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# Summit **TIMES**

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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## Sikkim registers 30th COVID death



**SUMMIT REPORT**  
**GANGTOK, 23 SEPT:**

A 50-year-old male, currently residing in Rumtek, passed away due to COVID on Tuesday night at STNM Hospital. Sources inform that he had returned to Sikkim on 19 Sept and proceeded to home quarantine in Rumtek where he has a room on rent. He is reported to have developed flu-like symptoms on 21 Sept and was taken to hospital the next day but passed away on the way, it is informed. He tested positive in TruNat screening. As per the daily COVID chart, this death has been recorded as death due to comorbidities.

## COVID-19 tally in India crosses 56-lakh mark

**NEW DELHI, SEP 23 (PTI):** India's COVID-19 caseload went past 56 lakh with 83,347 infections being reported in a day, while over 45 lakh people have recovered from the disease, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Wednesday.

The national recovery rate stands at 81.25 per cent.

The coronavirus caseload surged to 56,46,010, while the death toll climbed to 90,020 with 1,085 people succumbing to the disease in a span of 24 hours, the data updated at 8 am showed.

The total recoveries surged to 45,87,613 in the country so far.

The COVID-19 case fatality rate due to the coronavirus infection has dropped to 1.59 per cent.

There are 9,68,377 active cases of coronavirus infection in the country which comprises 17.15 per cent of the total caseload, the data stated.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and it went past 50 lakh on September 16.

According to the ICMR, a cumulative total of 6,62,79,462 samples have been tested up to September 22 with 9,53,683 samples being tested on Tuesday.

## Sikkim cut off as major landslide hits NH10



**GANGTOK, 23 SEP (PTI):** A major landslide, triggered by heavy rains, on the National Highway 10 cut off Sikkim from the rest of the country on Wednesday morning, officials said.

The landslide happened at the 29 Mile area in West Bengal, they said.

The NH-10, which is considered the lifeline for the people of Sikkim, is maintained by the General Reserve Engineer Force (GREF) and the PWD of West Bengal, they added.

Officials at the site said that it will take at least a day or two to clear the debris completely.

The road can be cleared for one way traffic by evening which is possible if the rain subsides, they said.

Drivers ferrying essential commodities to Sikkim from Siliguri are stuck at the spot.

Travelling on this highway during heavy rains is dangerous as there are many trouble spots along it, officials said.

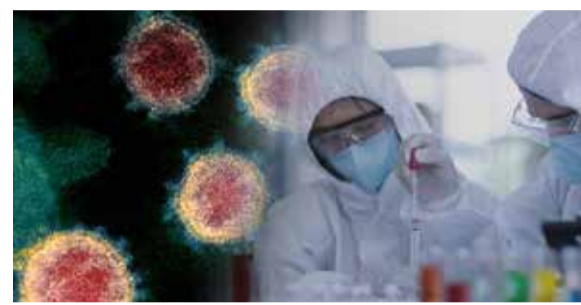
# 35 new cases take Sikkim's COVID tally to 2547

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 23 SEPT:**

Sikkim recorded the 30th COVID-19 related death after a 50-year-old man from Rumtek in East Sikkim died on Tuesday evening. The patient had returned to Sikkim on 19 September and was in home quarantine at Rumtek. On developing some symptoms, the patient was rushed to STNM hospital on Tuesday evening where he was declared brought dead at around 6:30 PM, informed Health Department State IEC Officer, Sonam G Bhutia in the daily health bulletin on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, 35 fresh cases of novel coronavirus were reported in East District in the last 24 hours



ending 8 AM Wednesday taking the State's tally of confirmed cases of COVID-19 to 2547. There are now 575 active cases of novel coronavirus in the State.

The figure of the cured & discharged patients of COVID-19 has further improved to 1942 with the discharge of 14 more patients on Tuesday from isolation facilities.

In the health bulletin, Mr Bhutia further informed that 27 of 295 samples returned

positive for COVID-19 in the RT-PCR testing at VRD Lab in STNM hospital on Tuesday. Likewise, four samples were also found COVID-19 positive in TrueNat testing, while four more persons were found positive for COVID-19 in the rapid antigen testing of 46 samples, he said. He mentioned that four patients were in ICU facility of STNM hospital.

While giving break-up of new cases, Mr Bhutia informed that two from the containment

zone near Manjushree School in Lower Sichey, seven patients admitted in STNM hospital, one from Dichiling area, one from Ninety Bazaar in Sichey, one from the containment zone in Upper Sichey, one from Daragaon, Tadong, three primary contacts from the containment zone in Church Road, one from the containment zone in Metro Point Tadong and another from the containment zone near Joredhara Tadong tested positive for COVID-19.

Likewise, samples of a person from Barpipal on Bye-Pass Road, one from near Eagle Dwar in Swastik, one from Singtam, one from Rinchenpong but presently admitted in STNM hospital, one from Seti Bazaar near

DAC [East], Sichey, one from the containment zone near Cooperative in Sichey and one person from the containment zone near West Point SSS in Tathangchen returned positive for COVID-19.

He added that one person from Rhenock, one from Rangpo, three from COVID Care Centre at Mintokgang and one person from Rumtek, who passed away on Tuesday, tested COVID-19 positive.

Mr Bhutia mentioned that one person from Greendale School Road above CRH, Tadong, one from Rumtek, one from Police quarter in Gangtok and one from Samdong reported positive for COVID-19 in the rapid antigen testing at the Central Referral Hospital, Tadong.

## Relief for vehicle owners

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 23 SEPT:**

The Transport Department has issued a circular today announcing one time relaxation for waiver of penalty portion for renewal of token tax expiring prior to 01 Feb 2020 for a window period of 3 months.

This means that vehicle owners whose token tax validity expired "prior" to 01 Feb 2020 can renew their

token tax from 01 Oct till 31 Dec 2020 without having to pay penalty.

Another circular issued today states that vehicle owners whose token tax validity expired "from" 01 Feb 2020 can also renew their token tax from 01 Oct till 31 Dec 2020 without having to pay penalty. It further states that all vehicle related documents expiring from 01 Feb 2020 shall be deemed valid upto 31 Dec 2020.

## Assam to cull 12,000 pigs as African swine fever spreads



**GUWAHATI, SEP 23 (PTI):**

Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Wednesday ordered to cull nearly 12,000 pigs in the areas affected by the deadly African swine fever and asked officials to compensate the owners adequately.

So far, 18,000 pigs have died after contracting the virus across 14 districts of the state, a senior official of the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department told PTI.

"Chairing a meeting with department officials,

the chief minister said that in compliance with the guidelines of the Centre and the state government, and adhering to experts' opinion, culling of the infected swine population in all the affected districts should be completed before Durga Puja," according to an official statement.

The total number of pigs to be killed in this exercise will be around 12,000, it added.

"As a result of the culling operation, the loss incurred by the farmers will be adequately compensated," Sonowal said.

The latest culling drive will be carried out within one kilometre radius of 30 epicentres across the 14 affected districts, the senior official said.

"We will start the exercise immediately," he added.

When asked about the compensation, the official said the owners of the 12,000 pigs will get the money deposited in their bank accounts, while a proposal has been sent to the government for giving financial support to the owners of the 18,000 pigs that have died already.

## Opposition Absent, 15 Bills Passed In Rajya Sabha In Two Days

**NEW DELHI, 23 SEPT:**

Fifteen bills made it past the Rajya Sabha over the last two days as the opposition boycotted the proceedings in both houses over the suspension of its eight members for Sunday's ruckus. Seven of the bills were passed yesterday, eight today. Three of the Bills passed were the hugely contentious labour laws that have been opposed by the most labour unions, including one affiliated to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, the ideological mentor of the BJP.

Rajya Sabha chairman Venkaiah Naidu, in his valedictory address as parliament again adjourned indefinitely today, recalled precedents when bills were passed after walkout by some members.

"Shri Naidu said there have been a number of precedents when the bills were approved in the wake of boycott or walkout by some members. In this context, he cited the passage of Finance Bill and Appropriation Bill in 2013," read a tweet from Mr Naidu's official handle as the Vice-President.

The suspension of eight members of the Rajya Sabha over Sunday's ruckus was "unpleasant but inevitable," said Mr Naidu, who was not in the House that day.

It was the right of the

opposition to protest, "but the question is how should it be done", Mr Naidu said adding that he was "duty bound to uphold the dignity of the Upper House".

Mr Naidu also pointed out that boycott for a longer time deprives the members of the opportunity to effectively convey their ideas.

The opposition members had decided on Monday to boycott proceedings in both houses after eight members were suspended for the chaos after Deputy Chairman Harivansh Singh refused to hold a physical voting on farm bills as demanded by the members.

The upset members had marched to the Well of the House, tore up papers and tried to wrench the mics.

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Today, MPs of the Congress and like-minded parties held a march from the Gandhi statue to the Ambedkar statue in parliament premises.

In the evening, the Leader of the Opposition met President Ram Nath Kovind and requested him to withhold assent to the farm bills. The passage of the bills in Rajya Sabha was "unconstitutional", they have told the President, Congress's Ghulam Nabi Azad said.

## MoS Railways Suresh Angadi dies of coronavirus

**NEW DELHI, SEP 23 (PTI):** Minister of State for Railways and Karnataka BJP MP Suresh Angadi passed away on Wednesday, days after he tested positive for COVID-19. The 65-year-old passed away at around 8 pm at the AIIMS trauma centre which has been converted into a dedicated COVID-19 facility, sources at the hospital said.

Belagavi, Angadi is the first Union minister to have died of coronavirus. At least six MLAs and three MPs have earlier succumbed to it. Former President Pranab Mukherjee, who died on August 31, was also diagnosed as COVID-19 positive.

Angadi had on September 11 himself announced on microblogging site Twitter that he had contracted the disease.

The MP from Belagavi had requested all those who came in close contact with him over the last few days to monitor their health and get tested in case of any symptoms.

India's COVID-19 count now stands at 45,62,415, including 9,43,480 active cases, 35,42,664 recoveries and 76,271 deaths.

Shri Suresh Angadi was an exceptional Karyakarta, who

worked hard to make the Party strong in Karnataka. He was a dedicated MP and effective Minister, admired across the spectrum. His demise is saddening. My thoughts are with his family and friends in this sad hour. Om Shanti, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Twitter.

"Extremely saddened by the passing away of Central Minister Shri Suresh Angadi

Ji. He was a remarkable leader who dedicated all his life for organisation and went on to serve society with utmost diligence and compassion. My thoughts and Prayers are with his family and followers," BJP president J P Nadda tweeted.

Railway Minister Piyush Goyal said on the microblogging website, "Deeply anguished at the unfortunate demise of Suresh Angadi ji.

## SKM's women's wing meets in Mangalbaria

SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 23 SEPT:

A coordination meeting of Sikkim Krantikari Morcha was organised by Nari Shakti, the women's wing of the party, at the SKM office at Mangalbaria under Rinchenpong constituency in West Sikkim on Wednesday.

The meeting, which was conducted on the directions of the SKM president, was attended by the party's CLC president Suk Hang Limboo, district coordinators Pema Chuki Bhutia

and Balmiki Chettri, Dethang ward panchayat Sanchamaya Rai and others, a press release informs.

The release adds that the meeting primarily discussed the role and responsibilities of Nari Shakti for the development of Sikkimese society.

The meeting also expressed happiness on getting Suk Hang Limboo as the president of the constituency level committee.

The release informs



that the meeting was also addressed by Nari Shakti district coordinator, Pema Chuki Bhutia.

In his address, the CLC president encouraged everyone to work together for

the development of the constituency and to strengthen the party in the constituency.

## Pharmacists - Healthcare's Unsung Heroes

ABHIMANYU NEPAL

The 10th World Pharmacists Day is observed on 25 September, with the theme transforming global health.

Pharmacists are the unsung healthcare heroes who make essential contributions in transforming health in the communities. Advising on healthy living and ensure the medicines are taken

correctly the patients may not realize the way pharmacist work with them to improve quality of life and in managing disease well.

Pharmacists play very vital role in helping people get the best results from their medications. In addition to dispensing prescriptions pharmacist counsel patients on the safe and appropriate use of their medications and also provide other

clinical services.

Minister GOI, NitinGadkari said, "Pharmacists are the backbone of our medical support in the war against COVID-19. Their ongoing efforts and selfless dedication are serving the lives of people each and every day".

Pharmacists have always been the most accessible health care provider. In the fight

against COVID-19 pharmacists around the world have continued to provide direct patient care and perform frontline duties for our communities. Pharmacists have stepped up to take more responsibilities in the fight against COVID-19.

The effort of pharmacists should not be forgotten when

frontline workers are lauded once this global pandemic ends, but without question, should not be overlooked in the present, when their frontline efforts are still needed to fight COVID-19. Pharmacists are the unsung heroes in the fight against COVID-19 and they should be addressed as such and given the recognition they deserve.

## Maharashtra: 21,029 new coronavirus cases, 479 deaths

MUMBAI, SEP 23 (PTI): Maharashtra's coronavirus case tally rose to 12,63,799 on Wednesday with addition of 21,029 cases, the state health department said.

With 479 COVID-19 patients dying during the day, the death toll reached 33,886, it said.

On the other hand, 19,476 patients were discharged, taking the number of recoveries in the state to 9,56,030, it said, adding that there are now 2,73,477 active cases in Maharashtra.

Mumbai city reported 2,360 new infections

on Wednesday, which pushed its case count to 1,90,264, while the death toll rose to 8,604 with 49 coronavirus patients dying in the state capital.

Pune city added 1,797 COVID-19 cases, raising its tally to 1,46,062, while 26 deaths took the toll to 3,329.

The state has so far conducted 61,06,787 tests.

Out of 479 fatalities recorded on Wednesday, 251 were reported in the last 48 hours while 127 had taken place a week back. Another 101 deaths had taken place

more than a week ago, the health department said.

The Mumbai division, which consists of Mumbai city and satellite towns, reported 5,663 new cases, raising the total count to 4,48,717.

A total of 15,081 people have died due to COVID-19 in the region so far, it said.

The number of cases in the Pune division stood at 3,35,749 and deaths at 7,303.

Nashik division's cumulative case tally stood at 1,66,911 and

death toll at 3,397.

Kolhapur division has reported 84,799 cases and 2,511 deaths till now, while Aurangabad division's case tally stands at 48,059 cases and death count at 1,250.

Latur division has reported 49,777 cases till now and 1,365 fatalities.

Akola division has recorded 36,323 cases while 762 people have succumbed to the infection in the region so far.

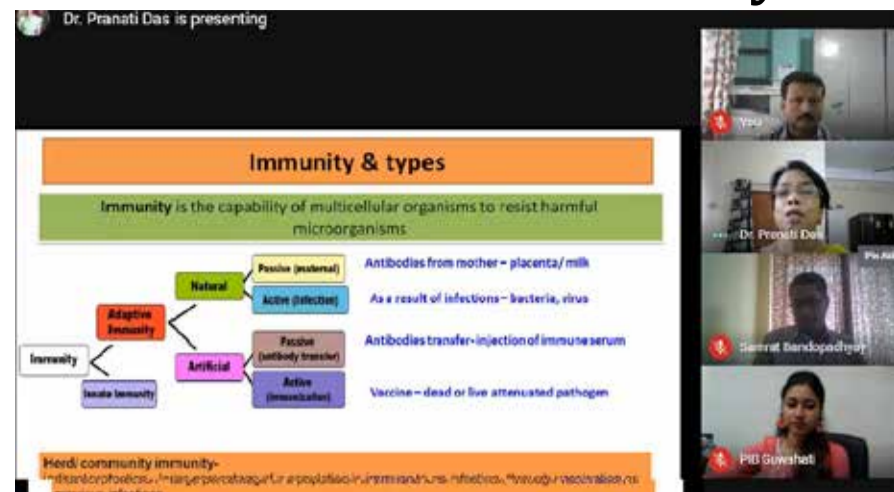
Nagpur division has recorded 92,072 infections and 2,097 fatalities.

1,392 COVID-19 patients from outside Maharashtra have received treatment in the state, while 120 such patients have died.

A total of 18,75,424 people are currently under home quarantine in the state while 34,457 are in institutional quarantine.

Maharashtra's COVID-19 figures are as follows: Positive cases: 12,63,799, new cases: 21,029, death toll: 33,886, discharged: 9,56,030, active cases: 2,73,477, people tested so far: 61,06,787.

## PIB Guwahati organises webinar on Poshan Abhiyaan



GUWAHATI, 23 SEPT (PIB):

Poshan Abhiyaan has special focus on reducing under-nutrition and low birth weight in children, and anaemia in adolescent girls, pregnant women, lactating mothers as well as children. The 3rd Rashtriya Poshan Maah is being celebrated this month across the country. During this pandemic situation to create awareness about health and nutrition PIB Guwahati organised a webinar on Poshan Abhiyaan today.

Taking part as a speaker in the webinar today, Prof & HoD of Food Science & Nutrition, Dr Pranati Das, Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat said that strong Immune System is the best defence against COVID-19, as long as the immune system is functioning normally, infection such as

COVID-19 go unnoticed. While deliberating on Immunity & Nutrition, she said that nutrition is essential for health and well-being at every stage of life. For holistic health benefits there is a need to have balanced meals which includes fresh fruits and vegetables she added. In her address she said that during this COVID situation people are more concerned about their health and for good health they are taking vitamins tablets, but supplement should not be considered as a substitute of good diet.

S P M U - P o s h a n Abhiyaan, Har Gobinda Boro, Assam gave a detailed briefing on the on-going campaign of the Poshan Abhiyaan in Assam. He discussed about the Poshan Abhiyaan as a programmatic approach in addressing the life cycle issues of malnutrition. He

said that malnutrition is a major challenge which hampers the growth of our country and Government is implementing Poshan Abhiyaan to address the problem of malnutrition.

Joint Director, Samrat B a n o p a d h y a y, PIB Guwahati in his welcome address said that Poshan Abhiyaan is an initiative by Government of India to improve nutritional status of children up to 6 years, adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers. Deputy Director, Pallab C h a k r a b o r t y, PIB

Guwahati delivered the closing address in the webinar. Field Exhibition Officer, Hiramani Das moderated the webinar.

The webinar was attended by around 60 participants including the officials of PIB and FOB, North East Zone, Students of AAU and journalists across NE zone.

## Mahanandarises, inundates areas in Siliguri

SUMMIT REPORT  
SILIGURI, 23 SEPT:

Water level of the Mahananda River has risen due to heavy rainfall in Siliguri and surrounding areas. Continuous rainfall in Siliguri and adjoining areas last night has inundated many areas in Siliguri.

According to the locals, they have been facing several problems due to water logging especially when it comes to transportation.

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### BUILDING FOR SALE

A two storey house building constructed on plot area 50x40 ft. Situated at Upper Phong near Phong SS, South Sikkim is on sale. Cost Rs 56 Lakhs (Negotiable). Interested may contact : 8145829309, 7864937800, 9749897695.

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#### LAND FOR SALE

Two plots available - 30x40 sq ft and 50x30 sq ft Junkeri Dara, Samlik Marchak Price negotiable Contact : 6296366498, 9641878315, 9593262407

#### LAND FOR SALE

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

#### LAND FOR SALE

An area measuring 1 acre at dam 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 footside land for sale measuring 30 by 45 square feet near smile land below apica garden. Contact no. 7797885351/9733538899.

## Paytm executive says India's secondary listing plan would be undue burden

NEW DELHI, 23 SEPT [REUTERS]: India's potential plan to compel companies to do a secondary listing on an Indian stock exchange if they opt to first list on an overseas bourse would unfairly penalise Indian firms, according to a senior executive at fintech company Paytm.

"Companies should be allowed to list wherever they want. I think that would be good not just for the companies, but for the digital ecosystem," Madhur Deora, a president of SoftBank-backed 9984.T Paytm, told Reuters in an interview on Tuesday.

Deora's comments come as India works on forging rules that would open the doors for Indian startups to list overseas and access deeper capital pools.

Earlier this month however, Reuters reported that New Delhi is also considering mandating an Indian secondary listing for any Indian company that opts to first list abroad, a move investors fear will harm valuations.

"I would have preferred for that (decision) to be left to companies and their boards," said Deora. "This (idea) would complicate

our lives."

Companies like Google GOOGL.O that vie against Paytm in the digital payments space have no such obligation, noted Deora.

"The fact that we are Indian and we are domiciled in India - that should not create additional obligation for us," he said.

Paytm, which also counts Chinese tech giant Alibaba BABA.N and Berkshire Hathaway BRK.A among its backers, expects to become profitable within 12 to 18 months, said Deora, a former investment banker who

joined the startup in 2016.

One of India's most valuable startups, Paytm began a decade ago as a platform for mobile recharges but it now sells things ranging from flight tickets to mutual funds. It competes with Google Pay, Walmart's WMT.N PhonePe and Amazon Pay in India's digital payments market, which is set to more than double in value to \$135 billion by 2023 from 2019.

"We want to go public only as a profitable company," Deora said without specifying a timeline for a listing.

## Covid-19: Daily discharges exceed daily cases for 5th day

NEW DELHI, SEP 23 (PTI):

Daily Covid-19 recoveries have exceeded the new cases for the fifth consecutive day, the Union Health Ministry said Wednesday, as the total recoveries surged to 45,87,613 pushing the national recovery rate to 81.25 per cent.

A total of 89,746 recoveries have been registered against 83,347 new coronavirus cases in a span of 24 hours, according to the Health Ministry data.

With its focussed strategies and coordinated and proactive measures, India is reporting a steep increase in

recoveries, the ministry said.

"New recoveries in India have exceeded the new cases for the fifth consecutive day," it said, adding, "India has the highest recovered cases in the world. It contributes 19.5 per cent to the global recoveries."

Seventeen states and UTs have more new recoveries than new cases.

Seventy-five percent of the new recovered cases are being reported from 10 states and UTs - Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Delhi, Kerala, West Bengal and Haryana.

## Rajya Sabha returns two Appropriation Bills

NEW DELHI, SEP 23 (PTI): Rajya Sabha on Wednesday returned the Appropriation (No 3) Bill, 2020 and the Appropriation (No 4) Bill, 2020, authorising payment of certain sums from the Consolidated Fund of India for the current financial year.

The bills, which were passed by Lok Sabha on September 19, were cleared in the Upper House with a voice vote and without any discussion.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman moved the Bills for consideration and passing.

The Appropriation (No 4) Bill, 2020 authorises payment and appropriation of certain further sums out of the Consolidated Fund of India for services of the financial year 2020-2021, while the Appropriation (No 3) Bill, 2020 provides for authorisation of appropriation of money out of the Consolidated Fund of India to meet the amounts spent on certain services during the financial year ended on March 31, 2017, in excess of the amounts granted for those services and for

that year.

An Appropriation Bill is a money bill that allows the government to withdraw funds from the Consolidated Fund of India to meet its expenses during the course of a financial year.

As per Article 114 of the Constitution, the government can withdraw money from it only after receiving approval from Parliament.

While the Finance Bill contains provisions on financing the expenditure of the government, an Appropriation Bill specifies the quantum and purpose for withdrawing money.

The Appropriation Bill is first passed by Lok Sabha and then sent to Rajya Sabha.

Rajya Sabha has the power to recommend any amendments in this Bill. However, it is the prerogative of Lok Sabha to either accept or reject these recommendations.

The government had introduced the Appropriation Bill in the lower house of Parliament after discussions on Budget proposals and Voting on Demand for Grants.

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# CRICKETER TIED UP IN RED TAPE RUES THE INJUSTICE

**SUMMIT REPORT**  
**GANGTOK, 23 SEPT:**

Bikki Jaiswal has been playing for Sikkim Cricket Association since 2018 but is now being told that he is not even eligible for registration here, a bureaucratic googly which has put his cricketing dreams in jeopardy.

Trials for SiCA probables are already underway and Bikki is running from pillar to post to get heard

and addressed as a sportsperson after having given two seasons to SiCA.

It is no secret that sports administrators have traditionally been inconsiderate, even mean to sportspersons. Are we seeing that happen in this instance as well?

Players are required to have been residing in, or studying in or employed in a state for at least two years to be eligible to try for

state squads. Bikki, who is also a registered cricketer with BCCI, was originally registered under the employment clause in 2018. SiCA, however, amended this rules in a way that Bikki cannot qualify under this clause any more. He does however have all documents at hand to establish his residence here and get registered under this clause.

In fact, following an appeal, he even received

a whatsapp message informing him he could attend the trials. When he asked for a written confirmation, however, he was told he was not eligible. An inquiry into his complaint also arrived at the same verdict but addressed only his eligibility under the employment criteria and ignored his qualifying under the residence clause.

It is almost as if there

is a section hell-bent on denying him. If that is the case, it is an unfortunate development which will not only affect this one player, but will contaminate the sporting culture and development of cricket itself in Sikkim.

The player has appealed to the SiCA president and placed his faith in him to deliver him justice since all other avenues have run into dead-ends.

# NBBDC organizes webinar on higher educational aspects of NEP

**SUMMIT REPORT**  
**GANGTOK, 23 SEPT:**

A Webinar on Higher Educational Aspects of National Educational Policy (NEP) 2020 was organized through the Google Meet platform Nar Bahadur Bhandari Degree College (NBBDC), Tadong, Sikkim today.

Additional Chief Secretary, GPUadhyaya, Education Department, Government of Sikkim delivered his inaugural address to the galaxy of HoDs and faculty members of 23 teaching Departments of the College. In his address, ShriUpadhyaya highlighted important aspects of NEP 2020 and stressed upon the role of Government, institutions, faculty members and other stakeholders. He also assured that the Education Department will support all public funded institutions in moving ahead towards the goals of NEP-2020.

Delivering his talk on the introduction to higher educational framework of NEP-2020, Principal-in-Charge, Dr BhaktaKunwar, NBBDC

illustrated the key changes adopted in the new policy. In his presentation, Dr Kunwar stressed on the fact that the concept of multidisciplinary institution is the focal point of NEP-2020.

Vice Principal, Dr Sunita Kharel presented the Historical Perspective of the various education policies framed by the government in the social level. In her presentation she illustrated the role of education policies in providing education to women, adult and children in various ways and means.

Dr Satyadeep Singh Chhetri presented his paper on challenges and possibilities of NEP-2020 in context of HEIs. He highlighted on various paradigm shift to be faced by the concerned in near future. Infrastructure, appropriate curriculum and human resource were the major concerns of his presentation. He presented a comparative analysis of education system prevailing in the first world countries and Indian context.

Tek Bahadur Chhetri highlighted pertinent issues related with NEP-2020 & Regional languages. He said, 'as policy's main focus is multi-lingual mode of teaching starts from school level and beyond, conventional teaching process is become challenging. To promote regional languages, policy mentioned the establishment of language related department and institutions, providing e-learning facilities, facilitation of 'LokVidya', oral history

translation, research and project on tradition, culture and ethnological fields are the major aspects, for which facilitator should be made aware about. He also suggested providing financial and related support to the local languages which are on the verge of extinction. Various faculty members participated in interactive session. The moderator of the webinar was Dr Shobha Sharma.

# As RS clears bills amid Oppn boycott, Naidu defends action; expresses anguish at 'unpleasant turn of events'

**NEW DELHI, SEP 23 (PTI):**

Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu on Wednesday said it is "extremely unpalatable" when bills are passed amid a boycott of proceedings by some sections of the House, but not taking up legislative work in such a situation may legitimise their action as an "instrument of blocking legislation".

He was speaking before adjourning the Upper House sine die, eight days ahead of schedule, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Rajya Sabha passed 15 bills in the last two sittings with opposition parties boycotting the proceedings to protest the suspension of eight members on Monday for their "unruly" behaviour in the House during the passage of two key farm bills.

"Though it is not the first time that some members are suspended and bills are passed when some sections of the House boycott the proceedings, I find it extremely unpalatable.

"This kind of situation needs to be avoided by all means," Naidu said in his remarks on the conclusion of the 252nd session of Rajya

Sabha. Expressing concern over the conduct of some of the members, he said it was "deeply painful" and all need to "collectively ponder" over these issues.

Naidu, who has been associated with the Upper House for the last 22 years, said he gets anguished whenever bills are passed in the din.

Over the suspension on the eight members, Naidu said rules of the House do provide for such action when it becomes inevitable.

"If legislative work is not taken up during the boycott by some sections of the House, it may legitimise such boycott as an effective instrument of blocking legislation," he said.

Naidu said the House had to hold 18 sittings but it held only 10.

"We have to conclude this session eight sittings ahead of the scheduled 18 sittings as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to challenge humankind across the globe even after nine months of its outbreak," he said.

The Chairman also said that for the first time in the history of

Upper House, a notice of motion for removal of the Deputy Chairman has been given, which was rejected by him.

"The developments in the House surrounding this unprecedented move have been deeply painful for all those who hold the stature and the dignity of this august House dear to their hearts," he said

Most of the opposition including the Congress, Left parties, the TMC, the Samajwadi Party and the NCP had decided to boycott House proceedings in protest against the suspension of the eight MPs

Terming it an "unpleasant turn of events", Naidu appealed to members to ensure that "such unseemly behaviour is not repeated".

"I am naturally more pained to see that happen as the chairman of this august House. It hurts me the most when the Chair is rendered helpless by the turn of events and has to perforce take action against the members as per the rules," said Naidu.

Earlier in the day, the House passed key bills including three on labour reforms, two Appropriation Bills and the Foreign

Contribution (Regulation) Amendment.

Naidu said the 10-day session was productive and as many as 25 bills were passed and six were introduced.

"The productivity of the House during this session has been 100.47 per cent. As against the scheduled available time of 38 hours and 30 minutes, the actual functional time of the House has been 38 hours and 41 minutes," said Naidu.

Though the Upper house has lost three hours and 15 minutes due to disruptions, it sat for an extra three hours and 26 minutes.

"The new normal of high productivity witnessed during the last three sessions has continued during this session as well," he said, adding "as a result, the overall productivity of the last 4 sessions comes to a praiseworthy 96.13 per cent. This high productivity for four consecutive sessions is the best during the last 5 years."

In this 252nd session, the Upper House has spent 22 hours 03 minutes on discussions over the government's legislative proposals

during these 10 sittings, which is a record 57 per cent of the total functional time of the House during this session.

Besides, 1,567 unstarred questions were replied to in writing by the government

"Members raised issues of urgent public importance through 92 Zero Hour and 66 Special Mentions on which a total time of four hours 15 minutes was spent, accounting for 10.99 per cent of the total functional time of the House," he said.

Despite the pandemic, 198 members participated in the discussion on various Bills

During the session, Rajya Sabha had done readjustment of the sitting patterns to maintain social distance. It functioned from six different locations including the chambers of both the Houses - Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha and four galleries of the upper house.

"We are living in extraordinary times warranting several adjustments requiring us to live a new normal life," he said.

The Monsoon session had started on September 14.

# Japan to require COVID tests for athletes, but may not mandate quarantine

**TOKYO, 23 SEPT [REUTERS]:**

Organisers of next year's delayed Tokyo Olympics will require coronavirus tests of foreign athletes upon their arrival in Japan, but may not mandate a two-week quarantine period, according to draft measures released on Wednesday.

Japanese athletes and other participants living in Japan would face similar requirements when travelling to training camps and competition venues under the planned measures, which were released after a meeting between the Tokyo 2020 organising committee, the Japanese government and the Tokyo metropolitan authorities.

The pandemic, which has infected millions worldwide, has cast a shadow over the viability of next year's Games, even as Japan's new Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga has emphasised their importance.

Earlier on Wednesday, Suga spoke to International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach by phone and had a discussion about


holding a successful Games. Suga promised to cooperate closely on holding a safe event for athletes and spectators, his office said.

In the draft plan, Tokyo organisers also proposed to limit travel within Japan for athletes, who would register all domestic travel routes and would be transported to towns hosting national delegations and training sites in dedicated vehicles.

Details of the coronavirus measures for the Games were still under discussion, including the frequency of tests, Toshiro Muto, the CEO of the Tokyo 2020 organising committee told reporters.

Muto also said he hoped deliberations with the IOC and various international sports federations would be finalised by December.

Japan has avoided the kind of explosive outbreak suffered by nations such as the United States, India and Brazil, with roughly 80,000 infections and about 1,500 deaths to date. The virus has killed about 964,000 people worldwide.



**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.

<p><b>Symptoms of nCoV</b></p> <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>	<p><b>Precautions to Prevent nCoV</b></p> <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>
<p><b>Treatment</b></p> <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>	<p>If you seek help, you may call :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Toll free no. 104</li> <li>District surveillance Officer</li> <li>EAST : 7028372100</li> <li>WEST : 9593297809</li> <li>NORTH : 9641957468</li> <li>SOUTH : 7407691463</li> <li>New STNM</li> <li>AMS : 9434711402</li> </ul>

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

# Bombay High Court suspends hearings due to heavy rains

**MUMBAI, SEP 23 (PTI):**

The Bombay High Court on Wednesday suspended its hearings scheduled for the day, including all virtual hearings, in view of the heavy rainfall in the city and suburbs.

The bail pleas filed by actress Rhea Chakraborty and her brother Showik Chakraborty, both arrested in a drugs case

related to the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput, were to be heard on Wednesday by a single bench of Justice Sarang Kotwal through video-conferencing.

Besides, a division bench led by Justice S J Kathawalla was scheduled to hear actress Kangana Ranaut's plea against

the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation over the demolition of a part of her bungalow in Pali Hill area here.

As per the communication issued by the high court registrar, these cases and other matters scheduled during the day will be taken up by the benches concerned on Thursday.



**Sikkim University**

SU/REG/PROIF-2/05/2018/Vol-I/564 Date: 23.09.2020

**ADMISSION NOTICE**

Sikkim University announces admission to M.Phil & Ph.D programmes for the Academic Year 2020-21 in the following departments.

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Anthropology (M.Phil/Ph.D)</li> <li>2. Botany (Ph.D)</li> <li>3. Chemistry (M.Phil/Ph.D)</li> <li>4. Chinese (Ph.D)</li> <li>5. Commerce (Ph.D)</li> <li>6. Computer Applications (Ph.D)</li> <li>7. Economics (M.Phil / Ph.D)</li> <li>8. Education (Ph.D)</li> <li>9. English (M.Phil / Ph.D)</li> <li>10. Geography (M.Phil / Ph.D)</li> <li>11. Geology (Ph.D)</li> <li>12. Hindi (M.Phil /Ph.D)</li> <li>13. History (M.Phil /Ph.D)</li> <li>14. Horticulture (Ph.D)</li> <li>15. International Relations (M.Phil/Ph.D)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>16. Law (M.Phil / Ph.D)</li> <li>17. Management (Ph.D)</li> <li>18. Mathematics (M.Phil/ Ph.D)</li> <li>19. Microbiology (Ph.D)</li> <li>20. Music (M.Phil /Ph.D)</li> <li>21. Nepali (M.Phil /Ph.D)</li> <li>22. Peace and Conflict Studies and Management (M.Phil / Ph.D)</li> <li>23. Physics (M.Phil/ Ph.D)</li> <li>24. Political Science (M.Phil)</li> <li>25. Psychology (M.Phil /Ph.D)</li> <li>26. Sociology (Ph.D)</li> <li>27. Tourism (M.Phil / Ph.D)</li> <li>28. Zoology (Ph.D)</li> </ol>
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The details of courses and other admission procedure to be followed will be available on University website at [www.cus.ac.in](http://www.cus.ac.in) on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2020. Last date for submission of online application form is 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020 (up to mid night).

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## Remember Why the Stairway to Heaven Collapsed

*The Babel approach never achieved anything good*

When an important issue comes up, there need not be as many associations and organisations as there are voices or opinions or political positions. No resolution is possible then and the larger risk that such an approach runs is that it becomes possible to ignore the inconvenient voices in the cacophony that invariably results. Unfortunately, this has been the traditional response in Sikkim, whether it be the discussions over hydel projects, the complications of seat reservation, direct tax laws, or even celebrations. Communities which are usually served by one representative organization during “normal”, calm times, splinter the moment some form of consensus needs to be arrived at. While it is not unusual for organizations to have “camps”, organizations here are unique in their tendency to shatter under the slightest pressure and then reassemble under breakaway groups. Then, each segment claims to be genuinely representative and even if one accepts that each is motivated by honest concern, it soon becomes obvious that all have more motivations at play which instruct their different responses and often at-conflict positions.

There is no problem in holding different opinions, but when each opinion opts to speak from an independent platform, they compromise the end result. At the end of the day, all the complaints, criticism and support are addressed to the government in power, which can then pick and choose which voice it wants to hold a conversation with. That is a convenient dodge offered up to avoid uncomfortable discussions and the only way to correct this situation is for groups to first establish their locus-standi, prove that they represent the collective opinion of a sizeable number of people and not just of a handful who have appropriated a position. This is not as easy as it sounds and as the voices grow more and more aggressive, they expend more energy running each other down than addressing the issue at hand.

Sikkim, where just about every development leads to the creation of either a Joint Action or Apex Committee and now even enquiry committees, it is unfortunate that the more pressing of its concerns do not have any – they just have a litter of opposing opinions. Maybe it is still not too late, because if a genuine redressal of concerns is to be achieved, then, such committees should be formed and include voices representing every opinion and every segment. This committee should ideally first get over its prejudices – not everyone protesting is after all anti-establishment and not everyone supporting is sold out. It is this prejudice that leads to a situation where many hurtful things are said and the brunt is borne by the community at large, none of which can afford to get further weakened. As the discordance grows, they hear only their own anger and not the other arguments. Sikkim has the legend of the Stairway to Heaven which can be interpreted as a story conveying the risks attendant to a refusal to converse coherently. That moral is unfortunately forgotten.

## Coronavirus mutations: what we've learned so far

LUCY VAN DORP  
THECONVERSATION.COM

In early January, the first genome sequence of Sars-CoV-2 – the virus that causes COVID-19 – was released under the moniker “Wuhan-1”. This string of 30,000 letters (the A, T, C and Gs of the genetic code) marked day one in the race to understand the genetics of this newly discovered coronavirus. Now, a further 100,000 coronavirus genomes sampled from COVID-19 patients in over 100 countries have joined Wuhan-1. Geneticists around the world are mining the data for answers. Where did Sars-CoV-2 come from? When did it start infecting humans? How is the virus mutating – and does it matter? Sars-CoV-2 genomics, much like the virus itself, went big and went global.

The term mutation tends to conjure up images of dangerous new viruses with enhanced abilities sweeping across the planet. And while mutations constantly emerge and sometimes sweep – early mutations in Sars-CoV-2 have made their way around the world as the virus spread almost unnoticed – mutations are a perfectly natural part of any organism, including viruses. The vast majority have no impact on a virus's ability to transmit or cause disease.

A mutation just means a difference; a letter change in the genome. While the Sars-CoV-2 population was genetically essentially invariant when it jumped into its first human host in late 2019, over 13,000 of these changes are now found in the 100,000 Sars-CoV-2 sequenced to date. Yet any two viruses from any two patients anywhere in the world differ on average by only ten letters. This is a tiny fraction of the total 30,000 characters in the virus's genetic code and means that all Sars-CoV-2 in circulation can be considered part of a single clonal lineage.

### SLOWLY MUTATING

It will take some time for the virus to acquire substantial genetic diversity. Sars-CoV-2 mutates fairly slowly for a virus, with any lineage acquiring a couple of changes every month; two to six-fold lower than the number of mutations acquired by influenza viruses over the same period.

Still, mutations are the bedrock on which natural selection can act. Most commonly mutations will render a virus non-functional or



have no effect whatsoever. Yet the potential for mutations to affect transmissibility of Sars-CoV-2 in its new human hosts exists. As a result, there have been intense efforts to determine which, if any, of the mutations identifiable since the first Sars-CoV-2 genome was sequenced in Wuhan may significantly alter viral function.

An infamous mutation in this context is an amino acid change in the Sars-CoV-2 spike protein, the protein that gives coronaviruses their characteristic crown-like projections and allows it to attach to host cells. This single character change in the viral genome – termed D614G – has been shown to increase virus infectivity in cells grown in the lab, though with no measurable impact on disease severity. Although this mutation is also near systematically found with three other mutations, and all four are now found in about 80% of sequenced Sars-CoV-2 making it the most frequent set of mutations in circulation.

The challenge with D614G, as with other mutations, is disentangling whether they have risen in frequency because they happened to be present in viruses responsible for seeding early

successful outbreaks, or whether they truly confer an advantage to their carriers. While genomics work on a UK dataset suggests a subtle role of D614G in increasing the growth rate of lineages carrying it, our own work could find no measurable impact on transmission. SIMPLY CARRIED ALONG

D614G is not the only mutation found at high frequency. A string of three mutations in the protein shell of Sars-CoV-2 are also increasingly appearing in sequencing data and are now found in a third of viruses. A single change at position 57 of the Orf3a protein, a known immunogenic region, occurs in a quarter. Other mutations exist in the spike protein while myriad others seem induced by the activity of our own immune response. At the same time, there remains no consensus that these, or any others, are significantly changing virus transmissibility or virulence. Most mutations are simply carried along as Sars-CoV-2 continues to successfully spread.

But replacements are not the only small edits that may affect Sars-CoV-2. Deletions in the Sars-CoV-2 accessory genes Orf7b/Orf8 have been shown to reduce the virulence of Sars-CoV-2, potentially eliciting

milder infections in patients. A similar deletion may have behaved in the same way in Sars-CoV-1, the related coronavirus responsible for the Sars outbreak in 2002-04. Progression towards a less virulent Sars-CoV-2 would be welcome news, though deletions in Orf8 have been present from the early days of the pandemic and do not seem to be increasing in frequency.

While adaptive changes may yet occur, all the available data at this stage suggests we're facing the same virus since the start of the pandemic. Chris Whitty, chief medical officer for England, was right to pour cold water on the idea that the virus has mutated into something milder than the one that caused the UK to impose a lockdown in March. Possible decreases in symptom severity seen over the summer are probably a result of younger people being infected, containment measures (such as social distancing) and improved treatment rather than changes in the virus itself. However, while Sars-CoV-2 has not significantly changed to date, we continue to expand our tools to track and trace its evolution, ready to keep pace.

*[the writer is Senior Research Fellow, Microbial Genomics, UCL]*

## Cheap plastic is flooding developing countries – we're making new biodegradable materials to help

DEIRDRE MCKAY  
THECONVERSATION.COM

Squeezed by lower fuel demand during the pandemic and the rise of renewable energy, the oil industry is staking out a new future for itself in plastics. Instead of powering vehicles or generating electricity, oil companies are increasingly looking to use their product to manufacture cheap plastic packaging, which they can sell in lower to middle income countries.

The problem? Many countries lack the means to recycle even their own plastics. Countries in the developing world are already inundated with plastic exported for sorting and reprocessing by higher income nations, so oil companies are effectively threatening to flood the developing world with a new wave of virtually unrecyclable plastics. Companies in the US are setting the groundwork for this right now by lobbying to undermine Kenya's plastic bag ban.

The vast amounts of plastic waste that have already accumulated in the developing world are not being adequately managed. Landfill and incineration are the most common solutions, but burning plastics releases toxic chemicals. In reprocessing or landfill facilities, plastics often escape to choke rivers and coastal seas. Even lying around on the soil, plastics cause problems. A team of researchers in China found that the number and variety of insects and worms in soil was significantly reduced when LDPE – the kind of plastic carrier bags are made from – was spread over the earth.

As pressure to sell more plastics to the developing world grows, so does the body of evidence demonstrating the harms caused by this waste accumulating in the environment. This calls for locking waste plastics in “safe sinks”, like wood-plastic composites.

### BIODEGRADABLE COMPOSITES

Waste plastics from homes and businesses, like used carrier bags, can be collected, cleaned and combined with natural materials such as sawdust. These new composite materials lock plastic debris in a stable form, preventing it from being broken up and scattered into soils and the ocean. New materials could eventually replace plastics derived from petroleum and turn off the tap of new plastics production. But for now, these safe sinks are a vital step.



Our team at Universiti Sumatera Utara (the University of North Sumatra) in Indonesia recently developed a wood-plastic composite for use in construction. Combining LDPE and durian wood sawdust from a local sawmill, we pressed out composite materials suitable for building homes, fencing and furniture. Our study demonstrated that termites native to Indonesia can ingest these composite materials when buried in the soil, but we still need further research.

The termites have LDPE in their guts, but we're not yet sure if they are digesting the plastics entirely or just breaking them up into micro and nano-plastics. Some termites cultivate microorganisms in their nests which can degrade LDPE plastics. Do ours? If not, introducing new termites or microbes that aren't indigenous to Sumatra might create even bigger problems.

North Sumatra is home to rainforests, rhinos and tigers, and local ecosystems are vulnerable. People living in remote communities typically want the convenience of consumer goods, processed food, medicines and other amenities that come with plastic packaging. But they don't want the waste it generates. Most of these communities lack solid waste management services, so burning and burying are their only options. While people on the nearby Indonesian island

of Java enjoy a higher standard of living, their rivers are more polluted with plastic than any others in the world.

Our wood-plastic composite could replace wood, plastic decking or fencing, diverting plastic waste from the environment and easing the pressure on forests for building supplies. But we also need to test if our biodegradable composite is safe. We don't yet know if it will be more or less of a fire hazard than other building materials available on the Indonesian market. Flammability assessments are important – recycled plastic decking recently caught fire and burned down an ancient archaeological site in Australia.

### GLOBAL MATERIALS RESEARCH

Durian wood evolved in concert with insect and microbial life in Indonesia that was capable of decomposing it. Combining plastic waste with materials

that are part of local ecosystems could ensure that resulting composites are biodegradable within the environments they're created, wherever that is in the world. Scientists have discovered some aspects of natural systems that can break up and degrade plastics. We used termites and their associated microbes, but moth larvae and plastic-eating bacteria might also work.

Worldwide, sawmills are producing dust and flour from local wood that could be combined with ubiquitous plastic waste. Where emerging markets are likely to be targeted with cheap plastic packaging, scientists could adapt our procedure for making composite materials to local conditions.

These composite materials are promising as safe sinks for plastic waste, but they take time to develop. They're most useful for countries inundated with plastic waste which lack the capital investment for most technical fixes, and have an even greater problem developing reliable solid waste management infrastructure. Though plastics are a global issue, it is this kind of low-cost, local research that can help solve the plastics crisis where it is felt most acutely.

*[the writer is Reader in Geography and Environmental Politics, Keele University]*

# In a first, Kolkata to get tram library

**KOLKATA, SEP 23 (PTI):** In a first of its kind, Kolkata is all set to get a tram library, a top official said on Wednesday.

The specially designed tram library will have books and magazines, including those on competitive examinations such as the civil services, WBSCS, GRE or GMAT in order to attract readers from various educational institutions along its route, West Bengal Transport Corporation (WBTC) managing director Rajanvir Singh Kapur said.

The tram library, which will be inaugurated on Thursday, will travel



regularly between Shyambazar and Esplanade, traversing 4.5 km through the city's education hub -- College Street, Kapur said.

There are at least 30 educational institutions

along or near its route, including the Calcutta University and Presidency University, Scottish Church College, Hindu School, Hare School and the Calcutta Girls' School.

"The tram library, being introduced by the WBTC that oversees India's only functional tramways, is a special tram with books, magazines, which can be

read while travelling on the tram," Kapur said. The tramcar will also have free wifi and will help passengers read e-books apart from laying their hands on books in the library, he said, adding that the collection will be updated regularly. "We are also planning book reading sessions, book launches and literary festivals in the tram library in the future," the official said, terming the project as a dream come true that will give a new dimension to the city's electric tram service, which is in existence since 1902.

# Sudeva FC appoint Chenchu Dorji as head coach

**NEW DELHI, SEP 23 (PTI):** Bracing up for their maiden I-League appearance, Sudeva FC on Wednesday appointed Bhutanese Chenchu Dorji as the team's head coach ahead of the upcoming season.

I-League's newest entrant is the first team from national capital New Delhi.

The league will be held in Kolkata from November to March.

Dorji is the first Bhutanese coach at the

helm of any club in the history of the I-League.

He joined Sudeva's academy in November 2019 and is now the chief tactician of the senior team.

Dorji has previously worked at the Bhutan Football Federation for 12 years and has also had a brief stint at a Manipur-based club.

The new coach felt honoured at being appointed to the post.

"It is a great honour to be part of the I-League. I

really thank the president and the vice-president for believing in me and deciding to give the huge responsibility. If you do well, you will survive and I am very excited about this challenge."

"As with every head coach, I also want to win. I want to win all the matches, but that does not happen in football."

"We must be ready to handle such a situation wisely. This is our first season and we want to be in the best position at the end of the season."

# Mizoram MP urges Centre to give compensation to people affected by earthquakes



**AIZAWL, SEPT 23 [PTI]:** Rajya Sabha MP from Mizoram K Vanlalvena has urged the Centre to give compensations to people affected by earthquakes in Mizoram and to send a team to investigate the cause of frequent earthquakes in the state, an official said on Wednesday.

The MP has asked the Earth Science Ministry and Ministry of Home Affairs Disaster Management Division to immediately send an investigation team to Mizoram, to provide compensation to the earthquake victims, and to provide adequate facilities related to earthquake management to Mizoram, the official said.

The Rajya Sabha MP also raised the issue in the Upper House of

Parliament on Tuesday and said that earthquakes have rocked Mizoram's Champhai district and some parts of Serchhip district near Myanmar border on more than 100 occasions during this year damaging many dwelling houses and affecting people.

Vanlalvena said that he has met officials of Union Earth Science Ministry and urged them to send an investigation team to Mizoram, to assess the ground reality and causes of frequent earthquakes in the state.

A series of earthquakes hit several parts of Mizoram, including Champhai district, Saitual, Siaha and Serchhip district since June 18. Champhai was the hardest hit district. The last earthquake

was reported on September 20.

Officials of the Mizoram Disaster Management and Rehabilitation department said that tremors were felt on a number of occasions since June.

They said that more than 280 houses were damaged in Champhai district causing monetary loss to the tune of over Rs 316.35 lakh.

Officials also said that the government was taking massive efforts to deal with earthquakes by sending geology experts to the affected areas, doctors to assess the health condition of the affected people and providing assistance to the victims.

Champhai district deputy commissioner Maria CT Zuali said that

# 4 BJP leaders from Bengal's Kharagpur join TMC

**KOLKATA (WB), SEP 23 (PTI):** Four BJP leaders from West Bengal's Kharagpur, along with hundreds of their supporters, joined the Trinamool Congress on Wednesday, giving the ruling party in the state a fillip in the industrial region ahead of the assembly elections due in April-May next year.

BJP leaders Sailendra Singh, Ajoy Chatterjee, Rajdip Guha and Sajal Roy joined the TMC in the presence of Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, Chandrima Bhattacharya, at the party's headquarters here.

Singh was an influential leader in the saffron party's trade union wing Bharatiya



Mazdoor Sangh, while Guha has a mass following in several wards of Kharagpur town. Roy is a popular leader in the rural areas and Chatterjee was with the BJP for a long time, Bhattacharya, also a senior TMC leader, said.

"This is a big blow to the BJP and its state chief Dilip Ghosh in Paschim Medinipur district and

Kharagpur in particular. It shows people of the constituency are no longer with the saffron party. The writing on the wall became clear with last year's by-election results," Bhattacharya told PTI.

The TMC had won the Kharagpur Sadar assembly constituency for the first time in the by-election last year.

The seat was vacated by Ghosh, who was elected as the Medinipur MP in the Lok Sabha elections.

"The four BJP leaders had become disillusioned with the functioning of the saffron party. They wanted to join our leader Mamata Banerjee to work for the masses at the grassroots," Bhattacharya said.

The senior TMC leader said 500 supporters of Singh have also joined the ruling party in the state but only around 100 of them were present at the venue so that the COVID-19 safety protocols were maintained.

Reacting to the development, Dilip Ghosh said, "Some greedy people, who maintained links with the TMC while remaining in the BJP, have left. They have been unmasked. It will not harm the party."

"The BJP members who are facing the TMC's atrocities have not left the party. They will remain with us. They will dislodge the Trinamool Congress from power in the next elections," he added.

# Broad-based containment zones reduce to 4 in Kolkata

**KOLKATA, SEPT 23 (PTI):** With consistent improvement in the discharge rate of COVID-19 patients in West Bengal, the state capital has witnessed a significant reduction in the number of broad-based containment zones, according to official data.

The number of such zones in the city has reduced from 20 in mid-August to four on September 22.

A total of 2,02,030 patients have been cured of the infection in the state increasing the discharge rate to 87.28 per cent as on Tuesday.

In the metropolis, 45,262 people have recovered from COVID-19 so far while there are 4,320 active cases at present, the data showed.

As many as 1,607 deaths and nearly 52,000 COVID-19 cases have been recorded in the city till September 22.

Currently there are 3,290 broad-based containment zones in the state, according to state government website

'Egiye Bangla'.

An official of the state health department told PTI, "The concept of broad-based containment zones has changed after the easing of lockdown norms. Now only the buildings or the housing complexes in which COVID-19 cases are detected are earmarked as such zones. Strict norms have to be followed in those buildings.

"The number appears to be quite high as we are listing specific buildings where COVID-19 patients are found as broad-based containment zones instead of an entire area surrounding such buildings or housing complexes."

At present, Purba Bardhaman district has the highest number of broad-based containment zones at 563, followed by Nadia at 561 and Purulia at 511.

There are 808 COVID-19 active cases in Nadia, 697 in Purba Bardhaman and 675 in Purulia, the data showed.

A residential complex in Tollygunge locality,

two in Rabindra Sarobar and Ballygunge areas, and a slum in Behala's Sakherbazar have been identified as four broad-based containment zones in the city.

Neighbouring North 24 Parganas district has 13 broad-based containment zones.

The district has so far accounted for 1,000 deaths, and 40,951 recoveries. Currently, there are 4,283 active cases.

In the adjoining areas of the city, there are 18 such zones in Hooghly district, 49 zones in South 24 Parganas and 60 in Howrah, it said.

The number of active cases are 1,315 in Hooghly, 1,611 in South 24 Parganas and 1,276 in Howrah districts.

Jhargram has earmarked one place in the district as a broad-based containment zone while there is no such area in Paschim Bardhaman district.

Currently, Jhargram has 185 active cases and 991 patients are fighting the disease in Paschim Bardhaman district.

# Assam reports 2,073 new COVID-19 cases, 8 more deaths

**GUWAHATI, SEP 22 (PTI):** Assam on Tuesday reported 2,073 new cases of COVID-19 and eight more deaths, Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

Among the latest deaths, two happened in Kamrup Metropolitan and one each in Dibrugarh, Darrang, Bapeta, Bongaigaon, Jorhat and Cachar, he said.

Of the new cases detected, 344 are from

Kamrup Metropolitan, 168 from Dibrugarh, 166 from Jorhat and 125 from Golaghat, the minister said.

Total 29,647 tests were conducted during the day, he said, adding that the positivity rate was 6.99 per cent.

The total number of tests conducted in the state so far is 29,91,612.

Meanwhile, 1,817 patients were discharged from the

hospitals during the day.

The state has so far reported 1,61,393 cases of COVID-19. There are 29,857 active cases at present while 1,30,947 patients have recovered. So far, 586 patients have died and three persons migrated out of the state.

Further, 1,099 people who have recovered from COVID-19 donated their plasma in five medical colleges and hospitals.

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### Premier League should help struggling EFL clubs: Lampard

**LONDON, 23 SEPT (REUTERS):** Chelsea manager Frank Lampard said starting his career at the bottom of the soccer pyramid helped him appreciate the financial challenges facing lower-tier clubs during the COVID-19 pandemic and it was important for the Premier League to help out.

Clubs in the lower divisions rely on matchday revenue to keep finances ticking over and the government's decision to postpone the return of fans to stadiums is expected to have a massive impact.

"I think it's important the Premier League as a collective looks at supporting the English Football League, the leagues below and grassroots football," Lampard told British media.

"That's the base of why we're all here. I started, and a lot of young players started, in Sunday league football. I've managed in the Championship. I understand a lot of the difficulties clubs are having.

"I can't go too political because I don't know enough about the numbers, but I do think clubs in the Premier League and the Premier League themselves have a heart. I'm sure as we move forward they will be making positive moves on that front."

Chelsea face Barnsley in the League Cup later on Wednesday and Lampard said his side had paid for the Championship club's COVID-19 testing.

"It's a sign of a club in the Premier League doing the right thing," he said.

## Batting at number 7 is not leading from front: Gambhir lashes out at Dhoni

**NEW DELHI, SEP 23 (PTI):** Mahendra Singh Dhoni did not lead from the front by dropping himself down the batting order during a mammoth chase, opined former India batsman Gautam Gambhir, tearing into CSK captain's decision to bat at number seven against Rajasthan Royals.

The former India opener reckons that if any other captain had done this, he would have drawn a lot of flak but since it is Dhoni, people are not even talking about it.

With Chennai Super Kings chasing a massive 217-run target in Sharjah, Dhoni came to bat when they needed 103 runs from 38 balls.

Dhoni sent the likes of Sam Curran, Ruturaj Gaikwad and Kedar Jadhav ahead of him. CSK lost the match by 16 runs.

"I was a bit surprised to be honest. MS Dhoni batting at No. 7? And sending (Ruturaj) Gaikwad, Sam Curran before him. Makes no sense to me. In fact you should be leading from



the front," Gambhir told ESPNcricinfo's T20 Time Out.

"This is not what you call leading from the front. Batting at No. 7 when you're chasing 217. The game was over. Faf was probably the lone warrior," he said.

"See, if someone else would have done this, some other (batsman) captain had batted at No. 7, he would have got a lot of flak. It is MS Dhoni - probably that's why people don't talk about it."

Dhoni has argued that he did not get enough time to prepare due to an extended quarantine period, so he did not

come to out bat early. "I haven't batted for a long time. 14-day quarantine doesn't help," he said after the match.

Dhoni's reference was to CSK's extra one-week quarantine after 13 people in their contingent tested positive for COVID-19, resulting in missing out on important training sessions.

The 38-year-old Gambhir, who played 58 Tests and 147 ODIs between 2003 and 2016, also questioned CSK's intent to win the game.

"There is nothing wrong if you end up getting out early, at

least start leading from the front, trying to inspire the team as well. What you did in the last over (hitting 3 sixes in last over), probably if you'd done that coming in at No. 4 or 5, alongside Faf, you could have made a game out of it," said Gambhir.

"Probably there was no such intent to make a game out of it. I thought after the (first) six overs, they had literally given up on the game. And probably MS was trying to get back into that match rhythm of batting till the end and get some runs under his belt so he can actually play these kind of

innings in the coming games.

"You've got to be in the present, try and win each game possible. I thought there was no intent to win the game and they were never there in the chase."

On Dhoni hitting three sixes in the final over, Gambhir said, "Yes, you can talk about MS Dhoni's last over but it was of no use to be honest. It was just all personal runs."

Gambhir, also a BJP Member of Parliament, said it was "absolute miscalculation" on the part of CSK to delay Dhoni's arrival at the crease.

"When you don't have Suresh Raina, you're making people believe that Sam Curran is better than you. You're making people believe that Ruturaj Gaikwad, Curran, Kedar Jadhav, Faf du Plessis, M Vijay, all these guys, are better than you.

"Probably not the right captaincy as well. This is not how you ask someone like MS to lead the side.

### I worked on fitness and power-hitting skills during break: Samson

**SHARJAH, SEP 23 (PTI):** Convinced that possessing an array of shots is a must to go with power-hitting, wicket-keeper batsman Sanju Samson says he worked on these aspects during the coronavirus enforced break.

The work done by Samson was there to be seen when he pulverised the Chennai Super Kings on Tuesday night, setting up a Rajasthan Royal's win with his blistering 32-ball 74-run knock, studded with nine sixes and a boundary.

That he is an impact player is a known fact but his clean and



elegant hitting earned praise from one and all.

"I think range-hitting is what the game demands in this generation. I had time to work out in these 5 months, and I think I've increased that ability,"

Samson said at the post-match presentation.

"I've been working hard on my fitness, diet and training, and on my strength, because my game relies a lot on power hitting," he added.

Samson, who was adjudged Man-of-the-Match, said his plan is to go and hit all the deliveries in his arc.

"My game plan is stand and deliver. If it's in the arc I go for it, and it's very important to

keep the intent to hit the ball if it's there to be hit.

With Robin Uthappa and Jos Buttler also in the squad, the Royals are spoilt for choice in the wicket-keeping department.

However, Samson, who executed two stumpings and as many catches against CSK, said he is happy to play any role the captain and coach deem fit for him.

"Everyone likes to keep wickets and no one likes running around, but it's up to the coach. We are happy to bring smiles on the fans' faces and we hope to continue doing so.

### West Ham boss Moyes, two players test positive for COVID-19

**LONDON, 23 SEPT (REUTERS):** West Ham United manager David Moyes and players Issa Diop and Josh Cullen have returned positive tests for COVID-19, the Premier League club said on Tuesday.

The club's medical staff were informed of the test results as the team were preparing for Tuesday's League Cup third round match against Hull City at London Stadium.

"All three, who are asymptomatic, will now follow Public Health



England and Premier League guidelines and protocols," the club said

in a statement, adding that the manager and both players immediately

left the stadium and have returned home.

The club statement

added that West Ham had offered to conduct COVID-19 tests for the Hull City team before the match but the visitors declined.

French defender Diop and Ireland midfielder Cullen were replaced by Harrison Ashby and Jack Wilshere respectively in the starting lineup around 45 minutes before kick-off.

The match started as scheduled at 19:30 BST with assistant manager Alan Irvine taking charge of West Ham.

### Brazil to allow some fans back into football stadiums



**BRASILIA, 23 SEPT (REUTERS):** The Brazilian government on Tuesday sanctioned the partial return of fans to football stadiums.

"It is important to stress that the reopening should be up to 30% of capacity of stadiums," Brazil's Health Ministry said in a short statement, adding that the percentage can increase later if required.

The decision would allow for crowds of around 25,000 in Rio's Maracana stadium and came after the Brazilian Football Confederation asked health officials to rule on their proposal to get fans back into grounds that have been closed since March when football shut down due to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Individual cities can override the decision, with Belo Horizonte saying it will veto the return of fans, according to Brazilian media reports.

Hundreds of people are still dying each day from COVID-19 in Brazil,

one of the world's most badly-affected nations, and the decision comes the same day that the British government shelved plans to allow fans to return to watch live sport.

Professional matches kicked off again in June in Rio de Janeiro and in Sao Paulo state, Brazil's most populous, in July.

Clubs, however, are struggling to keep their players virus-free.

Brazilian champions Flamengo, for example, were due to play a Copa Libertadores tie in Ecuador on Tuesday but seven players and two staff tested positive for COVID-19 before the match.

Several other clubs have reported similar problems, with one Brazilian league game last month cancelled just minutes before kickoff after members of one side tested positive.

More than 136,000 people have died from COVID-19 in Brazil, the second highest death toll in the world after the United States.

### Dzumhur and coach taking legal action against French Open organisers over COVID-19 test



**PARIS, 23 SEPT (REUTERS):** Bosnian player Damir Dzumhur is taking legal action against the organisers of the French Open after he was barred from entering the qualification round as his coach Petar Popovic tested positive for COVID-19.

Popovic said the test was a 'false positive' because he had already contracted the virus earlier this year and he was "full of antibodies".

He said a new private test he underwent in Serbia returned negative, according to French sports daily L'Equipe.

Former world number 23 Dzumhur and Popovic said they were denied a second test by French Open organisers, the French tennis federation (FFT).

The FFT, however, said it was following a protocol that had been signed by the players.

"It's a scandal and a huge frustration,"

Popovic told L'Equipe on Tuesday.

"I'm sure we're going to win in court. They're going to pay a lot for this. It makes me crazy."

Six players have already been denied a place in the qualification phase after positive coronavirus tests.

"We have drawn up our protocol in consultation with the government services. It was signed by the players and their team to obtain their accreditation. We value it. These are our rules," the FFT said in a statement to Reuters.

The French Open will be held from Sept. 27-Oct. 11 after being moved from its usual late May-June slot.

The FFT plans to allow 5,000 spectators to attend each day following a recent spike in COVID-19 cases in France. It previously said the claycourt major would permit a maximum of 11,500 fans per day.

### SKK, AKM appeal to NSCN (IM), NNPGs to reconcile

**DIMPUR, SEPT 22 [NAGALAND PAGE]:**

The All Sumi Students' Union (SKK) and Ao Students' Conference (AKM) have appealed to NSCN (IM) and the 7 NNPGs to pave a way out and come forward for reconciliation in the interest of the Nagas in general and for the younger generation in particular.

The SKK and AKM held a consultative meeting on September

21 at SKK Hiyam, Zunheboto in regards to the pertinent issues that confront the Naga society.

The two bodies had a serious discussion about the ongoing Naga political issue between the Naga negotiator and the Government of India for an honourable, acceptable and an inclusive solution..

In a joint press state, ASSU president, Hutoshe Kits and AKM president,

Nungdokyanger Ao lamented that the Naga national workers as well as the Naga civil societies are deeply engaged in differences in many fronts which perpetuate directly or indirectly in pursuance to the main objective of achieving the goal towards permanent solution.

The SKK and AKM urged upon the Government of India to genuinely assimilate

the desired opinion of the general Naga public for attainment of lasting peace towards more than seven decades old protracted political issue rather than keeping the people in dilemma with assurances and promises without any breakthrough pragmatically.

The two bodies further viewed that the process of delimitation

initiated by Government of India at this juncture is a wrong step, adding implementation of delimitation will have a severe impact on Naga solution.

The two bodies made it clear that the Naga political solution is the foremost and urgent demand by all Nagas, thus the Government of India should keep the delimitation on hold and settle the Naga political issue first.

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## Malaysian opposition leader Anwar plans new government

**KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA (AP):** Malaysian opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim said Wednesday he has secured a majority in Parliament to form a new government, but parties in the ruling coalition called it a "cheap publicity" stunt.

Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin said Anwar must provide evidence, and "until proven otherwise, my National Alliance government still stands firm and I am still prime minister." He urged Malaysians to stay calm.

Anwar said he was granted an audience with the king Tuesday but it was postponed because the king was in a hospital for treatment. He said he will not reveal details until after he has met the king. No new date for the meeting has been set.

"Conclusively, we have a strong, formidable majority. I am not talking about four, five or six. I am talking about much more than that," Anwar said. "With a clear and indisputable support and majority behind me, the government led by ... Muhyiddin Yassin has fallen."

Parties in the ruling coalition issued a separate statement supporting Muhyiddin's leadership.

Anwar's "assertion is nothing more than a repeat of cheap publicity" stunts and shows he is "power crazy," said the joint statement signed by the parties' secretary generals.

Earlier in a televised speech, Muhyiddin also told Malaysians to "reject the blind actions of some politicians who deliberately want to disrupt political stability" and his government's economic recovery plan. He announced billions of ringgit (dollars) in new cash handouts to help small businesses and the poor amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Muhyiddin has been grappling to maintain support amid infighting in his coalition that has just a slim two-seat majority. He can ask the king to dissolve Parliament to seek early general elections.

James Chin, professor of Asian studies at Australia's University of Tasmania, said he believed negotiations for the formation of a new government are still ongoing. "The big question mark now in Kuala Lumpur is that people have not seen the list of MPs supporting Anwar ... and people are very cautious," he said.

Science and Technology Minister Khairy Jamaluddin countered Anwar's claim. He tweeted a picture of the Cabinet meeting, saying: "Cabinet meeting just ended. Nothing collapsed or fell."

But the president of the biggest party in Muhyiddin's coalition said he was aware that many lawmakers from his Malay party are backing Anwar as premier and that he cannot stop them.

# Thousands expected to honor Ginsburg at Supreme Court

**WASHINGTON (AP):** Thousands of people are expected to pay their respects at the Supreme Court to the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the women's rights champion, leader of the court's liberal bloc and feminist icon who died last week.

Even with the court closed to the public because of the coronavirus pandemic and Washington already consumed with talk of Ginsburg's replacement, the justice's former colleagues, family, close friends and the public will have the chance Wednesday and Thursday to pass by the casket of the second woman to serve on the Supreme Court.

The sad occasion is expected to bring together the remaining eight justices for the first time since the building was closed in March and they resorted to meetings by telephone.

Ginsburg will lie in repose for two days at the court where she served for 27 years and, before that, argued six cases for gender equality in the 1970s.

Following a private ceremony Wednesday in the court's Great Hall, her casket will be moved outside the building to the top of the court's front steps so that public mourners can pay their



respects in line with public health guidance for the pandemic.

Since her death Friday evening, people have been leaving flowers, notes, placards and all manner of Ginsburg paraphernalia outside the court in tribute to the woman who became known in her final years as the "Notorious RBG." Court workers cleared away the items and cleaned the court plaza and sidewalk in advance of Wednesday's ceremony.

Following past practice at the tradition-laden court, Ginsburg's casket is expected to arrive just before 9:30 a.m. EDT Wednesday, the court said. Supreme Court police will carry it up the court steps, which will be lined by former Ginsburg law clerks

serving as honorary pallbearers.

Chief Justice John Roberts and the other justices will be in the Great Hall when the casket arrives and is placed on the Lincoln Catafalque, the platform on which President Abraham Lincoln's coffin rested in the Capitol rotunda in 1865. A 2016 portrait of Ginsburg by artist Constance P. Beaty will be displayed nearby.

It's unclear whether President Donald Trump would visit the court before he leaves town Wednesday afternoon, though he did pay respects when Justice John Paul Stevens died last year and President Barack Obama visited the court after Justice Antonin Scalia's death in 2016.

The entrance to the courtroom, along with Ginsburg's chair and place on the bench next to Roberts, have been draped in black, a longstanding court custom. These visual signs of mourning, which in years past have reinforced the sense of loss, will largely go unseen this year. The court begins its new term Oct. 5, but the justices will not be in the courtroom and instead will hear arguments by phone.

After the private ceremony inside the court, Ginsburg's casket will be on public view from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Wednesday and 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. Thursday.

On Friday, Ginsburg will lie in state at the Capitol, the first woman to do so and only the second

Supreme Court justice after William Howard Taft. Taft had also been president. Rosa Parks, a private citizen as opposed to a government official, is the only woman who has lain in honor at the Capitol.

Ginsburg will be buried beside her husband, Martin, in a private ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery next week. Martin Ginsburg died in 2010. She is survived by a son and a daughter, four grandchildren, two step-grandchildren and a great-grandchild.

Ginsburg's death from cancer at age 87 has added another layer of tumult to an already chaotic election year. Trump and Senate Republicans are plowing ahead with plans to have a new justice on the bench, perhaps before the Nov. 3 election.

Only Chief Justice Roger Taney, who died in October 1864, died closer to a presidential election. Lincoln waited until December to nominate his replacement, Salmon Chase, who was confirmed the same day.

When Scalia, Ginsburg's closest friend on the court, died unexpectedly in 2016, Republicans refused to act on President Barack Obama's high-court nomination of Judge Merrick Garland.

## President of Belarus inaugurated despite election protests

**KYIV, UKRAINE (AP):** President Alexander Lukashenko of Belarus assumed his sixth term of office Wednesday during an inauguration ceremony that officials did not announce in advance after weeks of mass protests against the authoritarian leader's reelection, which opposition activists maintain was rigged.

State news agency Belta reported that the swearing-in ceremony took place in the capital of Minsk with several hundred top government officials, lawmakers, representatives of media organizations and other prominent figures present.

Lukashenko, 66, took an oath in Belarusian with his right hand on the country's Constitution, and the head of the country's central election commission handed him the official ID card of the president of Belarus.

"The day of assuming the post of the president is the day of our victory, convincing and fateful," Lukashenko said at the ceremony. "We were not just electing the president of the country — we were defending our values, our peaceful life, sovereignty and independence."

Lukashenko has run Belarus, an ex-Soviet nation of 9.5 million, with an iron fist for 26 years. Official results of the country's Aug. 9 presidential election had him winning 80% of the vote. His strongest opponent, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, got 10%.

Tsikhanouskaya, who is in exile after being forced to leave Belarus, has not accepted the outcome of the election as valid. Neither have the thousands of her supporters who continued demanding Lukashenko's resignation during more than six weeks of mass protests.

The United States and the European Union have questioned the election and criticized the brutal police crackdown on peaceful protesters during the first few days of

demonstrations. Lithuanian Foreign Minister Linkevicius called Wednesday's inauguration ceremony "such a farce."

"Forged elections. Forged inauguration. The former president of Belarus does not become less former. Quite the contrary. His illegitimacy is a fact with all the consequences that this entails," Linkevicius said on Twitter.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel's spokesman, Steffen Seibert, called the fact that the ceremony was prepared in secrecy "very telling."

"Even after this ceremony today, Mr. Lukashenko cannot claim democratic legitimization, which would be the condition to recognize him as the legitimate president of Belarus," Seibert said Wednesday.

Protests demanding Lukashenko to step down have rocked the country daily since last month's election, with the largest rallies in Minsk attracting up to 200,000 people.

During the first three days of the protests, police used truncheons and rubber bullets to disperse crowds. Several protesters died, and more than 7,000 were detained. The time and location of the inauguration ceremony were not publicized in advance. Law enforcement officers blocked off central areas of Minsk on Wednesday morning and public transportation services were suspended.

The Viasna human rights group said several protesters were detained near the Palace of Independence, where the ceremony took place, holding banners saying "The king has no clothes" and "The victory (will belong to) the people."

Alexander Klaskousky, an independent Minsk-based analyst, said the secrecy surrounding the president's inauguration illustrated the threat the ongoing unrest poses to Lukashenko's grip on power.

## Russia's Navalny released from German hospital after 32 days

**BERLIN (AP):** Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny has been released from a Berlin hospital after more than a month's treatment for poisoning, with doctors now believing that a "complete recovery" from the Soviet-era nerve agent is possible for him, the hospital said Wednesday.

Navalny spent 32 days at Berlin's Charite hospital, 24 of them in intensive care, before doctors deemed his "condition had improved sufficiently for him to be discharged from acute inpatient care."

As he was released Tuesday, the 44-year-old displayed his characteristic sarcastic sense of humor. In an Instagram post, he took swipe at Russian President Vladimir Putin, scoffing at reported comments by the Russian leader suggesting that Navalny might have intentionally poisoned himself.

Navalny, a politician and corruption investigator who is Putin's most visible opponent, was flown to Germany two days after falling ill on Aug. 20 on a domestic flight in Russia. He spent those two days in a coma in a hospital in the Siberian city of Omsk, where Russian doctors said they found no trace of any poisoning.

German chemical weapons experts have determined that he was poisoned with the Soviet-era nerve agent Novichok — findings corroborated by labs in France and Sweden.

The hospital said based on Navalny's progress, physicians

believe that a "complete recovery is possible," but added it "remains too early to gauge the potential long-term effects of his severe poisoning."

In recent days, Navalny has been posting regular photos of his convalescence from the hospital on Instagram, first showing him sitting up in his bed surrounded by his family, then up and about in the building.

In his post Tuesday night, he laughed off a report in the French newspaper Le Monde saying that Putin suggested to French President Emmanuel Macron in a call that he "could have taken the poison himself."

"Good theory, I believe it deserves the most careful attention," Navalny wrote in Russian. "Cooked Novichok in the kitchen. Took a sip from a flask on the plane. Fell into a coma."

He wryly wrote that the "ultimate aim of my cunning plan" must have been to die in Siberia, where the cause of death would be "lived long enough."

"But Putin outmaneuvered me. You can't fool him," Navalny wrote. "As a result, I lay in coma for 18 days like a fool, but didn't get my way. The provocation failed!"

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov on Wednesday said the report about Putin's conversation with Macron was "inaccurate in its reported wording," but refused to elaborate as to which part was inaccurate. Macron's

office refused to comment on the report.

The nerve agent used in the attack was the same class of Soviet-era poison that Britain said was used on former Russian spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter in Salisbury, England, in 2018. German Chancellor Angela Merkel has called the poisoning attempted murder and she and other world leaders have demanded that Russia fully investigate the case.

Navalny was kept in an induced coma for more than two weeks as he was treated with an antidote. Members of his team accused the Kremlin of involvement in the poisoning, charges that Russian officials have vehemently denied.

Russia has bristled at the demands for an investigation, saying that Germany needs to share medical data in the case or compare notes with Russian doctors.

Germany has noted that Navalny was in Russia treatment for 48 hours and that Russia has its own samples from Navalny. Peskov said Wednesday that Moscow needs data from Germany "to compare" tests results.

Germany has also enlisted the Hague-based Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons for technical assistance in the case. The agency has collected independent samples from Navalny for testing but results have not yet been announced.

The Charite statement was released

in consultation with Navalny and his wife, and the hospital would not comment further on any outpatient care for him.

Navalny's team has said he eventually plans to return to Russia, but had no immediate statement after his release from the hospital.

Peskov said Wednesday that Navalny, "as any other Russian citizen," is free to come back to Russia "at any moment." He

reiterated that what happened to the him remains "a big question" for the Kremlin, as Russian investigators "don't have any facts pointing to" poisonous substances in Navalny's body.

Peskov once again called for Germany, France and Sweden to share their data with Moscow.

"We're still expecting it and are convinced that it can help us make significant progress in this case," he said.

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**SIGNATURE SNARL!** Singer Miley Cyrus wore a black sheer bodysuit from the Mugler Fall Winter 2020 collection by Casey Cadwallader at the iHeart Festival 2020 in Los Angeles.

## Liv Tyler exits '9-1-1: Lone Star'

**LOS ANGELES, SEP 23 (PTI):** Actor Liv Tyler will not return for the second season of popular series "9-1-1: Lone Star".

Tyler, who played Michelle Blake opposite Rob Lowe's Owen Strand, exited the procedural drama series due to issues related to the coronavirus pandemic, reported Entertainment Weekly.

The 43-year-old actor lives in London with her partner Dave Gardner and children, and had been commuting to Los Angeles, where the series is filmed.

However, the uncertainty regarding international travel during the coronavirus pandemic, as well as a delayed production start, made her reevaluate her future on the series.

Tim Minear, who co-created the show with Ryan Murphy and Brad Fulchuk, thanked Tyler for helping them launch the



series, which is a spin-off of "9-1-1".

"What a thrill it was having a movie star of Liv Tyler's stature to help us launch the first season of '911: Lone Star'. We loved working with Liv and will be forever indebted to her for her haunting, powerful portrayal of Michelle Blake.

"While we were able to tell a complete chapter in Michelle's story, as with Connie Britton on our mothership, we also feel like there are more stories to be told. The door here will always be open for a return," he said.

## FIR against director Anurag Kashyap after actress alleges rape

**MUMBAI, SEP 23 (PTI):** Mumbai Police have registered an FIR against filmmaker Anurag Kashyap after actress Payal Ghosh accused him of raping her in 2013, an official said on Wednesday. Kashyap has dismissed the allegations as "baseless".

The First Information Report (FIR) was registered at Versova police station late Tuesday night after the actress along with her lawyer Nitin Satpute approached the police, the official said.

The FIR was registered under Indian Penal Code Sections 376 (I) (rape), 354 (assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty), 341 (wrongful restraint) and 342 (wrongful confinement), the official said, adding that further investigation is underway.

Kashyap will be called for questioning in connection with the alleged seven-year-old incident, he said. In her police complaint, the actress alleged that Kashyap raped her at a place on Yari Road in Versova in 2013.

The actress and her lawyer earlier approached Oshiwara police station here on Monday, but they were asked



to go to the Versova police station as the alleged incident took place under its area of jurisdiction, the official said.

They had approached the Oshiwara police as Kashyap's office is located in that area.

Satpute in a tweet late Tuesday night said, "Finally FIR has been lodged against Accused for the offence Rape, Wrongful Restrain, Wrongful Confinement and outraging modesty of woman."

On Saturday, the actress took to

Twitter, claiming that Kashyap was sexually inappropriate towards her, an allegation the director called "baseless".

Kashyap called the actor's claim an attempt to "silence" him for his outspoken views.

His lawyer earlier in a tweet said, "My client, Anurag Kashyap, has been deeply pained by the false allegations, these are completely false, malicious and dishonest."

## Have contributed towards bringing a positive change in society through cinema: Ayushmann Khurrana

**MUMBAI, SEP 23 (PTI):** Actor Ayushmann Khurrana, who has been voted as one of the most influential people in the world by TIME magazine, on Wednesday said he has always aimed to bring a positive change in society through cinema.

The 36-year-old actor has come a long way from being a contestant on a reality show to an RJ to a VJ, followed by hosting popular television shows.

Having made his acting debut in Bollywood in 2012 with "Vicky Donor", Khurrana has made a niche for himself with social entertainers including "Dum Laga Ke Haisha", "Bareilly Ki Barfi", "Shubh Mangal Saavdhan", "Badhaai Ho", "Article 15", among others.

The National Award winner is among the five Indians who have featured on this list. Others are Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Sundar Pichai CEO of Google, London-based Indian-origin doctor Ravindra Gupta, who found a cure for AIDS and Bilkis - Dadi Shaheen Bagh, a Delhi neighbourhood that became the epicentre of the anti-CAA protests.

Khurrana is the youngest Indian to be featured in this year's TIME Magazine. The "Andhadhun" star said he is humbled with the recognition bestowed on him.

"As an artiste, I have only looked to contribute towards bringing a positive change in society through cinema and this moment is a huge validation of my belief system and my journey," he said in a statement.

Khurrana said he believes cinema has the power to bring



about change by triggering the right conversations among people in society.

"Hopefully, through my content choices, I have been able to contribute towards my country and countrymen," he added.

Khurrana's colleague Deepika Padukone has written a short article in the magazine, appreciating his talent.

On the work front, Khurrana will be reuniting with his "Article 15" director Anubhav Sinha on a new project. The actor will soon begin shooting for Abhishek Kapoor's next in which he plays a cross functional athlete.

## Drugs probe: Film producer Madhu Mantena reaches NCB office

**MUMBAI, SEP 23 (PTI):** Film producer Madhu Mantena reached the NCB guest house here on Wednesday to record his statement in connection with the agency's probe into the alleged Bollywood-drugs nexus, an official said.

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) had summoned Mantena for questioning in connection with the probe, he said.

He reached the NCB guest house in south Mumbai around 11.30 am, the official said.

Mantena was the co-producer of 2016 Bollywood film 'Udta Punjab' which dealt with the issue of drug

menace.

His name allegedly cropped up during the questioning of late actor Sushant Singh Rajput's talent manager Jaya Saha, who was quizzed by the probe agency for last two days, the official said.

Saha has been called again by the NCB on Wednesday.

During the NCB's probe into the drugs angle in Rajput's death case, a wider drugs nexus in Bollywood came to light.

The NCB on Tuesday summoned actress Deepika Padukone's manager Karishma Prakash and KWAN talent management agency's



CEO Dhurv Chitgopekar, but the former could not appear before the agency due to ill-health.

NCB officials on Tuesday said they might summon

Padukone if needed.

Some WhatsApp conversations purportedly discussing drugs are on the radar of the agency, sources said.

### ARIES:

American-Polish artist Jerzy Kosinski once said, "The principle of true art is not to portray, but to evoke." His sentiments accurately describe where you are in your creative journey, Aries. Your relationship with art and expression is undergoing a major evolution as a result of your own awakening, inspiring those around you to look at the world differently. So stay in your magic. Create from a space of wholeness. Remember, it is your uniqueness that makes you stand apart from the crowd.

### TAURUS:

This is a time of breakthroughs in the Taurus HQ. The boulders that once stood in your path are being cleared, paving the way for you to move forward. Remember, both the journey and the destination are equally significant. Give thanks for the lessons you have learned along the way. On the other side of the victory: a brand new opportunity that will take you one step closer to the dream. Luck is on your side, Taurus. Be vigilant. You want to make the right move at the right time.

### GEMINI:

We all have opinions on the lives of others—opinions that are based on our judgements rather than the truth. The cards are reminding you how little you know about the given situation. So breathe out the toxic emotions and breathe in the love. Remember, we're all made of the same stuff, soil and stardust. As you do, learn to keep your ego aside too. Meeting the other from a space of openness is the best way to find amicable solutions.

### CANCER:

Art is not just a form of expression, it's a catalyst for inner alchemy. Nobody understands this better than you, Cancer. Today, you're in the mood to become one with the cosmic currents, to seduce the Muse, and to paint your innermost feelings onto the canvas. Remember to stay in your magic and create from a space of wholeness. While you're at it, let go of the idea of perfection. It is by staying true to your soul's essence that you will be able to build an authentic connection with your audience.

### LEO:

Let's talk about addictions, toxic patterns, and on-again, off-again relationships. Are you stuck in an endless loop, Leo? One that you seem to have no way out of? Could your lack of willpower be the reason you're unable to take a step in the right direction? The cards are urging you to stop making excuses for yourself and dedicate yourself to the inner work. If you need external support at this point, consider approaching a healer, counsellor or therapist.

### VIRGO:

Business opportunities are aplenty, Virgo. But, you can't put your eggs in too many baskets. Pick the one that feels most in alignment with your soul's purpose and take a leap of faith. Remember, it's okay to not know everything. Life seldom comes with a manual. You will figure it out along the way. Expanding the business may also be a big theme for some of you. Don't be afraid to experiment with something you have never done before.

### LIBRA:

There's always more than one way to move forward. Don't

give in to the illusion of limitations. Challenge yourself to look at the roadblock from a different perspective and you will find a creative solution. Love and other intoxicants are also showing up strongly in your cards, Libra. How and why are you resisting thy suitors? The opportunity to be bitten by the love bug is being presented to you. Be mindful of the old stories that are keeping you from experiencing the glory of the four-letter word.

### SCORPIO:

Just because you have done things in a certain way for so long, doesn't mean you're obliged to continue on the same path. Change things up a little, Scorpio. Give yourself the permission to venture into the unknown. As a result of this exploration, you will evolve in more ways than one. Starting a new business may be on the cards for some. It's good to have a structure in place as long as you don't feel limited by the rules of the game. Learning to improvise as you go along will take your career to new heights.

### SAGITTARIUS:

Our understanding of spirituality is often limited to who we are in front of our altars, but the truth is, it's the energy we take into the world that really defines us. The cards are urging you to become aware of your thoughts, words, and actions. It is by living consciously that you will hold space for your soul to evolve. Balance and harmony are also going to be big themes for you. Trust that conflicts will be resolved amicably once you move beyond the ego. Archers in the market for love will find themselves drawn towards somebody with a heart of gold. The Universe wants you to make space

for a soulful connection—now.

### CAPRICORN:

This is a time of decision-making, Capricorn. A time of stepping back and assessing the options before you. Remember to find a balance between your head and heart as you do, and yes that means not getting carried away by your emotions. Spirituality and soulfulness is also highlighted in your cards. Remember, it's not always about sacred texts and ancient rituals. Something as simple as gardening can prove to be transcendental if you pour your heart into it.

### AQUARIUS:

You can blame your circumstances all you want, Aquarius, but, the truth is, you are the only one who is standing in the way of your success. Remember, no man is an island. Having co-conspirators on your journey will help you move mountains. Word for the wise: keep your ego aside and find a way to work with, rather than against, the team. Moving or relocating may also be on the cards for some. Given your lust for adventure, this move will prove to be life-changing for you.

### PISCES:

Examine the given idea carefully. If you're convinced you're meant to bring it to life, it's time to take concrete action. Don't wait for somebody else to validate your next move or give you the go-ahead. This is your story. Make it a bestseller, Pisces! A good way to get the creative juices flowing is to spend some time meditating or contemplating. In moments of silence, you will receive divine downloads that will help you take your work to a whole new level.