have exited our lives, and in doing so, we somehow manage to keep them alive. Could this be a pattern of yours, Aries? The cards want you to remember that if they wanted to be a part of your life, they would be. They would have found a way to stand by your side despite the many curveballs life threw their way.

TAURUS:

Taurus, you're a master manifestor and you don't even know it. The cards are urging you to look around you. Your reality is proof of your ability to transform thoughts into things. So, align your actions with your intentions and watch the miracles unfold. Things on the love and romance front are also getting heated up. Single bulls will find themselves flirting with a certain somebody who's known to be quite the power player.

GEMINI:

Here's the trouble with saying yes to everything. It can give you that kick temporarily, but it does nothing to satisfy the void within. What are *you* filling your hours with, Gemini? Are these activities bringing you joy? It's time to get real with yourself—and to learn that 'no' is a complete sentence. Learning to be mindful about how you spend your time and energy will change the game for you permanently.

CANCER: