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# SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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**Ladakh standoff: India, China hold 7th round of high-level military talks**

**NEW DELHI, OCT 12 (PTI):** India and China on Monday held the seventh round of high-level military talks with a sole agenda of finalising a roadmap for disengagement of troops from all the friction points in eastern Ladakh.

As the border standoff entered the sixth month, an early resolution to the row appears dim.

The talks at the Corps commander level began at around 12 noon in Chushul on the Indian side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh, official sources said.

The Indian delegation is led by Lt Gen Harinder Singh, the commander of the Leh-based 14 Corps, and includes Naveen Srivastava, Joint Secretary (East Asia) in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

Close to 100,000 Indian and Chinese troops are deployed in eastern Ladakh as both sides are holding their ground and also showing readiness for a long-haul even as diplomatic and military talks to find an amicable solution continue.

The talks in Chushul are underway, the sources said.

Ahead of the talks, the sources said India will press for an early and complete disengagement of troops by China from all the friction points besides demanding restoration of immediate restoration of status quo ante in all areas of eastern Ladakh prior to April. The standoff began on May 5.

The agenda for the talks is to firm up a roadmap for disengagement of troops from all the friction points in eastern Ladakh, the sources said.

The China Study Group (CSG) comprising Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat and three service chiefs on Friday finalised India's strategy for the military talks. The CSG is India's key policy making body on China.

The sources said India will strongly oppose any demand by China for withdrawal of Indian troops from several strategic heights on the southern bank of the Pangong lake to kick-start the disengagement process.

During the sixth round of Corps commander talks on September 21, the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) insisted on withdrawal of troops by the Indian Army from several strategic heights in

**turn to pg 02**

## Arrested Siliguri kingpin of MBBS admission con cheated people of Rs 3 crore: Sikkim Police

**ARPAN PRADHAN GANGTOK, 12 OCT:**

In a major breakthrough in a case which has been dragging for five years, the Crime Branch & CID [CB&CID] branch of Sikkim Police has nabbed the main accused in racket which scammed people with promises of securing admission in

Sikkim Manipal Institute of Medical Sciences. The accused, one Sumantra Gupta, was arrested from Siliguri on Sunday. The case has been under investigation since 2015 when it was registered at the Sadar Thana and CB&CID.

Addressing a press conference here this af-

ternoon, Superintendent of Police CB&CID, Tenzing Loden Lepcha, informed that the arrest was effected in coordination with officials of Bhaktinagar Police Station of West Bengal police.

Additional SP [CB&CID], Rinzing Chopel, who is also the investigating officer of the case,

informed that there are more than 40 complaints registered against the accused adding up to around Rs 3 crore duped from people who have sought police assistance.

The accused, informed, has been remanded to five days police custody for interrogation.

The ASP explained

that the accused has been cheating people by claiming to be the Dean of SMIMS and assuring them admission in the institute on payment of grease money to him. Of course, he had no such clout in the institution and these assurances never came good and aspirants lost their money.

The case is being investigated as one of fraud, cheating and other crimes.

It is informed that at the time of arrest, the police seized 31 mobile sim cards, a laptop, a brand new vehicle and his mobile phone. The process to freeze all his bank accounts has also begun, the ASP informed.

The police have registered the cases with sections of 419, 420, 468, 471, 120B of IPC and C & D of Section 66 of IT Act against the accused.

The team which effected the arrest comprised of ASP Rinzing Chopel, PI Abhishek Dhal, and Lance Naik Sanjay Subba.

## India's COVID-19 tally crosses 71-lakh mark with 66,732 fresh cases



**NEW DELHI, OCT 12 (PTI):** India's COVID-19 tally went past 71 lakh with 66,732 fresh cases, while the number of people who have recuperated crossed 61 lakh, pushing the recovery rate to 86.36 per cent, according to the Union health ministry data updated on Monday.

The country's COVID-19 caseload stands at 71,20,538. The death toll climbed to 1,09,150 with the virus claiming 816 lives in a day, the data updated at 8 am showed.

For the fourth day in a row, the number of ac-

tive COVID-19 cases remained below 9 lakh.

There are 8,61,853 active cases of coronavirus infection in the country which account for 12.10 per cent of the total caseload, the data showed.

The case fatality rate due to the coronavirus infection has dropped to 1.53 per cent.

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 Octo-

ber 11. According to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), a total of 8,78,72,093 samples had been tested up to October 11. Of these, 9,94,851 samples were tested on Sunday.

The 816 fatalities include 309 from Maharashtra, 75 from Karnataka, 65 from Tamil Nadu, 59 from West Bengal, 41 from Uttar Pradesh, 35 from Punjab, 30 from Andhra Pradesh and 29 from Delhi.

Of the total 1,09,150 deaths reported so far in the country, 40,349 are from Maharashtra, 10,252 from Tamil

Nadu, 9,966 from Karnataka, 6,394 from Uttar Pradesh, 6,224 from Andhra Pradesh, 5,769 from Delhi, 5,622 from West Bengal, 3,833 from Punjab and 3,566 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.

## Sikkim records 57th COVID death and seven new cases

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 12 OCT:**

Sikkim recorded its 57th COVID-19 related death with the demise of a 62-year-old male from Arithang in Gangtok on Sunday night who was found COVID-19 positive and shifted to STNM Hospital at around midnight the previous night. Shifted immediately to the COVID ICU at the hospital, the patient passed away at 10:22 PM last night.

In the daily health bulletin on Monday, Health Department State IEC officer, Sonam G Bhutia, explained that this was a COVID-19 death with co-morbidities of diabetes. The patient was also diagnosed with pneumonia and respiratory distress.

In the meantime, with no RT-PCR testing carried out on Sunday as the VRD Lab was closed, only seven fresh cases of novel coronavirus were reported in the last 24 hours in the State.

Among the new cases, six have been reported from East District and one from North Sikkim.

There are currently 384 COVID patients either in hospital or under isolation at home. The total number

of confirmed cases of COVID-19 reported in Sikkim has now reached 3,366.

On the other hand, the tally of discharged patients now stands at 2,844 with the discharge of five more patients from isolation facilities on Sunday.

Four patients are meanwhile currently in the ICU facility at STNM Hospital.

In TrueNat testing of four samples yesterday, only one person from Arithang was reported positive. The same patient passed away last night.

Six other persons were found COVID-19 positive in rapid antigen testing of 34 samples.

While providing details of the new cases found in RAT, Mr Bhutia informed that one person from Arithang, one from Chandmari, one from Bardang, one from Sirwani and a worker of Giri Ganga Teesta-III project from Pentok, Mangan in North Sikkim were tested positive for COVID-19.

He mentioned one person from Jalipool was also found COVID-19 positive and as the patient had recently visited a clinic at Ranipool, the clinic has also been contained.

## Sikkim trio to represent India in intl quiz competition



**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 12 OCT:**

Three Sikkim students, Rishal Pandey Chettri, Aditya Chettri and Rushali Golay [Tamang], have been selected as 'Official Country Representatives' of India for the BUP International Quiz League 2020 being organised by EMK Center and Quizzers Society of Bangladesh-based BUP, a press release informs.

The quiz competi-

tion will see participants from Britain, USA, Malaysia, Thailand, Nepal, Bangladesh, Azerbaijan, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Ghana etc.

The trio was short-listed on the basis of their performances in various quiz competitions and then went through trials during which they defeated thousands of others competing to represent India.

The competition will be held online due to the

ongoing pandemic between 21 to 24 October, it is informed.

Rishal and Aditya are students of Delhi Public School, Siliguri, and Rushali completed her class 12 from Holy Cross School, Tadong. The competition carries a prize money of BDT 25,000.

The trio have represented the state and the country at quiz competitions on several occasions in the past.

## Dzongu Panchayats say no to hydel projects

**WANGCHUK BHUTIA MANGAN, 12 OCT:**

The Panchayat Presidents, Vice Presidents, Zilla Panchayats and Ward Panchayats of eight Gram Panchayat Units of Dzongu constituency, North Sikkim, conducted their fifth monthly meeting at Hee-Gyathang Gram Panchayat Bhawan on 11 Oct, 2020.

The main agenda of the meeting was to discuss that no more Hydro Electric Projects (HEP) and dams will be allowed in Dzongu, North Sikkim. Power projects should not be implemented in Dzongu as these areas are very vulnerable due to several landslides.

The meeting stated that they have been opposing HEP's for the last several years to protect Dzongu and the Lepcha



Indigenous Habitat. It was mentioned that the government should understand the people's sentiments and the future of the coming generation which is also mentioned in Article 3069.

The meeting also rejected the Forest Rights Act (FRA) hearings and the resolutions passed in the past years.

The house also discussed the Shipgyer Sankalang approach

road which comes under GREF (BRO). The work was started in 1990 but remains incomplete, so the panchayats have decided to approach the Governor of Sikkim for early action.

They also informed media persons that Dzongu had already passed a resolution stating that they are ready to resume tourism this year following the stipulated COVID-19 protocols.

## Maha CM orders probe into Mumbai power outage

**MUMBAI, OCT 12 (PTI)**

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Monday took serious cognisance of a massive power outage in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) and ordered an immediate probe. Thackeray held a meeting on the issue and instructed authorities concerned to ensure there is no recurrence of the episode, an official statement said.

Power supply in majority of areas in the city was restored within three to three-and-a-half hours after it was affected at around 10 am, it said.

State Energy Minister Nitin Raut, who attended the meeting via video conferencing, also said reasons behind the technical snag that caused power failure will be probed.

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# Defence Minister goes virtual to inaugurate 4 bridges in Sikkim

**GANGTOK, OCT 12 [IPR]:** Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh virtually inaugurated 43 Bridges built by the Border Roads Organisation in border states and Union Territories of Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh today.

The bridges were inaugurated on an online event which was attended by the Union Minister of State for DONER Jitendra Singh, Minister of State for Sports and Youth Affairs Kiran Rijjiu, Chief Minister of Sikkim Prem Singh Tamang and other Chief Ministers, heads and officials of Seven States and Union Territories along with DG/BRO Lt. General Harpal Singh.

Chief Minister of Sikkim Prem Singh Tamang, Minister for Roads and Bridges Department Samdup Lepcha along with senior officials of the State Government, officials of BRO, GREF and other officials joined the live video from Samman Bhawan.

From the forty three bridges built by the BRO, Siyam khola, Ringchu



Khola, B5 and Khumdum Khola were the four bridges inaugurated in Sikkim.

The Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang in his address at the inaugural function placed forward the gratitude of the Sikkimese people for being presented with this milestone of four bridges in the State. He conveyed heartfelt greetings on behalf of the Sikkimese to all on this momentous occasion and thanked the Government of India, along with the Border Roads Organization.

He expressed happiness that the Defence Minister has dedicated forty three permanent bridges to the country and also laid the foundation stone of Nechiphu tunnel in Arunachal Pradesh.

The Chief Minister stated that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, all the essential needs of the Army in the country are being strengthened. He also expressed his gratitude to the Central Government for developing the projects in the border areas.

He informed that due to the hilly terrain in the border areas of Sikkim, landslides and other natural calamities are common. Keeping this situation and the security of the country in mind, the bridges will play an important role in transporting the essential materials and connecting the remote areas thereby benefitting the villagers. Because of Sikkim being located in the mountainous region of the Himalayas, road plays an important role in connecting remote ar-

eas. He appreciated the fact that Border Roads Organization has played an incredible role in the development, maintenance and construction of national highways and other roadways in the state of Sikkim. With better connectivity, tourism related activities will increase and it will have a good effect on socio-economic development of the region remarked the Chief Minister.

The Chief Minister communicated that plans are also being made for connectivity in the

border region of North Sikkim and use of latest technology in road construction in areas such as tunnel, slope stabilization, bridge construction and avalanche is being done which will have a far-reaching effect in improving connectivity.

The Chief Minister praised the employees of GREF for their selfless service for keeping the roads open during the monsoon and winter seasons. He also congratulated Director General of Border Roads Organization Lieutenant General Harpal Singh for the excellent work being done by the jawans and officers of the Swastik Project under his leadership and expressed positivity that they would always live upto the expectations of the people of Sikkim as well as of the country.

In conclusion, the Chief Minister said that he is filled with gratitude to witness the inauguration of the permanent bridges within Sikkim, this important work will definitely facilitate connectivity and bring positive changes in the socio-economic fabric of the state.

## Relief provided to schools and college in Tumin Lingee



### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 12 OCT:** Social worker, Pintso Bhutia of Tumin Lingee Constituency donated free thermal scanner, PPE kit, and sanitizers, etc. to 6 different schools and 1 college of Tumin Lingee.

The items were provided to Govt Samdong SS School, Govt Tumin Secondry School, Govt Dikchu SS School, Govt Makha SS School, Govt Lower Samdong S School, Govt Lingee SS School, and Govt Sanskrit College Samdong.

### Maha CM orders...

Nitin Raut later tweeted that "Power supply to all essential services in Mumbai, Mumbai Suburbs, Kalyan, Thane, Palghar & New Mumbai have been restored".

The meeting, which was held at the chief minister's official residence 'Varsha' in afternoon, was also attended by state chief secretary Sanjay Kumar and representatives of power supplying companies like BEST, Tata and Adani.

"During the meeting, the chief minister instructed a probe into the matter and asked to ensure there is no repeat of the incident," the statement said.

The CM has asked to check whether the snag was "expected, unexpected or was caused by dereliction" and directed authorities concerned to remain alert in view of the withdrawing monsoon forecast over the next four days.

The circuit 1 at 400 KV Kalwa-Padgha GIS stopped working due to over voltage at 4:33 am. The supply, however, was unaffected even as the maintenance work on the circuit 1 was on, the statement said.

Earlier in the day, Raut said the entire load was then transferred to circuit 2.

"Repair and maintenance work of Circuit 1 of 400 KV GIS was underway and the entire load was put on Circuit 2.

However, sudden technical failure in Circuit 2 resulted in power being affected in most parts of Mumbai and Thane," Raut said.

He also directed the state chief secretary to ensure that the control rooms and fire brigade are on alert to prevent any mishaps due to power outage, it said.

In the morning, the power outage paralysed Mumbai, halting local train services, trapping people in lifts and disrupting work from home adopted by millions during the ongoing pandemic.

Power restoration efforts began on a "war footing" and pocket-wise resumption in supply was started around 12 noon onwards.

## RDD organizes meeting on Jal Jeevan Mission



**NAMCHI, 12 OCT (IPR):** A video conferencing (VC) meeting on Jal Jeevan Mission held through zoom platform organized by SIRD&PR, RDD Gangtok was held at DAC, Namchi, today.

The VC was chaired by C.S Rao, Principal Secretary cum Mission Director State Water and Sanitation Mission (SWSM) who is also the Chairman of State Level Scheme Sanctioning Committee (SLSSC) for implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission and attended by officials of SIRD&PR alongside line department representatives who jointly form the District Water

and Sanitation Mission (DWSM) from all four districts.

During the course of the VC, the vision and prime objective of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) were discussed in detail which emphasizes drinking water supply in adequate quantity to every rural household on regular and long-term basis at affordable service delivery charges leading to improvement in living standards of rural communities.

Chairman of SLSSC, C.S Rao also addressed the VC wherein he stated that Jal Jeevan Mission is a central government ini-

tiative under the Ministry of Jal Shakti which aims to ensure access of piped water for every household in India. He also elaborated how JJM has been envisioned to provide safe and adequate drinking water through individual household tap connections by 2024 to all households in rural India. In addition he also stated that ensuring safe water to children is a priority under JJM as they are most susceptible to water-borne diseases. Rao also stressed upon concerted efforts in the form of time bound reports and actions involving all line departments

and local communities in order to make it a public movement. In this regard, he urged the DC who are the Chairpersons of DWSM of all four districts to ensure timely completion and submission of Village Action Plan (VAPs) and District Action Plan (DAP).

Sandip Rai Chief Engineer RDD (Gangtok) cum Member Secretary of SLSSC presented a PPT on Jal Jeevan Mission wherein various components under JJM such as development of in-village piped water supply infrastructure to provide tap water connection to every rural household, augmentation of existing sources to provide long-term sustainability of water supply system, grey water management, retrofitting of completed and ongoing schemes and other support activities were explained. Roles and responsibilities of DWSM's and other stakeholders was also elucidated to the concerned authorities in the PPT.

## Tree plantation by Rotary Club of Siliguri



### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 12 OCT:**

Rotary Club of Siliguri Uttarayan organised a tree plantation programme with Siliguri Tea Traders Association in North Bengal Tea Park behind NJP railway station today, a press release informs.

Project chairman, Kuldeep Bansal informed

that Siliguri Tea Traders Association President, Trilok Agarwal along with other Members were present in the campaign.

President Gopal Kayan and secretary Ajay Gupta informed that the Club planted 100 saplings today. This is the fourth tree plantation by the club this year, the release mentions.

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### Ladakh standoff: India...

Mukhpari, Rezang La and Magar hill areas around the southern bank of Pangong lake.

Indian troops had occupied the strategic heights after the PLA soldiers attempted to intimidate them in the southern bank of Pangong lake on the intervening night of August 29 and 30.

India has been maintaining that the disengagement process has to start simultaneously at all the friction points.

At the talks, the two sides are expected to further explore steps to maintain stability on the ground and avoid any action that may trigger fresh tension in the region where troops from both sides will be facing difficult conditions in the next four months due to harsh winter, the sources said.

Following the sixth round of military talks, the two sides announced a slew of decisions including not to send more troops to the frontline, refrain from unilaterally changing the situation on the ground and avoid taking any

actions that may further complicate matters.

The military talks were held with a specific agenda of exploring ways to implement a five-point agreement reached between Jaishankar and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi at a meeting in Moscow on September 10 on the sidelines of a Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) conclave.

The pact included measures like quick disengagement of troops, avoiding action that could escalate tensions, adherence to all agreements and protocols on border management and steps to restore peace along the LAC.

Days after the military talks, the two sides held diplomatic parleys under the framework of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) on border affairs, but no concrete outcome emerged from the negotiations on September 30.

After the diplomatic talks, the MEA said it was agreed that the next round

of the meeting of senior commanders should be held at an early date so that both sides can work towards an early and complete disengagement of the troops along the LAC in accordance with the existing bilateral agreement and protocols.

Srivastava, who has been leading the Indian side at the WMCC talks, also attended the military parleys on September 21 for the first time.

It is Lt Gen Singh's last round of talks with the PLA in the current standoff as he is due to take charge as head of the prestigious Indian Military Academy (IMA) this week. His successor at the 14 Corps Lt Gen PGK Menon is also part of the Indian delegation.

At the previous six rounds of military talks, the Indian side insisted on complete disengagement of Chinese troops at the earliest, and immediate restoration of status quo ante in all areas of eastern Ladakh prior to April.

The situation in eastern Ladakh

deteriorated following at least three attempts by the Chinese soldiers to "intimidate" Indian troops along the northern and southern bank of Pangong lake area between August 29 and September 8 where even shots were fired in the air for the first time at the LAC in 45 years.

As tensions escalated further, the foreign ministers of India and China held talks in Moscow on September 10 where they reached a five-point agreement to defuse the situation in eastern Ladakh.

The agreement was the basis for the sixth round of Corps commander-level talks.

In the last three months, the Indian Army rushed tanks, heavy weaponry, ammunition, fuel, food and essential winter supplies to various treacherous and high-altitude areas of the region to maintain combat readiness through the harsh winter of around four months starting around mid-October.

### CHANGE OF NAME

I, Mrs Kavita Devli spouse of JC-805758W Sub- (Instr) Dalip Singh Bhandari Resident of Village Saraswati Vihar, Dakpathar, Tehsil- Vikasnagar Dehradun Pin- 248125 have changed my name from Kavita Devli to Kavita Bhandari vide Affidavit No. A038092 dated 28.09.2020 before Ms Jyoti Pradhan Oath Commissioner (East) High Court of Sikkim.

## ~ SummitTIMES ~ CLASSIFIEDS

### LAND FOR SALE

Two plots available – 30X40 sq ft and 50X30 sq ft  
Junkeri Dara, Samlik Marchak  
Price negotiable  
Contact : 6296366498,  
9641878315, 9593262407

### LAND FOR SALE

A land measuring an area for 50x32 1/2 at 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.



# Student group writes to CM on college admission issue

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 12 OCT:**

A group of students who have not got selected for admission in colleges of the state have written to the Chief Minister, Education Minister and Education Secretary requesting their immediate intervention.

In a press release, the

group has said that they have not made it to the three lists that the Education Department has released till now and are anxious about what the future holds for them.

They have urged the government to create more seats in colleges since many are unwilling to study outside the state due to the

COVID-19 pandemic.

"When we visit the education department with our problems, we are told about the various private institutions within the state and government's scholarships there. Firstly, the Scholarships are given to very few students. Secondly, even with concession in

the fees, it is very difficult for those belonging to weak financial background to afford studies in private institutions," the release states.

They have put forth suggestions to increase the number of seats in each department in every government college of the state, running two

shifts of classes to accommodate all the students, and strengthen SSU and immediately enroll students in various courses in the University.

On 06 Oct 2020, the Education department released the third and the last list of names of students selected for various colleges in the state.

## SKM sports wing felicitates two coaches

**SAGAR CHETTRI  
GANGTOK, 12 OCT:**

The Sports Wing of Sikkim Krantikari Morcha party felicitated two coaches of Sikkim for their contributions in their respective sports disciplines here at White Hall premises on Monday. International athlete and chief coach of Strength lifting, Pema Dorjee Bhutia and archery coach, Pujan Rai were felicitated in recognition of their hard work and dedication in promoting their respective disciplines in the State and for promoting local talents in national and international platforms.

The felicitation programme had Minister for Sports & Youth Affairs Department, KN Lepcha as the chief guest, while Forest Minister, Karma Loday Bhutia was present as the guest of honour. The programme was also attended by Advisor to Sports & Youth Affairs Department, Megnath Subba, Chairman of State Youth Development Board, Basant Sharma, Secretary to SYA Department, Kuber Bhandari and other officials of the department.

In his address, the chief guest expressed that such events to recognize the hardwork and contribution of sportspersons are very important to further motivate them. He congratulated both coaches for their hard work and contribution towards sports in the State.

The Sports Minister mentioned that SKM has revived sports activities in the state soon after government formation. He mentioned that the State government has been working seriously to bring out talented sportspersons from different corners of the State by providing opportunities and creating infrastructures and platforms for local

sportspersons.

"We have been working to keep our young generation in sporting and productive activities and further encourage them to make a successful career in sports," he said.

The Minister informed that the State has availed a scheme of the Centre to transform Khel Gaon at Reshithang into a Centre of Excellence for athletics, boxing and archery.

He mentioned that the government has also decided to start club culture in the State and has also enhanced sports quota in government jobs to 5%. He urged the sportspersons of Sikkim to take full advantage of opportunities and facilities provided by the government. He encouraged everyone to come together to give their contributions to make Sikkim a Model State in sports.

Likewise, Forest Minister expressed that sports needs discipline, hardwork and dedication. He stated that local sportspersons of Sikkim have full potential to make a successful sports career in the national and international arena. While congratulating both awardees, Mr Bhutia encouraged them to continue with their efforts and hard work for further development of sports in the State. He expressed that sports is a priority sector of the SKM party and its government.

Pema Dorjee Bhutia and Pujan Rai shared their experiences and thanked the sports wing of SKM for such recognition and encouragement.

The programme was also addressed by SKM sports wing president, Rinzing Wangyal and other executive members of the sports wing.

## International Day of Girl Child observed at Uttarey School

**RUDRA KAUSHIK  
GYALSHING, 12 OCT:**

Mahila Shakti Kendra under the Social Welfare Department marked the International Day of Girl Child here at Uttarey Senior Secondary School of Uttarey (USSS) West Sikkim on Sunday. Following the necessary COVID -19 protocol, the programme was jointly organized by welfare officer, Maneka Chettri and the District Coordinators, Trizana Subba and Bidhyanti Tamang.

More than 30 adolescent girls from in and around Uttarey were invited to attend the programme. The objective of the programme was to highlight and address the needs and challenges girls face while promoting girls' empowerment, girl child rights, right to education, etc.

International Day of Girl Child is a United Nations Organization's (UNO) approved day which is observed every

year on 11 Oct.

H.B Shankhar spoke on subjects such as gender discrimination, importance of girls education, making the girls self-dependent through some skill development programme and overall development of girls in the society.

Bidhyanti Tamang spoke on various women/girls centric schemes and issues, awareness on roles and responsibilities of Mahila Shakti Kendra, tackling women/girls oriented issues through women based NGOs and organizations.

Dr. Nevidita Pradhan from Dentam Public Health Center spoke on girls' health, nutrition, mental health issues, etc. She informed the gathering on various girl centric medical problems and remedies, signs and symptoms of depression and other mental health issues.

Another resource person, Pema Yanki Bhu-

tia spoke on illegality of child marriage, child labor and protection of girl child from unlawful practices prevalent in the society. She expressed that awareness was vital in the society to deal with women centric issues.

Yasoda Chettri shared information on "good touch and bad touch" and other safety measures women and girls should practice.

The invitees in the programme were given mementoes and each adolescent girl was given a gift hamper which included a packet of sanitary pad, hand sanitizer, face mask, toothbrush, toothpaste and soap.

The event was also attended by the Vice Principal of the school, T. B. Limboo and other faculty members of the school, Anganwadi workers, Dr. Nevidita Pradhan and Dr. Goma, H.B. Shankar, CDDO Gyalshing and others.

## SC notice to Centre on pleas against farm laws

**NEW DELHI, OCT 12 (PTI):** The Supreme Court Monday sought response from the Centre on a batch of petitions challenging the constitutional validity of the newly enacted three contentious farm laws.

A bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde issued notice to the central government and sought its reply within four weeks.

The three laws -- Farmers' (Empowerment and Protection) Agree-

ment of Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020; Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020 and The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act 2020 -- took effect from September 27 after President Ram Nath Kovind's assent.

The bench, also comprising Justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian, was hearing pleas filed by Rashtriya Janta Dal lawmaker from

Rajya Sabha, Manoj Jha; Congress Lok Sabha MP from Kerala, TN Prathapan and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) Rajya Sabha MP from Tamil Nadu, Tiruchi Siva, and a petition filed by Rakesh Vaishnav.

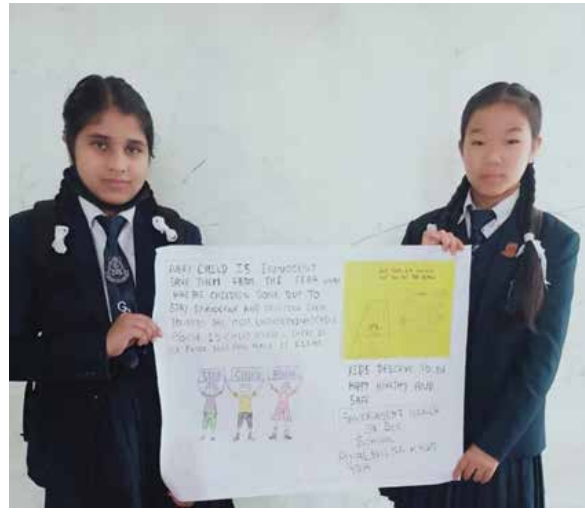
The petitions alleged that the three farm laws passed by Parliament would dismantle the Agricultural Produce Market Committees system intended to ensure fair prices for farm products.

## Child Protection Rights campaign by NSS Cell

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 12 OCT:**

NSS Cell, Department of Sports & Youth Affairs conducted a campaign on Child Protection Rights during which the NSS Cell, led by SNO and Programme Officers, Programme Coordinators and NSS volunteers registered their support through various means such as creating awareness among the masses about child exploitation in various forms through awareness videos, short skits, posters etc, a press release informs.

The campaign highlighted that "all children can be vulnerable by virtue of their young age and evolving capacities. They can be 'open to' harm, injury, violence, and abuse. Due to different circumstances and/



or factors children can also be vulnerable to adverse influences and 'at risk' behavior.

Marginalization further exacerbates vulnerability. In development settings like India, the burden of risk and vulnerability falls disproportionately on children. Impact of child vulner-

ability and marginalization can be short term or long term depending on the extent, nature and severity, and other factors. The damage can also be permanent. The impact can be on the physical, emotional, social, psychological and mental health and well-being of the child."

## SRM Univ Sikkim celebrates Research Day

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 12 OCT:**

Khoj 2020, the second annual research day at SRM University, Sikkim, was observed on 10 October in a series of parallel online sessions, a press release informs.

PG students, research scholars and faculty members from all departments of the university presented papers on a variety of topics.

A total of 50 papers were presented, and the best paper in each category was awarded.

The event also included the felicitation of teachers whose research papers and books were published.

Eighteen research papers were published this year by faculty members in national and international journals. One book, an edited volume, was published by an international press. The University also submitted eight research proposals for funded projects out of which one has already been granted and others are in the pipeline, the Coordinator of the

Research Cell informs.

Speaking at the valedictory function, the Vice Chancellor, Prof Ch Satish Kumar, said, "Research is the backbone of all academic endeavour at SRM University Sikkim and we will do everything possible to create a spirit and atmosphere of research in our institution."

Providing a further fillip to these efforts, Prof Ch Satish Kumar announced that the proceedings of the 2nd Annual Day would be published as a volume within the year.

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**What is Novel Coronavirus - nCoV?**

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

Symptoms of nCoV	Precautions to Prevent nCoV
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fever</li> <li>● Difficulty in breathing</li> <li>● Dry Cough</li> <li>● Severe acute respiratory syndrome</li> <li>● Pneumonia - like symptoms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Wash your hands often with soap.</li> <li>● Use an alcohol based hand sanitizer</li> <li>● Observe good personal hygiene.</li> <li>● Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.</li> <li>● Avoid contact with people with possible symptoms.</li> <li>● Avoid contact with animals and consumption of undercooked meats.</li> <li>● Avoid travel to nCoV affected places.</li> <li>● Wear a mask if you have respiratory syndrome, and cover your mouth while coughing or sneezing.</li> </ul>
Treatment	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Treatment is symptomatic and supportive, based on the patient's clinical condition.</li> <li>● No vaccinations available as of now</li> <li>● Visit Doctor in case symptoms detected.</li> </ul>	

If you seek help, you may call :  
-Toll free no. 104  
District surveillance Officer  
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WEST : 9593297809  
NORTH : 9641957468  
SOUTH : 7407691463  
New STNM  
AMS : 9434711402

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

**GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM  
HEALTH AND FAMILY  
WELFARE DEPARTMENT  
TASHILING, GANGTOK**

**NOTICE FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)**  
The Health & Family Welfare Department, Government of Sikkim invites Expression of Interest (EOI) for "Setting up of State of the Art 500 bedded Super-speciality Cancer Institute with full infrastructure including Proton Beam therapy Machine under invest model on Design, Build, Finance and Opeate (DBFO) mode for Government of Sikkim at Jorethang, South Sikkim.

The details of the EOI can be viewed and downloaded from the website [www.sikkim.gov.in](http://www.sikkim.gov.in)

Sd/-  
Principal Secretary  
Health & Family welfare Department  
Govt of Sikkim

R.O. No. 106/IPR.Pub/Class/20-21  
Dt.12.10.2020



## The Next Lot Sans Prejudice

*Can we give the young confidence instead of paranoia*

It's festive time. A time when people are lavish with gifts, blessings and best wishes. In this time of giving, can we expect the present generation to gift the next a grooming sans prejudice?

Just look around, the world as we know it is turning into a global village and WTO is blurring international boundaries as far as trade is concerned, but people in general are becoming more and more parochial. Almost every district wants to express itself as a State, every province wants to be a country and every community swears it has a unique identity independent of all others. While it would be improper to deny anyone their right to self-expression, it would be criminal to ignore the fact that self expression in the present-day politically charged times almost always comes at the cost of denying someone else the same right. The generation in control of things has abused with alacrity this fundamental right, and mindsets are already fixated on ideas which are prejudiced and even illogical. There is little that can be done on this front, but if we accept that things need to change and improve, we could try and do so with the generation still untrained in the biases which we have fomented.

Much as we would want to deny it, an obvious communal divide is getting sharper by the day in Sikkim as well. Enter homes, and opinions which could later inflame into searing conflagrations, are all there. Passing comments which never posed serious repercussions earlier are no longer as innocent as they used to be in times when violent expressions were rare. We need to be more careful and at the cost of sounding trite - more politically correct in the presence of younger adults. If we are to remain free of the communalism which has already swept most of the country and is trying to find its own interpretations in Sikkim, the State needs to address the issue more scientifically. The best places to start are the schools. It is perhaps time that classes were set aside to educate the younger generation on what makes their culture, their heritage and history inter-dependent and not hermetically independent. No attempts should be made to bring every community under one umbrella and students should be allowed the chance to celebrate each community's individuality and then learn of how each relies on the other. Once they know of other cultures and are also aware of their own, they will not feel threatened. The paranoia which inflicts various communities in Sikkim is borne not from any obvious threat, but from their own lack of sound moorings in their culture and history. Half-baked notions of identity are the most susceptible to exploitation and they are being exploited at present. There is no need to keep the future generation in the dark about differences which exist between different communities here. Perhaps, if they are well informed about the points of attrition, they will also be able to work out the solutions that have failed others so far. They might even discard the whole concept of notional contradictions.

Can we equip the next generation well enough to do that?

### WRITE US:

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



## Do social media algorithms erode our ability to make decisions freely? The jury is out

LEWIS MITCHELL & JAMES BAGROW  
*theconversation.com*

Have you ever watched a video or movie because YouTube or Netflix recommended it to you? Or added a friend on Facebook from the list of "people you may know"?

And how does Twitter decide which tweets to show you at the top of your feed?

These platforms are driven by algorithms, which rank and recommend content for us based on our data.

As Woodrow Hartzog, a professor of law and computer science at Northeastern University, Boston, explains:

If you want to know when social media companies are trying to manipulate you into disclosing information or engaging more, the answer is always.

So if we are making decisions based on what's shown to us by these algorithms, what does that mean for our ability to make decisions freely?

WHAT WE SEE IS TAILORED FOR US

An algorithm is a digital recipe: a list of rules for achieving an outcome, using a set of ingredients. Usually, for tech companies, that outcome is to make money by convincing us to buy something or keeping us scrolling in order to show us more advertisements.

The ingredients used are the data we provide through our actions online – knowingly or otherwise. Every time you like a post, watch a video, or buy something, you provide data that can be used to make predictions about your next move.

These algorithms can influence us, even if we're not aware of it. As the New York Times' Rabbit Hole podcast explores, YouTube's recommendation algorithms can drive viewers to increasingly extreme content, potentially leading to online radicalisation.

Facebook's News Feed algorithm ranks content to keep us engaged on the platform. It can produce a phenomenon called "emotional contagion", in which seeing positive posts leads us to write positive posts ourselves, and seeing negative posts

means we're more likely to craft negative posts — though this study was controversial partially because the effect sizes were small.

Also, so-called "dark patterns" are designed to trick us into sharing more, or spending more on websites like Amazon. These are tricks of website design such as hiding the unsubscribe button, or showing how many people are buying the product you're looking at right now. They subconsciously nudge you towards actions the site would like you to take.

YOU ARE BEING PROFILED

Cambridge Analytica, the company involved in the largest known Facebook data leak to date, claimed to be able to profile your psychology based on your "likes". These profiles could then be used to target you with political advertising.

"Cookies" are small pieces of data which track us across websites. They are records of actions you've taken online (such as links clicked and pages visited) that are stored in the browser. When they are combined with data from multiple sources including from large-scale hacks, this is known as "data enrichment". It can link our personal data like email addresses to other information such as our education level.

These data are regularly used by tech companies like Amazon, Facebook, and others to build profiles of us and predict our future behaviour.

YOU ARE BEING PREDICTED

So, how much of your behaviour can be predicted by algorithms based on your data?

Our research, published in Nature Human Behaviour last year, explored this question by looking at how much information about you is contained in the posts your friends make on social media.

Using data from Twitter, we estimated how predictable peoples' tweets were, using only the data from their friends. We found data from eight or nine friends was enough to be able to predict someone's tweets just as well as if we had downloaded them directly (well over 50% accuracy, see graph below). Indeed, 95% of the potential predictive accuracy that a machine learning algorithm might achieve is obtainable just from friends' data.

Our results mean that even if you #DeleteFacebook (which trended after the Cambridge Analytica scandal in 2018), you may still be able to be profiled, due to the social ties that remain. And that's before we consider the things about Facebook that make it so difficult to delete anyway.

We also found it's possible to build profiles of non-users — so-called "shadow profiles" — based on their contacts who are on the platform. Even if you have never used Facebook, if your friends do, there is the possibility a shadow profile could be built of you.

On social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter, privacy is no longer tied to the individual, but to the network as a whole.

NO MORE FREE WILL? NOT QUITE

But all hope is not lost. If you do delete your account, the information contained in your social ties with friends grows stale over time. We found predictability gradually declines to a low level, so your privacy and anonymity will eventually return.

While it may seem like algorithms are eroding our ability to think for ourselves, it's not necessarily the case. The evidence on the effectiveness of psychological profiling to influence voters is thin.

Most importantly, when it comes to the role of people versus algorithms in things like spreading (mis)information, people are just as important. On Facebook, the extent of your exposure to diverse points of view is more closely related to your social groupings than to the way News Feed presents you with content. And on Twitter, while "fake news" may spread faster than facts, it is primarily people who spread it, rather than bots.

Of course, content creators exploit social media platforms' algorithms to promote content, on YouTube, Reddit and other platforms, not just the other way round.

At the end of the day, underneath all the algorithms are people. And we influence the algorithms just as much as they may influence us.

[Lewis Mitchell is Senior Lecturer in Applied Mathematics, University of Adelaide; James Bagrow is Associate Professor, Mathematics & Statistics, University of Vermont]

## Remdesivir study finally published – an expert in critical care medicine gives us his verdict

JOHN KINNEAR  
*theconversation.com*

The results of the ACTT-1 trial, which looked at the effectiveness of remdesivir as a treatment for COVID-19, have finally been published. So far the only drug that has been shown to reduce deaths from the disease has been dexamethasone, a steroid that suppresses the immune system through its anti-inflammatory effects. Steroids have a secondary effect on the disease – they don't target the virus itself. Remdesivir, on the other hand, goes straight to the cause of the disease by inhibiting the virus.

The drug, which was developed by Gilead Sciences, was approved for use by the US Food and Drug Administration under an "emergency use authorisation" on May 1. It was recently used to treat President Donald Trump.

Gilead Sciences has claimed that the drug has significant benefits for patients – but robust data has been lacking until now. This makes the long-awaited results of the ACTT-1 trial important. Having read the study, most physicians treating patients with COVID-19 will be asking themselves the same question: "Should I be using remdesivir for my patients?"

SHOULD ALL COVID-19 PATIENTS GET REMDESIVIR?

The trial follows a gold-standard design of being double blind, ran-

domised and controlled, and like most trials published in top medical journals, at first glance the outcomes are fairly impressive. They found that

in short supply in the UK for the foreseeable future, the question warrants a more considered analysis.

The use of any drug also has po-

is worth remembering that ACTT-1 is a relatively small trial and sicker patients may well benefit, but it has yet to be proven. Another interesting

subgroup analysis showed that patients receiving dexamethasone showed added benefit with the addition of remdesivir, which is good news.

NO MAGIC BULLET

So when I go into my hospital this week and am confronted on the wards with patients who are ill with COVID-19, ACTT-1 tells me that, provided I can find remdesivir on the pharmacy shelf, I should be confident to use it in any patients who are receiving oxygen alone, in the hope that they will recover sooner and, more importantly, avoid progression to needing ventilation on intensive care. I should also

continue to use dexamethasone as normal, expecting added benefit.

The study also tells me that I should not shut the doors to the intensive care unit just yet. By prescribing remdesivir on top of applying the best treatment available, one in ten patients will continue to deteriorate and die. Remdesivir is not the magic bullet. If one exists, it has yet to be designed.

[the writer is Head of School of Medicine, Anglia Ruskin University]



patients receiving the drug improved and recovered more quickly, were less likely to progress to severe disease, were discharged from hospital sooner, and had a lower death rate of 11.4% compared with 15.2% in patients receiving "usual" treatment.

Based on these positive findings, it would be tempting to conclude that all patients who have the disease should receive the drug, but since it costs around US\$2,340 (£1,795) to treat one patient, and is likely to be

tentially negative consequences. Remdesivir has not been around long enough to have a track record for safety, and the reports of side-effects in COVID patients continue to grow.

When we unpick the data and look at analyses of smaller groups (subgroup analyses), the only patients for whom benefit was conclusively demonstrated were those who were less severely ill and receiving only supplemental oxygen rather than being on a ventilator. It



# 148 new cases take Arunachal's COVID-19 tally to 12,147

**ITANAGAR, OCT 12 (PTI):** At least 148 more people, including three health workers, have tested positive for COVID-19 in Arunachal Pradesh, pushing the tally to 12,147, an official said on Monday.

The death toll rose to 24 after a 58-year-old man succumbed to the infection at the Tomo Riba Institute of Health and Medical Sciences (TRIHS) in Naharlagun near here, he said.

"The person from Assam's Biswanath district was admitted to the hospital after he suffered a stroke. He also tested positive for COVID-19 and breathed his last on Sunday. The man was working with a private firm here," State Surveillance Officer (SSO) Dr Lobsang Jampa said.

Of the 148 fresh cases, 74 were reported from the Capital Complex region, 10 each from Namsai and Lepa Rada,



nine from West Siang, seven each from East Siang and Lower Subansiri and six each from Tirap and West Kameng districts, he said.

Five cases were also detected in Changlang, three each in Lower Dibang Valley, Kurung Kumey and Upper Siang, two each in Papumpare and Longding and one in East Kameng, the SSO

said.

Barring 19, all the new patients are asymptomatic and have been shifted to COVID Care Centres, he said.

Three health workers from Lower Dibang Valley district and an employee of the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) are among the new patients, Jampa said.

Altogether 158 peo-

ple were cured of the disease on Sunday, taking the total number of recoveries to 9,232.

At present, the recovery rate among COVID-19 patients in the state stands at 75.30 per cent, he said.

Arunachal Pradesh currently has 2,891 active coronavirus cases.

The Capital Complex region - comprising Ita-

nagar, Naharlagun, Nirjuli and Banderdewa areas - has the highest number of active cases at 1,332, followed by Changlang at 185, Papumpare at 131, Tirap at 119, East Siang at 118 and Upper Subansiri at 107, Jampa said.

Over 2.75 lakh samples have been tested for COVID-19 in the state so far, including 2,095 on Sunday, he added.

## Dissent brewing in Tripura BJP over CM's leadership

**AGARTALA OCT 12 (PTI):** Schism within the ruling BJP in Tripura has come to the fore with 12 dissident MLAs camping in New Delhi to meet the party's national president J P Nadda and express concern about "bad governance" in the state, which could lead to its downfall in the 2023 Assembly elections.

The team of legislators include former state health minister Sudip Roy Barman, Asish Saha, Sushanta Choudhury, Ramprasad Pal and Diba Chandra Hrankhaw.

"Twenty-five of the 36 BJP MLAs now want a change, and a proper reshuffling in the council of ministers headed by Biplab Kumar Deb so that good governance could be delivered to people," a member of the team said on condition of anonymity.

He also alleged that "poor leadership and misrule" by Deb have ruined the party in the state, which is now "alienated from people, but lost ground could be restored with the delivery of good governance".

Sushanta Choudhury, former youth Congress president, who had joined the BJP before the last Assembly elections held in February 2018, told reporters here over the phone that they are hopeful to meet BJP's national president JP Nadda and other organisational leaders to discuss on the current situation.

He also said they have a plan to seek appointments with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah.

"Neither the government nor the party is moving in the right direction. All the pre-poll promises, mentioned in the party's Vision Document, were made to be fulfilled. These should be reflected in action, but we are far away from reality. We want to highlight what is happening in the state," Choudhury said.

Asked whether they will demand the removal of Deb from the chief minister's post, he said, "We will apprise the central leadership of what is happening in Tripura. They would decide if they want to intervene in the issue. Our fight is not against the BJP's ideology. We have full faith in the dynamic leadership of the prime minister and the home minister."

Sudip Roy Barman, former Tripura Pradesh Congress Committee president, had joined the saffron party in 2017.

After the BJP-IPFT came to power in the state, Roy Barman became the health minister, but he was removed from his ministerial position in June last year, and Deb kept the portfolio with him.

Roy Barman had openly criticised the health department for "mismanagement" at the G B Pant Hospital, a state-run facility for treatment of coronavirus patients.

He was booked in an FIR for allegedly paying "an unauthorised visit" to a COVID Care Centre here.

In the 60-seated Tripura Assembly, BJP has 36 legislators along with eight MLAs from its partner the Indigenous People's Front of Tripura (IPFT). The CPI(M) has 16.

State BJP president Dr Manik Saha, in an interview with a local TV channel on Saturday, said that he was not aware of the fact that some MLAs had been in Delhi.

He also said actions would be initiated against them if they breach the party's discipline.

Meanwhile, Suryamani Nagar MLA Ram Prasad Pal met BJP national general secretary (organisation) BL Santosh on Saturday and apprised him of the situation in Tripura.

## Bihar minister dies of post-COVID complications

**PATNA, OCT 12 (PTI):** Bihar minister for backward and extremely backward class welfare Vinod Kumar Singh died on Monday at a hospital in Delhi due to post-COVID 19 complications, family sources said. He was 55.

He is survived by wife Nisha and two daughters.

Singh, a BJP MLA from Pranpur constituency in Katihar district, had tested positive for COVID-19 on June 28 and subsequently recovered.

Shortly after, however, he suffered a brain haemorrhage and had to be airlifted to a private hospital in Delhi, where he breathed his last.

Mourning the demise of Singh, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar announced that he would be cremated with full

state honours. "He was an efficient administrator and a popular leader. I am personally pained by Singh's untimely demise. His death has caused an irreparable loss to the states political spectrum and the society," Kumar said.

Among others, Bihar Legislative Council acting chairman Awadhesh Narayan Singh, Bihar BJP chief Sanjay Jaiswal, agriculture minister Prem Kumar, information and public relations minister Neeraj Kumar mourned Singh's demise.

Sources in the BJP said the party is likely to field Nisha Singh from Pranpur constituency, which is set to go to polls along with 77 other seats during the third phase of assembly elections, on November 7.

## 109 new COVID-19 cases, one more fatality in Tripura

**AGARTALA, OCT 12 (PTI):** At least 109 people tested positive for COVID-19 in Tripura on Monday, pushing the tally in the state to 28,461 a health department official said.

The death toll rose to 313 with one more person succumbing to the infection, he said.

West Tripura district, of which state capital Agartala is a part, has accounted for 169 of the 313 deaths.

Altogether 317 patients were discharged

on Sunday from G B Pant hospital, the main referral facility in the state for COVID-19 patients, the official said.

Tripura currently has 3,745 active coronavirus cases, while 24,380 people have recovered from the disease. Twenty-three patients have migrated to other states, he said.

As many as 4,16,492 samples have been examined for COVID-19 in the northeastern state so far, he added.

## Ladakh records 22 new cases, 64 more patients cured

**LEH, OCT 12 (PTI):** The Union Territory of Ladakh reported 22 new coronavirus cases, taking the total number of COVID-19 cases to 5081, an official bulletin said on Monday.

With 64 more patients cured of the disease, the number of active cases in the region dropped to 980 739 in Leh district and 241 in Kargil district, the bulletin released this morn-

ing by the directorate of health services said.

Ladakh had recorded a total of 64 COVID-related deaths, while 4037 patients have recovered from the disease till date.

Out of 22 new cases, the bulletin said 18 were detected in Leh and four in Kargil during the past 24 hours. It said all the 64 COVID patients were discharged in Leh on Sunday after successful treatment.

## BJP dist unit presidents demand State president Along's 'graceful resignation' in Nagaland

**KOHHIMA, OCT 11 [NAGALANDPAGE]:** At least 9 BJP district unit presidents, including 3 removed ones, have demanded 'graceful resignation' of the Nagaland BJP president Temjen Imna Along while alleging that his "autocratic and dictatorial way of functioning is destroying the party in the State".

Speaking to media persons in Kohima today, they said presidents of Kiphire, Peren, Mon, Noklak, Wokha districts and organizational district unit Aboi, including the removed presidents of Kohima, Phek and Tuensang have made the demand.

"We did not know him properly in the first term as president but after he was re-elected for the second term, we have understood his improper way of functioning according to his own whims and fancy and also running the Party office at his own residence," said the removed president of Kohima district, Seyiekhrielie Nagi while briefing media persons on the internal crisis within the State BJP and the district units.

He said the crisis started after State president Along refused to meet the district unit presidents to deliberate on the difficulties faced by the district units on May 28, and subsequently unceremoniously removing 3 district presidents starting with Phek on June 23, Tuensang and then Kohima on September 28 while also appointing the Youth and ST Morcha presidents of Aboi organizational district unit unilaterally.

"We the district presidents are not appointed by the State President but we are duly elected by the BJP election commission and we have the certificate of being elected as per the BJP constitution," he said. Nagi also accused Along of functioning only through the social media and also from his home without understanding the problems of the grassroots workers.

"We had been silent for the last few months as the BJP National general secretary in-charge of North East, Ram Madhav during his visit to the State on June 25 had requested us not to publicize our memorandum demanding removal of the State President," he said.

However, since no action has been initiated on their demand till date, they are compelled to come to the public so as to clear their stand, he said.

Removed president of BJP Phek unit, Nücutso Rüho speaking on similar lines said that "the district unit officials are unable to share the problems within the districts as the State president does not meet us despite several approaches".

"After joining the party in the year 2000, I was elected as the Phek district president in 2014 while the certificate issued by the Election in-charge clearly mentions that the tenure will be for 3 years, but without issuing any official notification Along removed me with his autocratic and dictatorial way of functioning," said Rüho.

He said that Along removed him

saying that he would be promoted to the State Executive for the good of the party but the Committee list released on August 28 does not contain his name. "Along's way of functioning is dangerous as he is appointing people who do not even have primary membership in the Party for his own convenience," he said.

The State president has been mis-leading the party functionaries till date as he has been making several promises but without any fulfillment, Rüho said, adding that even increase in Party membership up to 3.65 lakh, which he claims as his own achievement is all because of the district units, mandals, and booth level supported by organizing secretary. "Along didn't tour any of the districts and constituencies during the membership drive, but continues claiming credit for the increase of members in the State," he said.

"If Along continues as the State president, the Party will be totally destroyed, and therefore we demand that he gracefully resigns from the presidency," he said. Another removed president of Tuensang unit, T Chongshen Chang said "learning about the Phek district unit president's removal, the 14 district unit presidents held a meeting and raised voice saying that since the president is elected and cannot be removed simply without following the constitutional norms".

"We conveyed the same to Ram Madhav and subsequently without issuing any official notification, Along removed me and appointed care-taker president for Tuensang, which is absolutely wrong," he said. "Along is BJP president and if he himself does not follow the norms of the BJP Party constituency the Party's existence is in danger in the State," he said.

Along is Cabinet Minister in-charge of Higher & Technical Education and Tribal Affairs and is also holding the post of State BJP president, because of which he is unable to give time towards the party functioning, and therefore we demand that he should resign as the Party president, said Chang.

President of BJP organisational district unit of Aboi said that the State president had removed the incumbent presidents of the unit's youth and ST morcha on his own wish, which is not proper.

Another official of the Aboi unit informed that the State president is not looking after the welfare of the districts unit while citing that during the pandemic it was the Deputy Chief Minister Y Patton who supported them financially even to pay the rent of their district office.

The BJP district leaders said that the new BJP National General Secretary in-charge of North East, Dilip Saikia is scheduled to visit the State party tomorrow and that they would be meeting him to deliberate on the matter only after that they would decide on the further course of action.

## Parents not willing to send kids back to school in Assam amid COVID-19 pandemic

**GUWAHATI, OCT 11 (PTI):** Many parents in Assam are determined not to send their wards back to schools amid COVID-19 crisis even if the institutions reopen from next month, a cross-section of guardians said.

Though no order has been issued, the state government is likely to consider reopening of schools for students of Class 6 onwards from November 1, a senior official of the education department said.

Some of the parents along with teachers suggested that schools should remain shut for the entire year and the government should declare 2020 as "COVID-19 Year".

As per the Centre's latest Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), the Centre has allowed states and Union Territories to take a decision on reopening schools in a graded manner from October 15. Many

school authorities are of the view that the government's decision to reopen educational institutions is a "bit early" considering the rising number of infections and mounting fatalities.

Already students of Class 9 to 12 are permitted to visit schools on a voluntary basis, with written consent of their parents, for seeking guidance from teachers.

"I will not send my daughter until there is a vaccine or the situation improves. No parent wants to risk the life of children," Anil Kumar Jha, former special DGP of Assam, told PTI.

Jha, whose daughter studies in Class 2 of a private school in the state capital, said, "Losing an academic year is not a big issue for school children. The central government can bring out a notification in this regard and can easily give age relaxations in job or retirement against loss of this

particular year."

Expressing similar sentiments, Assam Public Service Commission member Sanjib Gohain Boruah, whose daughter is a Class 12 student, said opening of schools post the festive season is a matter of concern as COVID-19 positive cases are expected to go up.

"After months of staying at home, the children will naturally be excited to meet their friends and may forget to maintain norms of social distancing, necessary for containing the spread of the infection," he said.

Boruah favoured continuation of online learning for a few more months till there is a visible decline in COVID-19 cases even though he agreed that benefits of classroom teaching cannot be denied.

His daughter Anuragini Gohain Boruah said she is upset to miss the fun of the last year of her school life.

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*Plan to mend football pyramid's great crack should not be swept off table*

**DAVID CONN LONDON, 12 OCT [THEGUARDIAN]:** There are so many extraordinary elements in the Liverpool and Manchester United proposals to reshape English football, and so much understandable scepticism, that the historic move at the heart of it is in danger of being missed.

So, for clarity, it really is true that the US owners of these two fabulously rich football corporations have produced an offer that has not been forthcoming and never seemed possible from any Premier League leadership figures for 28 years.

There are, undoubtedly, some self-serving elements to their prospectus but by far the most significant is the proposal that the Premier League should share a net 25% of its future TV deals with the English Football League, and provide £250m immediately to help the 72 EFL clubs through their financial crisis. That is an offer, finally after a generation, to rejoin the top division with the three below and repair the vast, calamitous financial gap caused by the break-away of the First Division from the Football League to form the Premier League in 1992.

The wholly negative reaction of the government to this plan for huge financial reparations, which also includes increased money for the FA and grassroots good causes – approximately 8.5% of annual net Premier League TV money – seems bizarre.

For months throughout this pandemic and its financial crisis for the game and its cherished pyramid, the culture secretary, Oliver Dowden, has been urging the Premier League to use its financial might to help the “football family”.

The Premier League has dithered, delayed and produced nothing solid, despite being told in the spring the EFL had an immediate £250m hole and that many clubs face ruin through a Covid-19 winter of matches in empty grounds. Steve Parish, the chairman of Crystal Palace, recently argued that “Premier League clubs are being unfairly singled out” and should not have to share their money.

“No other industry is asking firms to bail out competitors,” Parish wrote in the Sunday Times before offering some comparisons. “The supermarkets aren’t instructed to help the corner shops. Deliveroo aren’t bailing out your local cafe.”

Quite apart from the assumption that Selhurst Park counts as a supermarket among corner shops, these are dreary arguments that do not merit earnest engagement. It is the kind of reasoning, for the maintenance of inequality, that also makes it more difficult for the Premier League’s middling clubs to be outraged about Liverpool, United and the rest of the big six looking to cement their own power.

# Amid uncertainty and upheaval, LeBron shows us what an American should be

**KAREEM ABDUL-JABBAR LOS ANGELES, 12 OCT [THEGUARDIAN]:** Winning an NBA championship is nothing new for the Los Angeles Lakers. They have been in the finals a record 31 times since winning the title on their first trip in 1950, and they tied the Boston Celtics with 17 championships after seeing off the Miami Heat on Sunday night. But those are just statistics for superfans to rattle off over steaming pizza or a trivia question on a soggy napkin in a sports bar. Championship playoffs are much more than naked numbers – each has its own unique personality, its own significance to the players and fans, and its own impact on American culture. The game is never “just a game”. For those who think sports are merely mindless entertainment somehow separate from the Sturm and Drang of the world around, you haven’t been paying attention lately. Sports have always been a mirror of national values reflecting all the same struggles and turmoil. This year’s championship series is especially meaningful because, although it took place during one of the most politically and socially chaotic and world-bending times in recent history, in many ways, it was an expression of the finest qualities of America – both on and off the court.

On the court, the Lakers came out of the gate like a thundering juggernaut, relentlessly pummeling the Heat for two games into what many people thought was a defeated heap of expensive athletic shoes. But many people were wrong, and the series went to six games. The NBA finals were much more dramatic than we expected, which is due to the gutsy determination and profession-



alism of the dedicated players who gave it their all, despite playing under the most restrictive and challenging circumstances in the history of the sport.

That the finals took place at all is a complex blending of capitalism and ingenuity – two things America excels at. The NBA, like all professional sports leagues, needed to make money. But unlike the other leagues, they MacGyvered a safe and responsible way that protected their players, the staff and fans: they housed everyone involved with the teams and the games in a virtual bubble at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida, for the several months it would take to complete the season, the playoffs and the finals. On 19 August, the NBA revealed that after testing all 341 basketball players, none were positive for the Covid-19 virus. Yet, during the first week of the Major League Baseball season, a total of 29

players tested positive. By 21 August, one-third of the teams in baseball had postponed games, likely because of players who didn’t follow safety protocols. The NFL suffered setbacks as well when 23 players and personnel from the Titans and several players from other teams tested positive, causing games to be postponed.

What’s especially impressive about the NBA is that the bubble proved to be more socially responsible than the US president, who in his maskless wonderland facilitated the infections of many who attended a White House ceremony. They also proved to be more patriotic in that they followed government/CDC guidelines, unlike the president. Finally, they proved that residing in a bubble doesn’t mean you live in isolation from your duty to your country or community. They displayed ‘Black Lives Matter’ on the floor of the court and they

postponed several games, not because of infections, but because the police shot Jacob Blake, an unarmed black man, in the back seven times.

Though many NBA players throughout the season were vocal about their support for equality, the finals brought the focus on one man as the symbol of the merging of athletics and ethics: LeBron James. To be a symbol, one must excel at their sport. Watching LeBron’s chiseled Mount Rushmore face of determination as he displayed a dazzling blend of agility, grace, power and surgical skill that clearly amped up his teammates to push themselves harder and higher showed he deserves every accolade he gets. But his unwavering willingness to continue to convince the disillusioned and disenfranchised why they need to vote, makes him the embodiment of this NBA championship triumph.

Naturally, the NBA’s expression of social responsi-

bility made it a target for conservatives who wanted it to fail. On 1 September, Trump tweeted: “People are tired of watching the highly political @NBA. ... Basketball ratings are WAY down, and they won’t be coming back. I hope football and baseball are watching and learning because the same thing will be happening to them. Stand tall for our Country and our Flag!!!”

Ted Cruz, the Republican senator from Texas, echoed the sentiment by tweeting that the NBA ratings are low because of the politicizing of the league and that he hadn’t watched a single game of the finals for the first time in years. He ended with the hashtag “GoWokeGoBroke”. That really says everything you need to know about the character – or lack thereof – of both men: Never speak out against injustice if it costs you money. These are the sentiments of people born to collaborate with the enemy. To

his credit, Mavericks owner Mark Cuban called Cruz out in his own tweet: “A US Senator with 3 @NBA teams in his state, employing thousands of people and he is rooting for their businesses to do poorly.”

It’s bad enough that Trump and Cruz show such a lack of moral leadership that equates ethics with popularity (think which side they’d have been on when slavery, women not voting and killing witches were all popular), but they also are just wrong about weak ratings being a result of rejecting the message. Because of the pandemic, many sports are competing against each other on TV for the first time ever, and it’s affecting all their ratings. The Stanley Cup final, Kentucky Derby, Preakness Stakes, Indy 500 and golf’s US Open have all had ratings declines in the double digits. They also seem totally unaware that as many as 26 million Americans – about one in every 15 – protested against the police killing of George Floyd over the summer. How’s that for popularity, Mr President?

The NBA finals are always about the two best teams battling it out in astounding feats of athleticism and grit. But this year that has called on all of us to endure so much, the finals were also about two teams that want to stand for something more than being the best team, they want to be the best examples. This year LeBron James exemplified what a modern athlete should be, the Lakers exemplified what a team should be, and the NBA exemplified what a professional sports league should be: fiercely dedicated to their sport and passionately committed to their community.

The game is never “just a game”.

## Hamilton steers clear of great debate after record success

**ALAN BALDWIN LONDON, 12 OCT [REUTERS]:** Lewis Hamilton looks sure to become the most successful Formula One driver of all time but argument about the greatest will rumble on.

But the Mercedes driver, who equalled Ferrari great Michael Schumacher’s all-time record 91 wins in Sunday’s Eifel Grand Prix and is heading for a seventh title, said that did not matter to him.

“There’s a lot of talk in all sports about greatest, past and present, and I think it’s almost impossible to compare,” said the Briton.

“There’s all this talk of who is and who is not and it’s not important to me. What’s important is the journey...it’s what we’ve done along the way, the obstacles you’ve faced. And everyone’s got a different journey.”

Triple world champion Jackie Stewart, previously Britain’s most successful driver, said last week Hamilton would not be in his top three because there were so many more races now and the Mercedes was so superior.

The sport’s only Black driver, who has broken down barriers and spoken out on a range of subjects from racial injustice to the environment, said



he got knocked by many people and especially older drivers.

“Maybe one day they’ll get over it,” Hamilton said.

“I have so much respect for the past legends, even those that do continue to talk negatively about me all the time. I still hold them in high regard because I know it was a different time in history. It was incredibly tough for them.

“In 20 years’ time when I’m looking back...I will not be talking down any young driver that’s coming through and succeeding, because a responsibility as an older driver is to shine the light as bright as possible and encourage those.

“There’s going to be someone else, whether it’s Max (Verstappen) or

whoever, chasing the record that I eventually set. It’s the wrong approach to be hoping he doesn’t break it.”

“You should be encouraging them to live to their full potential and if that means them getting to that record, that’s amazing”

**MORE RECORDS** Hamilton was presented with one of Schumacher’s helmets by the German’s son Mick after the victory at the Nuerburgring, with the youngster offering the family’s congratulations.

The sense of achievement was not lost on his rivals, either.

As Australian Daniel Ricciardo observed, if Hamilton had taken his 91 wins consecutively then nobody else in Formula One would have

had a look in for the past four and a half seasons.

“It’s incredible and very impressive. And I’m pretty sure there will be some more victories coming his way, and probably also championships,” said Red Bull’s Verstappen, runner-up on Sunday.

Hamilton is now 69 points clear at the top and closest rival, Mercedes team mate Valtteri Bottas, recognised it would take a miracle to stop him taking the title.

Many more wins will surely follow for a man who has averaged 10 a season since 2014. He is on seven for 2020 with six races remaining.

The tally could be well past 100 before Hamilton hangs up his helmet, with rules and cars staying substantially the same next year.

## King Nadal continues Paris reign with record-equalling 20th Slam

**PARIS, 12 OCT [REUTERS]:** Spaniard Rafael Nadal inflicted one of the most humiliating defeats on great rival Novak Djokovic in the French Open final on Sunday, thrashing the world number one 6-0 6-2 7-5 to lift a record-equalling 20th Grand Slam men’s singles title.

Tennis fans would have been salivating at the prospect of another epic clash in one of the sport’s greatest rivalries but it proved to be one of the most one-sided Grand Slam finals in the Open era under the closed roof of Court Philippe Chatrier.

The roof, which made its debut at this year’s rescheduled Grand Slam, was closed just before the start of play, sending fans and pundits on social media into a frenzy on which player would benefit from the indoor conditions.

Most thought it would favour the Serbian’s game against the 34-year-old Nadal, who was bidding for a 13th title on the red claycourts at Roland Garros.

But Nadal adapted brilliantly as he has done all fortnight to the new brand of balls and the much colder and wet conditions at this year’s event which started in late September rather than its usual May-June slot due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Of course, we were hoping for a great final and this is not going to go down as a great final. I am more surprised, I didn’t think Rafa was going to play this well,” Eurosport tennis expert and seven-times Grand Slam champion Mats Wilander said. The stakes were high for both players in their ninth meeting in a Grand Slam final - they were tied 4-4 previously - with the added incentive of lifting another major trophy in the battle to be considered the men’s “Greatest of all time”.

Nadal has now tied Roger Federer’s haul of 20 majors with Djokovic, the last active player to beat the Spaniard at Roland Garros, three adrift.

“To win here means everything. I don’t think today about the 20th and

equal Roger on this great number, today is just a Roland Garros victory and that means everything to me,” the world number two said. “This love story I have with this city and this court is unforgettable.” The 39-year-old Federer, who has been recovering from knee surgery this year, congratulated his friend.

“As my greatest rival over many years, I believe we have pushed each other to become better players,” Federer posted on Twitter, along with a photo of him with Nadal.

“Therefore it is a true honour for me to congratulate him on his 20th Grand Slam victory.”

**DOOR SHUT** Before the match Djokovic had said Roland Garros was Nadal’s home and the Spaniard did not once leave the door ajar for the Serbian to make a comeback into the match.

Djokovic, 33, who had won five Grand Slam finals in a row since losing to Stan Wawrinka at the 2016 U.S. Open, still leads Nadal 29-27 in career meetings but the scar of Sunday’s defeat will run deep.

The drop shots on the slow claycourts served Djokovic well in earlier rounds and he used plenty of them in his opening game on Sunday but Nadal ran most of them down, blunting the Serbian’s weapon and gameplan. Djokovic struggled with his first serve and was unable to come up with a Plan B as Nadal continued to be the aggressor while making just two unforced errors in the opening set to hand his opponent a rare bagel in the opening set.

Nadal showed exemplary athleticism and court coverage to get his racket to Djokovic’s crunching groundstrokes as the bewildered Serbian watched on, fast running out of ideas on how to win important points.

In the second set there was no letup in intensity from Nadal, who continued to hit deep returns to keep his opponent pinned to the back of the baseline.



## Greece calls new Turkish survey mission a threat to region

**ATHENS, OCT 12 (AP):** Greece has accused neighbour Turkey of undermining efforts to ease a crisis over drilling rights in the eastern Mediterranean after the announcement that a Turkish survey vessel is being prepared to renew a research mission in disputed waters.

The spat over sea boundaries in an area between Greek islands, Cyprus and Turkey's southern coast flared up over the summer, prompting a military build-up and fears of a confrontation between the two NATO members.

Turkish authorities said the Oruc Reis survey vessel is due to return to the region through October 20.

Greece's Foreign Ministry on Monday called the decision a major escalation and a direct threat to peace and security in the region.

Under pressure from NATO allies, Greece and Turkey have both committed to restarting a dialogue on the dispute for the first time more than four years.

Turkey also faces the threat of sanctions from the European Union, which has sided in the dispute with member states Greece and Cyprus.

## British Airways CEO replaced as company fights for survival

**LONDON (AP):** British Airways CEO Alex Cruz has been replaced after 4 1/2 years on the job as the COVID-19 pandemic pummels airlines around the world.

International Consolidated Airlines Group, BA's parent company, said Monday that Cruz had been replaced by Sean Doyle, previously the boss of Aer Lingus, another carrier in the group.

BA has been criticized in recent months for its handling of 12,000 job cuts linked to the pandemic. The airline's passenger traffic dropped 95% from a year earlier in the second quarter, leading to a first-half operating loss of 4.04 billion euros (\$4.77 billion).

Airlines around the world have seen passenger numbers plummet amid government-imposed travel restrictions and concerns about the safety of air travel during the pandemic.

Earlier this year, Cruz told the House of Commons transport select committee that BA was "fighting for our own survival."

# England to have 3-tier lockdown system amid 'tipping point'

**LONDON (AP):** Millions of people in northern England are anxiously waiting to hear how much further virus restrictions will be tightened in coming days as the British government confirmed Sunday that it will be introducing a new system for local lockdowns.

In response to the virus' resurgence, Prime Minister Boris Johnson is expected to announce in Parliament on Monday a three-tier local lockdown system, formally known as "Local COVID Alert Levels," for England, his office said.

Under the new system, the country will be placed into "medium," "high" and "very high" alert levels. Johnson's office said the government is working with local leaders to decide which areas are covered by the very high alert level, and the appropriate interventions in those areas.

Details of what is involved at each level haven't been confirmed but the highest level is widely expected to involve the closure of pubs and restaurants and the banning of household mixing, both indoors and outside, among other measures.

The new lockdown system, which is intended to simplify the process by which local restrictions are imposed, has been widely anticipated for a couple of weeks following a sharp increase in new cases. Following further discussions early Monday, John-



son will inform lawmakers of the new system before hosting a briefing along with Treasury chief Rishi Sunak and the government's chief medical officer, Chris Whitty.

England's deputy chief medical officer, Professor Jonathan Van-Tam, warned that the U.K. is at a "tipping point" akin to where the country was in March.

"But we can prevent history repeating itself if we all act now," he said. "Now we know where it is and how to tackle

it — let's grasp this opportunity and prevent history from repeating itself." All across Europe including the U.K., there have been huge increases in coronavirus cases over the past few weeks following the reopening of large sectors of the economy, as well as schools and universities. Infection levels — and deaths — in the U.K. are rising at their fastest rates in months.

Without quick action, there are fears that U.K. hospitals will be overwhelmed in

the coming weeks at a time of year when they are already at their busiest with winter-related afflictions like the flu. The U.K. has experienced Europe's deadliest outbreak, with an official death toll of 42,825, up another 65 on Sunday.

Although coronavirus infections are rising throughout England, northern cities like Liverpool, Manchester and Newcastle have seen a disproportionate increase. While some rural areas in eastern England have less than 20

cases per 100,000 people, some major metropolitan areas have recently recorded levels above 500 per 100,000, nearly as bad as Madrid or Brussels.

As a result, national restrictions such as a 10 p.m. curfew on pubs and restaurants have been supplemented by local actions, including in some cases banning contacts between households. In Scotland's two biggest cities, Glasgow and Edinburgh, pubs have already closed for

16 days to suppress the outbreak. Liverpool's local leader has said he expects his city to face the most onerous restrictions from Wednesday.

Local leaders across northern England have vented their fury at the Conservative government over what they see as an "inadequate" wage support scheme that it announced Friday and for not properly telling them about the upcoming restrictions. The wage plan aims to help employees in companies that are forced to close because of virus restrictions, but mayors say it's not generous enough in paying only two-thirds of employees' wages and doesn't compensate those indirectly hit by any business closures, such as drink suppliers to pubs.

Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick on Sunday sought to assuage concerns that the government was being overly hierarchical in its approach. He also indicated that local authorities will be given more control over the national test and trace program, which has struggled to live up to Johnson's prediction that it would be "world-beating."

"In addition to the national infrastructure which is developing and increasing with every passing week, we're also going to be making use of local councils to do contact tracing in particular, because there is clear evidence that local councils are good at that, as you'd expect," he told the BBC.

## Hong Kong leader delays policy address until Beijing visit

**HONG KONG, OCT 12 (AP):** Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam said on Monday that her annual policy address scheduled for this week will be delayed until she travels to Beijing to ask the Chinese central government for help with measures to help her city's battered economy.

Lam's announcement comes just two days before her policy address was scheduled to take place, and amid reports that Chinese President Xi Jinping would be travelling to the Chinese southern coastal city of Shenzhen to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the special economic zone. The leader of Hong Kong, a semi-autonomous Chinese territory, typically gives a policy address at the start of each legislative year, but Lam said that this is a convention that is not cast in stone.

She said she is postponing the address after submitting several proposed measures to Beijing seeking their support to help boost Hong Kong's economy, which has taken a battering due to the coronavirus pandemic and months of anti-government protests last year.

Lam said at a news conference that she will travel to Beijing at the end of October to par-



ticipate in meetings with various ministries and commissions and see if the central authorities will support the proposed measures. She declined to give details on the proposals.

Lam added that gaining the support from the central authorities in Beijing would allow her to give an address later in the year that will boost the confidence of the city's economic revival.

For our economy to revive, we need the support of the mainland. We have to better integrate into the national development plan, she said.

The supporting policies of central authorities would go a

long way to boosting the confidence in our economy as well as the revival of economic activity in Hong Kong, she added.

Lam, who will also travel to Shenzhen with a delegation of ministers from Hong Kong later on Monday to take part in the commemoration activities, said she has no scheduled meetings with Xi in Shenzhen. Local media speculated earlier that Lam was postponing her policy address because of Xi's visit to the Chinese city.

It is an indisputable fact that Hong Kong's economic growth is very related to what we are going to do in our work with the mainland economy, Lam said.

## Japan vows to boost missile defense after North Korea parade

**TOKYO, OCT 12 (AP):** Japan vowed Monday to bolster its missile deterrence capability to respond to threats by North Korean weapons that are becoming more diverse and complex, as displayed during Pyongyang's military parade over the weekend. North Korea, marking the 75th anniversary of its ruling party on Saturday, paraded a variety of weapons systems, unveiling what appeared to be an intercontinental ballistic missile that is larger than any of the North's known ICBMs.

It also displayed what was likely an upgraded version of a missile that can be fired from submarines.

While some experts say the weapons could have been mock-ups of missiles under development, the exhibits appear to signify North Korea's continuous upgrading of its weapons capabilities during stalled nuclear diplomacy with the US.

In order to respond to threats that are diversifying and complex, we will firmly work to strengthen our com-

prehensive missile deterrence capability, Chief Cabinet Secretary Katsunobu Kato told a regular news conference Monday. We understand that some of those missiles are said to make it difficult for us to respond with our conventional equipment.

Kato declined to give details on Japan's analysis of the missiles displayed by North Korea. He said only that Japan would continue to cooperate with the US and other concerned countries to protect the Japanese people.

Under the nearly eight-year tenure of hawkish former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Japan expanded its military's international role under the Japan-US alliance, amid growing threats from North Korea and China.

Tokyo has repeatedly called the two countries threats to its regional security, and is currently studying a major change to its missile deterrence policy that would include the possibility of developing a first-strike capability on enemy bases to defend against imminent attacks.

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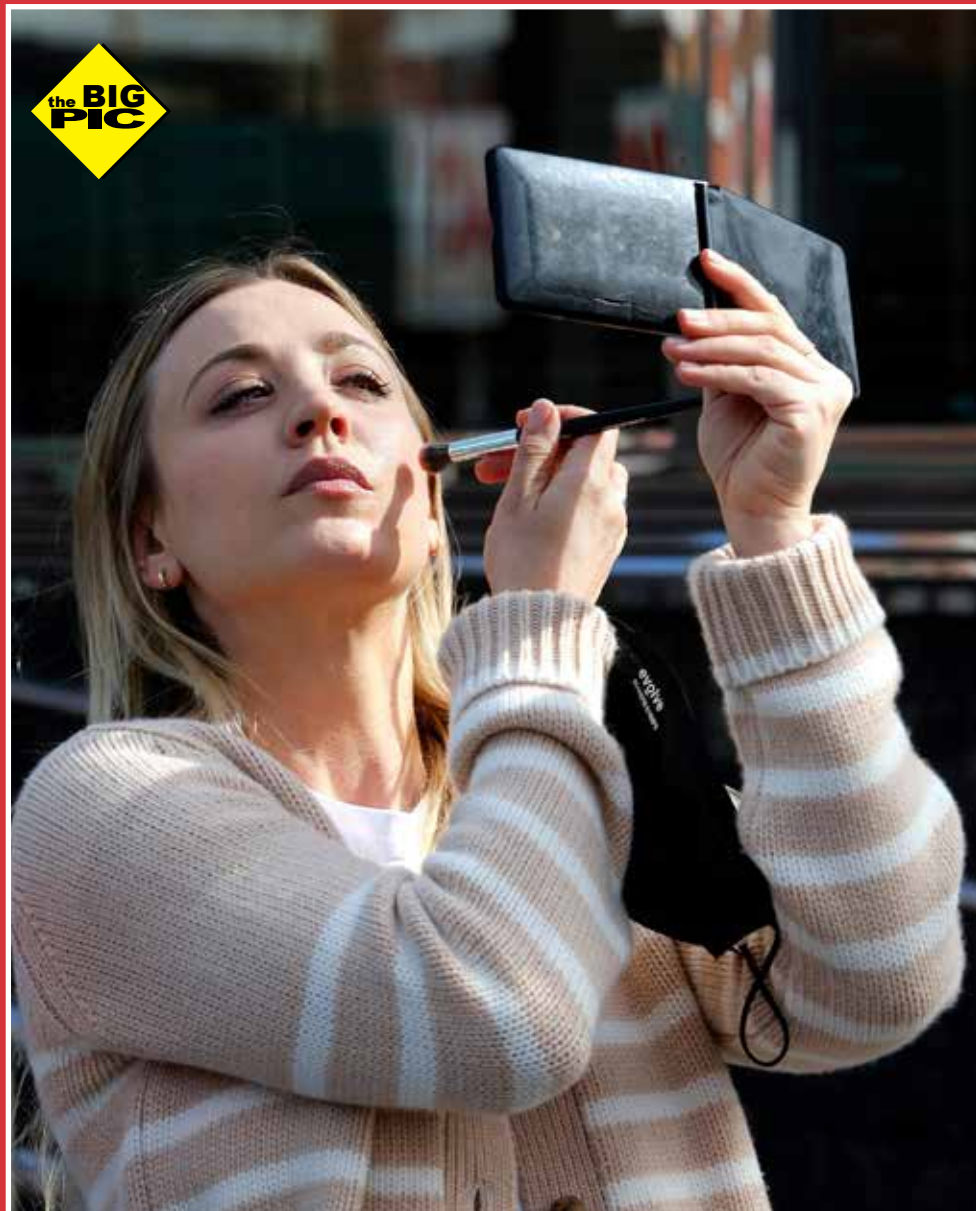
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**TIME FOR A TOUCH-UP!** Actress Kaley Cuoco fixed her makeup while filming HBO Max's *The Flight Attendant* in NYC.

## Film personalities urge Mumbaikars to keep calm amid major power outage



**MUMBAI, OCT 12 (PTI):** As Mumbai came to standstill after a grid failure caused a major power outage across the megapolis on Monday, Hindi cine personalities including megastar Amitabh Bachchan, actors Ali Fazal, Nimrat Kaur and filmmaker Kunal Kohli urged people to stay calm.

Maharashtra's Power Minister Nitin Raut said the electricity supply in Mumbai was interrupted around 10 am during maintenance and repair work at Maharashtra State Electricity Transmission Company's 400 kv Kalwa-Padgha centre.

In a Twitter post, Raut said the Kalwa-Padgha transmission line tripped, leading to power outages in Thane, Palghar and Navi Mumbai.

"Consequently, cascading the power failure to Mumbai-Thane & Mumbai suburban city. It will be restored in approximately an hour," he tweeted.

Bachchan, who celebrated his 78th birthday on Sunday, was one of the first celebrities to react on the power outage in the city.

Entire city in power outage Somehow managing this message...keep calm all shall be well, the veteran actor wrote on the micro-

logging site. Kohli requested his social media followers to not panic.

Another #power tussle in Mumbai?! #powercut #poweroutage stay calm, there's truly no shortage of #power in Mumbai.

Bombay electricity kaputt! Phone is melting, tweeted Fazal.

Kaur wrote, Hi retrograde Mercury! Missed you #MumbaiPowerFailure

Kemmu shared a funny video comparing the reaction of people of Mumbai with that of small town's during power failure.

It's a tense situation #powercut, he captioned the video.

Veteran actor Anupam Kher and music composer Armaan Malik also shared their concerns over the power outage.

Due to the power failure suburban local train services and metro, operating only for essential workers at present, have been held up. Traffic signals in some areas were also not working.

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) Commissioner, Iqbal Singh Chahal, has asked all the hospitals to keep diesel generator sets ready in case the power outage in the city lasts more than two hours.

## Vanessa Bryant Pays Tribute to Gianna and Kobe Bryant After Lakers Win NBA Championship

After the Los Angeles Lakers won the 2020 NBA Championship, Vanessa Bryant took to social media to congratulate the team. Scroll on to read her tribute to husband Kobe Bryant and daughter Gianna. Vanessa Bryant is sending love to her Lakers family after their win at the 2020 NBA Finals.

On Sunday, Oct. 11, the Los Angeles Lakers defeated the Miami Heat to take home the championship title. After the team's victory, Vanessa took to social media to congratulate the Lakers while also honoring Kobe Bryant and Gianna Bryant.

In a post on her Instagram Story, Vanessa shared a picture of her late husband alongside Rob Pelinka, the general manager of the Lakers. "Congratulations Uncle P! Congratulations @lakers," Vanessa captioned the photo. "Kobe was right, RP! 'Stay the course- blackout the noise.'"

She added, "Wish Kobe and Gigi were here to see this."

Vanessa also shared a heartfelt tribute to Kobe and Gianna, who passed away in a helicopter crash in January, in honor of National Father-Daughter Day. Alongside a photo of Kobe and Gianna at the 2009 NBA Championship, Vanessa wrote, "#GirlDad #DaddysGirl #Mamba

#Mambacita #2 #8 #24 Congratulations @Lakers." After their win on Sunday, Lakers star Anthony Davis dedicated their victory to Kobe. "Ever since the tragedy, all we wanted to do is do it for him and we didn't let him down," Davis shared during a post-game interview. "It would have been great to do it last game

know Vanessa is proud of us, the organization's proud of us. It means a lot to us."

LeBron James also reflected on Kobe's death in a post-game interview, sharing that his passing brought the Lakers "even closer together."

"And obviously we know it brought the whole basketball world close as



in his jerseys, but it made us come down even more aggressive, even more powerful on both ends of the floor, to make sure we close it down tonight. I know he's looking down on us proud of us. I

well," he shared. "But when you're internal and it hits home, it just means that much more. We locked in from that very moment, saying, 'This is bigger than us, this is bigger than us.'"

## Akshay Kumar starts filming YRF's Prithviraj'

**MUMBAI, OCT 12 (PTI):** Superstar Akshay Kumar has started shooting for Yash Raj Film's (YRF) biopic on Samrat Prithviraj Chauhan. Titled "Prithviraj", the movie will be directed by critically-acclaimed writer-director Chandraprakash Dwivedi. YRF is producing the project.

Dwivedi is best known for directing and starring in television epic "Chanakya" (1991). He also directed movie adaptation of Amrita Pritam's Partition-set novel "Pinjar" (2003).

The director said the team is excited to return to the sets after over six months long production shutdown due to coronavirus pandemic.

Yes, we have resumed Prithviraj' shoot at YRF studios and the entire team is excited to have a great shooting schedule! the director said in a statement. Akshay

essays the titular character in the film, while Miss World 2017 Manushi Chhillar plays Sanyogita.

"Prithviraj" was announced last year in September and had completed the major portion of its filming before the pandemic. According to the release issued by the makers, an extravagant set has been built inside the YRF Studios compound and all safety precautions have been put in place for a smooth shoot.

Prithviraj also features actors Sanjay Dutt and Sonu Sood.

Akshay recently wrapped up the shooting schedule of espionage thriller film "Bell Bottom" in the UK. The actor is also looking forward to the release of his horror comedy "Laxmmi Bomb". The film will premiere on Disney+Hotstar on November 9.

## Nawazuddin Siddiqui to feature in Umesh Shukla's next production

**MUMBAI, OCT 12 (PTI):** Actor Nawazuddin Siddiqui is set to play the lead role in filmmaker Umesh Shukla's next production venture.

Sejal Shah is directing the untitled film penned by Bhavesh Mandalia.

The project will be produced by Umesh Shukla and Ashish Wagh via their banner Merry Go Round Studios, along with Gaurav Shukla, Bhavesh Mandalia, Sejal Shah of Bombay Fables Motion Pictures.

Umesh Shukla, known for directing critically-acclaimed films "Oh My God" and "102 Not Out", said the upcoming movie traces the extraordinary journey of an ordinary man. "Heroes are amongst

us, we simply choose not to see. Ordinary people who achieved the extraordinary. And who else but Nawaz to bring a story alive and make us care. This movie is heartfelt, thrilling and most importantly it will entertain you. Be prepared for a mad ride," the producer said in a statement.

Siddiqui said for somebody like him who is always in search of challenging roles, the film is an interesting opportunity.

I am always searching for roles which are challenging and quirky and stories which are exciting and have something to say. With this interesting group of people coming together you can expect the unexpected from us," Siddiqui said in a statement here.

## Gal Gadot and Patty Jenkins to reteam for Cleopatra' biopic

**LOS ANGELES, OCT 12 (PTI):** Actor Gal Gadot will be reuniting with her Wonder Woman director Patty Jenkins for Paramount Pictures' upcoming biopic Cleopatra. Gadot, 35, will play the titular role of the last ruler of Egypt's Ptolemaic Kingdom in the film to be directed by Jenkins and penned by Laeta Kalogridis.

According to Deadline, the period drama will be produced by Atlas Entertainment's Charles Roven, Jenkins, Gadot and her Pilot Wave Motion Pictures partner Jaron Varsano. Gadot, who is looking forward to the release of her much-anticipated superhero movie Wonder Woman 1984 directed by Jenkins, said Cleopatra was a story she wanted to tell for a very long time.

I love embarking on new journeys, I love the excitement of new projects, the thrill of bringing new stories to life. Cleopatra is a story I wanted to tell for a very long time. Can't be more grateful about this A team!! @PattyJenks @ParamountPics #AtlasEntertainment #LaetaKalogridis, the actor wrote on Twitter. The Queen of Nile was most recently played by actor Elizabeth Taylor in 1963's Cleopatra, directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz. The film went on to win four Academy Awards.

Prior to Taylor, American-French film actor Claudette Colbert played the role in 1934's Cecil B. DeMille-directed Cleopatra.

### ARIES:

There's good news for rams who'd been struggling to get their travel plans in order. Everything will get sorted in the days to come, and seamlessly so. This is also a time of completion. A time of wrapping up the projects that you've poured your heart and soul into. It's time to put your creations out into the world with the right intention. Trust that the Universe will align you with fellow travellers who are meant to help you move forward and onwards on this path.

Tip: Trust that your travel plans will sort themselves out.

### TAURUS:

You're stepping into a time of joy, harmony, peace and prosperity. Watch how everything comes together for you! This is your big moment, Taurus. Get ready to take a bow. You'll find that your soul tribe is standing right by your side and motivating you to keep moving forward. Continue to believe in your own power and potential and know that your good vibes will make you irresistible to the good stuff.

Tip: This is your big moment.

### GEMINI:

While everything seems alright on paper, there is growing unrest within you about the path you're walking on. This phase of your life is more about minor adjustments than drastic changes, though. You know what you need to do, Gemini. Trust your instinct on this one. Given that we're stepping into retrograde season, the past could also find its way into your life—and by the past we mean 'the one who got away'. The good thing is that you have transformed dramatically since you last met them, and cannot quite understand why you were so smitten by their presence.

Tip: Did somebody say 'blast from the past'?

### CANCER:

You've been playing the on-again, off-again game for a while now, Cancer, and no, it isn't helping your relationship move forward. What you're being asked to do today: read the signs and recognise what the Universe is telling you. If something or someone was meant for you, you wouldn't feel like you're constantly pushing against the flow.

Tip: Read the signs.

### LEO:

You're leaving the past and all the turmoil associated with it behind. This is a time of movement and transition, Leo (in the literal sense of the word for some of you). Trust that you're being led towards calmer shores and that the help and support you need in each moment will be available to you. For now, slow down. Breathe. Reassess the lessons you've been asked to integrate over the last few months. Prioritising self-care is important at a time like this.

Tip: This is a time of movement and transition.

### VIRGO:

The trouble is, you've been approaching the world outside-in rather than the other way around. You've been trying to fit yourself into a box that was never meant to be yours. Today, you're being asked to start a dialogue with your inner child. To remember all the things that brought you joy and helped you sail through the difficult times. You'll find that the answer to 'what is my calling?' is a lot simpler than you thought.

Tip: Start a dialogue with your inner child.

### LIBRA:

The process of creation requires a certain degree of detach-

ment. So, don't be afraid to retreat into the womb space this week, Libra. A heady mix of silence and solitude will help you channel the right ideas and heal on a mind, body, and soul level. Remember, things may or may not work out according to the roadmap you've drawn up in your head, and that's okay. Take a breather if you need to, and return to the given project with a fresh perspective.

Tip: The process of creation requires a certain degree of detachment.

### SCORPIO:

This week, you're feeling all the feels, which in turn is adding a touch of magic to everything you say and do. There's something about creating from a space of love that takes our work to a whole new level. Scorpio, the mysterious forces above are with you! Just when you're about to make progress, your inner demons could rear their ugly heads and threaten to take you a few steps back on your journey. In moments of self-doubt, take a deep breath and remind yourself of who you are and what you came here for.

Tip: Remember who you are.

### SAGITTARIUS:

It's a cup-hath-runneth-over kind of day in the Sagittarius HQ, and you'll find your familial ties are taking centre stage. It's a time to get to know your tribe on a deeper level and to share both your joy and your sorrows with them. Their support will help you get through whatever it is that you're going through at the moment. What's more, joy and celebration are also on the cards this week. You, or somebody close to you, could be getting ready to tie the knot soon.

Tip: Your cup is about to runneth over.

### CAPRICORN:

You didn't think you could ever make it here, yet you did! If this doesn't tell you about your capabilities, what does? Today, you're being asked to hit the pause button, take a moment to lovingly gaze at your creations, and give yourself the validation you sometimes seek from others. Know that you deserve every bit of the success you have attracted into your Universe. Yes, there is an important lesson in here for you, Capricorn—the realisation that stepping into your power makes you a magnet for miracles. Word for the wise: stop undermining yourself.

Tip: Baby, you're the gold standard!

### Aquarius:

'Find what you love and let it kill you' is a big mood in the Aquarius HQ. Allow yourself to be intoxicated by the process of creation. Give yourself the permission to immerse yourself fully in your art. 'Joy' and 'playfulness' are the magic words that will help you create your best work yet. Don't lose sight of the long term goals while you're at it, though. Referencing that vision board every now and then will help you stay on the right track.

Tip: Find what you love and let it kill you.

### PISCES:

You can roll your eyes at the 'influenza game' all you want, but you know that putting yourself out there is the secret to reaching a wider audience. The real question is: how can you share your message without betraying yourself in the process? Pisces, 'keeping it real' is a philosophy that will come in handy at a time like this. Some of you may be thinking about getting help on the digital front. Consider hiring somebody who thinks out of the box, or turn to that one friend who has aced the number game.

Tip: It's time to rethink your social media plan.