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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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With two more deaths, Sikkim's COVID toll reaches 54

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 09 OCT:**

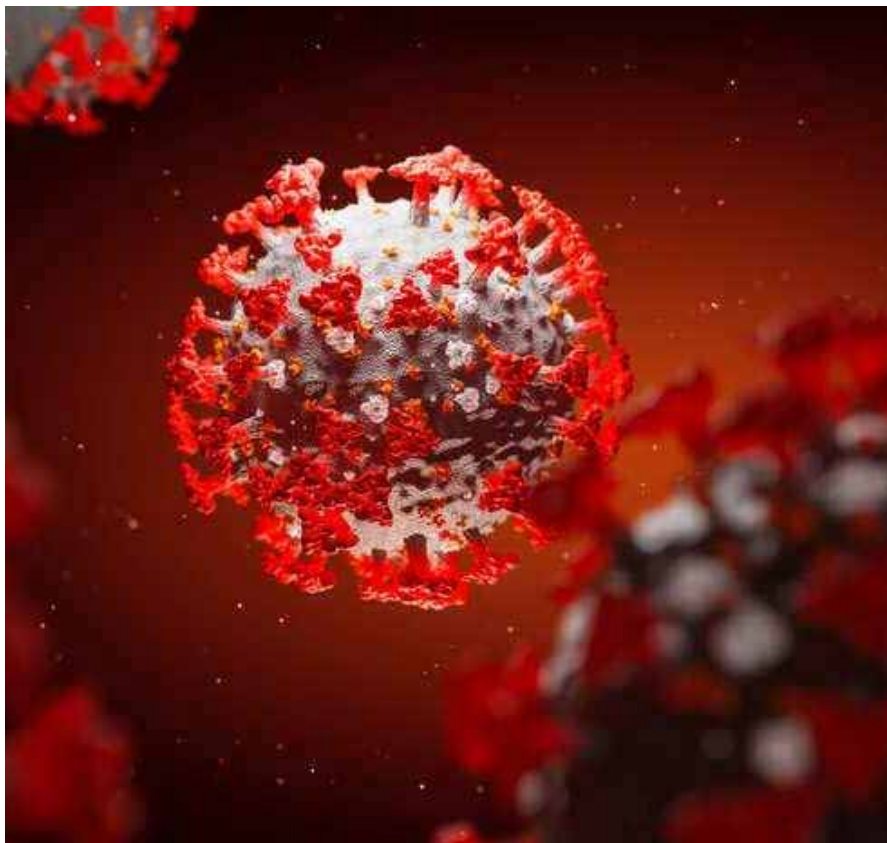
Sikkim registered two more deaths of COVID-positive patients, one of them a barely two-month old baby girl, taking the State's COVID-19 toll to 54.

The baby was admitted to STNM Hospital, the only COVID Hospital in the State, on 03 October and had congenital complications. She was also diagnosed with septicemia, severe pneumonia and cardio respiratory failure has been marked as the cause of the death. She had tested positive for COVID-19 in TrueNat testing.

She passed away at STNM Hospital at 10:55AM on Friday.

Earlier in the day, at around 6AM, a 44-year-old male from Hee Gaon in West Sikkim, who had been admitted to STNM Hospital on 29 September after testing positive for COVID-19, also breathed his last. He had the co-morbid condition of chronic kidney disease.

Health Department, State IEC Officer, Sonam G Bhutia, in his health bulletin on Friday evening, further informed that Sikkim now has 504



active cases with the detection of 32 new cases of novel coronavirus in the past 24 hours.

The VRD Lab at STNM Hospital is back to screening samples through RT-PCR after having remained contained for three days.

Out of the 32 new cases, 26 have been reported from East District, one from West Sikkim and five from South District,

taking the State's COVID caseload to 3,278.

17 more patients were discharged from isolation wards taking the total number of discharged patients to 2,640.

Meanwhile, nine patients are currently admitted in the COVID ICU facility at STNM Hospital.

RT-PCR testing of 273 samples returned 14 positive cases while

18 more cases were detected in rapid antigen testing of 60 samples. All seven samples screened by TrueNat returned negative.

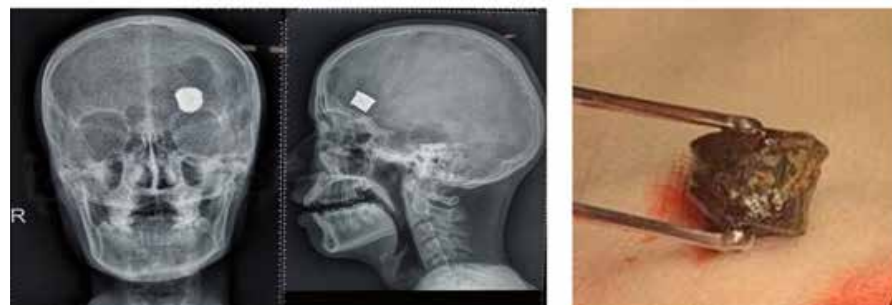
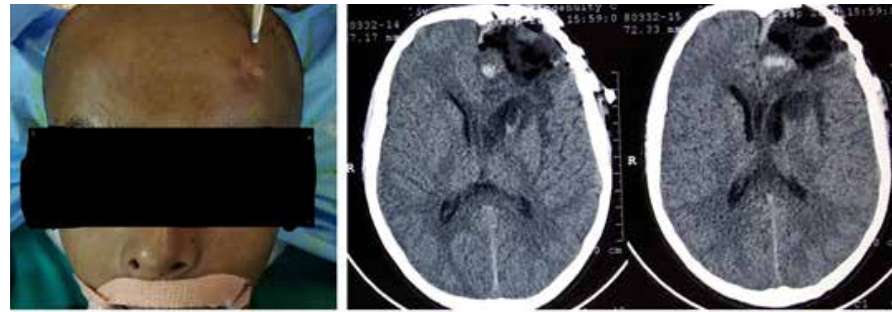
While giving details of the new cases, Mr Bhutia informed that one SSB personnel stationed at Melli-Aching, Yaksom in West Sikkim, one from Daragaon, Tadong, one from Chandmari, one from near Khel-

gaon, Reshithang, one from Greendale School road, one from Namli, Ranipool, one from Munsi Colony in Development Area, one from Rai Gaon in Lower Burtuk, two from Tharo Line in Lal Market, one from Tadong, one from near Tadong police outpost, one from Vajra and one from Development Area were tested positive for COVID-19 in RT-PCR testing.

Mr Bhutia added that one person from Chisopani, one from Bermiok, two from near Tadong flyover, one from near Rongneck School in Decheling, one from Central Pandam, one from 6th Mile Tadong, one from near ICDS centre in Rhinock, one from below Sikkim Spastic Society in Shyari, one from below Swastik gate in Upper Burtuk, one from Maneydara in Lingding, one from Middle Shyari and one from near helipad in Upper Burtuk were detected in RAT.

He added that one person from 4th Mile Rangpo, one from Mahiggaon, one from Tingrithang and two from Melli Bazaar were also found positive for COVID-19 in RAT.

Bullet removed from teen's skull at CRH



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 09 OCT:**

Another uniquely interesting case was successfully treated by the Department of Neurosurgery in Central Referral Hospital (CRH) here recently.

A 16-year-old boy was brought to the emergency reception with complaints of headache, nausea and vomiting and fever since one month. Three months ago he had an accident while trying out a firearm he had designed. After watching a few online videos on how to build a gun with readily available materials like metal pipes, rods and matchsticks, he built one for himself and decided to try it out in his backyard. The homemade firearm supposedly backfired and in the process he injured himself in the forehead. The exact details of the events are being investigated by the police at the moment.

Following the injury, the patient never lost consciousness and appeared normal except for the small skin wound on the left forehead and so he decided not to go to the hospital at that moment. He took over-the-counter medications with which his wound healed with a superficial scar. He was alright for some time but soon start-

ed to experience headaches along with nausea and vomiting. He also had on and off high grade fever with chills and rigor. Over-the-counter medications gave only temporary relief and over time his symptoms worsened progressively. Only when the medications stopped working was he brought to CRH.

The CT scan and X-ray reported a metallic foreign body inside the skull. Contrast enhanced CT scan of the brain showed multiple pockets of pus with thickened capsules surrounding the projectile. There was also significant edema of the surrounding brain causing dangerous mass effect and impending cerebral herniation, all of which can be life threatening. He was planned and prepared for surgery by Consultant Neurosurgeon, Dr Pranav and his team.

A left frontal craniotomy and removal of the projectile was performed. There were multiple encapsulated pockets of thick pus surrounding the projectile. High magnification operating Neurosurgical Microscope was used to carefully explore the brain without injuring the delicate vital structures. The country made projectile was removed

successfully. Pus was drained from the cavities and the abscess capsules were excised using fine dissection. The cavities were then flushed with clean saline. The entry wound on the skull was in the form of a defect about 1.5cm in diameter. This defect was repaired with a titanium mesh plate and screws. The patient made a remarkable recovery from the surgery without any complications and neurological deficits.

Brain abscess is a serious condition and very often can be lethal. Therefore, prompt diagnosis and treatment is mandatory to save life and prevent significant morbidity. When the size of the abscess is large i.e. more than 2-3cms it has to be excised or aspirated if surgery is contraindicated. Smaller ones maybe treated with antibiotics alone. Medical treatment includes intravenous broad spectrum antibiotics for 4-6 weeks. Targeted therapy with culture sensitive antibiotics is usually preferred. Dr Pranav Rai has been working in CRH since December 2019. He has successfully treated over 100 complicated Neurosurgery cases involving trauma, infections, tumours, congenital conditions etc.

India's already-high inflation likely climbed further in September: Reuters poll

INDRADIP GHOSH

BENGALURU, 09 OCT (REUTERS): Retail inflation in India likely rose further above the central bank's medium-term target last month as food prices climbed due to lingering supply disruptions, a Reuters poll found, reducing the chances of another interest rate cut.

Persistent high prices have hurt the recession-stricken economy, which contracted a record 23.9% in April-June despite the Reserve Bank of India cutting its key repo rate by a cumulative 115 basis points since the pandemic started. Although the government has eased some lockdown restrictions to help the economy, supply chain disruptions have shown little sign of abating as the virus continues to spread rapidly in India.

The Oct. 6-8 Reuters poll of 47 economists suggested consumer prices rose 6.88% last month from a year ago, its highest in five months and faster than August's 6.69% rate.

If realised, inflation would be above the top end of the RBI's medium-term target range of 2%-6% for the sixth consecutive month.

"An acceleration in food inflation and ongoing virus-related supply disruptions have kept headline CPI inflation higher than we had anticipated, but price pressures should ease soon," said Shilpan Shah, senior India economist at Capital Economics. Above-average rainfall this year, a key determinant of yields in farming, is predicted to help reduce food-price pressures over the coming months. But inflation running above target is expected to keep the RBI on the sidelines for the rest of this year, despite expectations the Indian economy will mark its first full-year contraction since 1979 this year.

The Indian government appointed three new external members to the Monetary Policy Committee on Monday after delaying the latest policy-setting meeting, which is scheduled to conclude later on Friday. "We expect the RBI to remain cognizant of the price pressures but maintain their accommodative stance especially as it is food-led. Rate cuts will be delayed but not denied," said Rini Sen, India economist at ANZ.

Malbasey Dak Bungalow to be developed at a cost of Rs 34.41 crore

CM ATTENDS FOUNDATION STONE LAYING CEREMONY

**RUDRA KAUSHIK
GYALSHING, 09 OCT:**

Chief Minister, P.S Tamang attended the foundation stone laying ceremony of 'Integrated development of Dak Bungalow' located at Malbasey under Soreng Chakhung constituency, West District, today.

Under the project, the Dak Bungalow constructed during the British era will be renovate and upgraded at a cost of Rs 34.31 crore.

The state government has taken this initiative



with an aim to promote Malbasey as a tourism destination.

The Chief Minister informed that in order to add Malbasey and Soreng Chakhung constituency to the world tourism map, the upgradation and beau-

tification of Dak Bungalow has been initiated by the state government.

The Dak Bungalow located near Don Bosco School of Malbasey was in pathetic condition due to lack of proper upkeep.

turn to pg 02

COVID-19: Active cases in India dip below 9 lakh, recoveries cross 59 lakh

NEW DELHI, 09 OCT [PTI]: India's COVID-19 tally of cases went past 69 lakh with 70,496 infections being reported in a day, while active cases of infection fell below 9 lakh after a month, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Friday.

The total coronavirus cases mounted to 69,06,151. The death toll climbed to 1,06,490 with 964 people succumbing to the disease in a span of 24 hours, the data updated at 8 am showed.

The total recoveries have surged to 59,06,069 pushing the recovery rate to 85.52 percent, while there are 8,93,592 active cases of coronavirus infection in the country which comprises 12.94 percent of the total caseload, the data stated.

The COVID-19 case fatality rate due to the coronavirus infection was recorded at 1.54 percent.



India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23 and 40 lakh on September 5. It went past 50 lakh on September 16 and crossed 60 lakh on September 28.

According to the ICMR, a cumu-

lative total of 8,46,34,680 samples have been tested up to October 8 with 11,68,705 samples being tested on Thursday.

The 964 new fatalities include 358 from Maharashtra, 101 from Karnata-

ka, 68 Tamil Nadu, 63 from West Bengal, 45 from Uttar Pradesh, 42 Andhra Pradesh and 37 from Delhi.

A total of 1,06,490 deaths have been reported so far in the country includes 39,430 from Maharashtra followed by 10,052 from Tamil Nadu, 9,675 from Karnataka, 6,245 from Uttar Pradesh, 6,128 from Andhra Pradesh, 5,653 from Delhi, 5,439 from West Bengal, 3,741 from Punjab and 3,538 from Gujarat.

The health ministry stressed that more than 70 percent of the deaths occurred due to comorbidities.

"Our figures are being reconciled with the Indian Council of Medical Research," the ministry said on its website, adding that state-wise distribution of figures is subject to further verification and reconciliation.

Son who missed mother's funeral because of negligence at STNM, reiterates his complaint is against negligent officers not entire fraternity

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 09 OCT:

Bikash Gurung, the eldest son of late Munna Gurung from DPH area who could not attend the final rites of his mother because of slack administration at STNM hospital, today reiterated that his fight is not against the entire medical fraternity.

Speaking to media persons today, he stressed that he wanted action taken against only those whose negligence and mismanagement during the handing and taking over of his mother's body on 06 October which led to her cremation being held without any of her family present. She was a COVID-19 patient.

Today, he thanked the State government for having constituted a four-member committee to conduct a preliminary enquiry into the incident. The committee, he said, will complete its enquiry in three days.

He further demanded that strict action be taken against those whose slackness led to the family not being informed about the funeral.

Today, he also alleged that the hospital management did not follow prescribed Standard Operating Procedure which requires a family member to be present when the body is shifted from the isolation ward to the mortuary. All he received was a phone call informing him that his mother had passed away.

The hospital authorities, he added were trying to explain the negligence to miscommunication.

"When no communication was made about the cremation, how can there be miscommunication?" he counters.

Lions Club Rangpo presents safety kits to SGSSS

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 08 OCT:

Lions Club of Rangpo presented safety kits to be used against Covid-19 to Santinagar Gaon Sudhar Samiti Singtam under East Sikkim today, a press release informs.

The club's chairman, Sanjay Agarwal

reached Singtam and met the Samiti's president, Krishna Chhetri along with Sital Pradhan, Dhiraj Pradhan and other members.

The safety kits include 100 face masks, 100 bottles of hand sanitizer and 100 pieces of hand gloves.

Parliamentary panel on IT to take up TRP issue: Sources

NEW DELHI, OCT 9 (PTI): Amid reports of manipulations in Television Rating Points (TRP) by some channels, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Information Technology, chaired by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, has decided to take up the issue, sources said on Friday.

Congress MP and member of the panel Karti Chidambaram had requested Tharoor to take up the matter and call the officials of the Information and Broadcasting Ministry before the committee to seek clarification and remedial measures.

The sources said that the panel was serious about the reports of manipulations in TRP, and it will be discussed in length.

The government's advertising expenditure depends on this system, and public spending should not be based on flawed data, Karti said.

"Flawed or manipulated TRP cannot be the basis of ad spend. TV companies also base their valuations on TRP. Those valuations are questionable now," he added.

TRP is a tool to judge which TV programmes are viewed the most and also indicates the viewers' choice and popularity of a particular channel.

Karti's demand that the parliamentary panel should take up the issue came a day after Mumbai Police claimed to have busted a TRP manipulation racket and arrested four people.

"The recent issues surrounding TRPs of television channels have cast doubts on the legitimacy and reliability of the system. TRPs produce essential data on television audiences in India and have become the primary basis for advertising decisions," Karti said in a letter to panel chairman Tharoor.

"There is a need for further understanding this situation. In light of this, it is important that the standing committee take up this issue. Therefore, I request you to call before the Committee concerned officials of the responsible ministry, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, to seek necessary clarification on the current situation and remedial measures," he said.

Echoing similar sentiments, former Information and Broadcasting minister and Congress MP Manish Tewari said the entire paradigm of TRP has vitiated the broadcasting industry, especially the news media, and it should be seriously taken up by Parliament and the government.

Tharoor was last month reappointed chairman of the reinstated Parliamentary Standing Committee on Information Technology, days after BJP members sought his removal for summoning Facebook officials before the panel.

Tharoor had called the officials of the social media giant over reports in the US media suggesting that it had not applied hate speech rules on members of the BJP and some right wing outfits in India.

WB Governor visits family of martyred soldier

SMRITA KHAWAS

SILIGURI, 09 OCT:

Governor of West Bengal, Jagdeep Dhankhar today visited the family of martyred Bipul Roy of Bindipara, Alipurduar District, who sacrificed his life for our country at Galwan Valley along with Lieutenant General, Anil Chauhan, Army Commander Eastern Command and Anupama Chauhan.

After the visit, a press conference was held at the State Guest House Siliguri wherein the Governor of West Bengal, Mr Dhankhar stated that the law and order situation in Bengal is alarming. He criticized Chief Minister, Mamata Banerjee and alleged that her government has totally failed.

Further he added that the administration of



West Bengal is not neutral and said, "I want to appeal to the administration to be politically neutral."

He also said that when the funds for farmers are coming from the Central government then why are farmers not receiving the amount directly in their bank accounts.

"I am very much dis-

heartened because today during my visit to the martyred soldier's family, no one from the State government was present there. And I am shocked by that kind of behaviour and when it comes to the safety of the women in West Bengal, it is at its worst, the state government should work on this seriously."

Mr Dhankhar assured that the upcoming election of West Bengal in 2021 will be transparent, peaceful and violence free.

During the conference he mentioned that the family of the martyr received a cheque of Rs. 11 lakhs from Raj Bhawan and assured further help to the family.

Neck and Nodal blast devastates Abhishek variety of paddy in East Sikkim

GANGTOK, 09 OCT (PIB): The paddy farmers at 6th mile and Rautey-Rumtek, East Sikkim recently presented a complaint of empty chaffy grains but completely green paddy crop.

Bhim Prasad Sharma, farmer from 6th Mile, asserted that "The paddy plant looks like a normal ripened crop but in fact it has dried up due to some problem not known in the past" who had planted this variety of paddy on 0.4 ha. He said that his entire efforts has gone in vain and it will be a huge loss for him in this season without being able to harvest even a single grain from this variety in the present year.

Another farmer, Kamal Sharma, another farmer from Rautey-Rumtek, East Sikkim, has also planted this variety in 0.3ha and he also has a similar tale to narrate.

Upon discussion with farmers, Joint Director, Dr RK Avasthe, ICAR-NOFRI constituted a team of Scientists from ICAR-NOFRI, Tadong comprising of Dr Chandramani Raj (Scientist-Plant Pathology) and Dr Janak Kumar Singh (Subject Matter Specialist-Plant Breeding) for field visit.

The affected areas upon close observation of the paddy fields growing Abhishek variety recorded heavy damage due to combined infection of neck blast and nodal blast causing chaffy grains which remain unfilled. The paddy variety Abhishek was released from the Regional station, Hazaribagh of ICAR-National Rice Research Institute, Cuttack in 2006.

However, the local cultivars of paddy which are believed to have originated in Sikkim, like Sano attay and Kalchanti were free from the disease despite being planted in near vicinity of the affected Abhishek variety.

The microscopic examination of the affected samples was carried out by Dr Shweta Singh (Scientist - Plant Pathology) where she concluded that the paddy sheath and grains were infected with neck and nodal blast infection which was clearly evident due to presence of spores of the fungi.

Rice blast, a devastating disease of paddy, is caused by Magnaporthe grisea (Herbert) Barr in almost all paddy growing areas of India. It is the most common disease in irrigated conditions of temperate and sub-tropical areas of the country. The pathogen is most common on leaves causing leaf blast during the vegetative stage or on nodes, neck and panicle during reproductive stage causing Node blast, Neck blast and panicle blast, respectively.

Neck blast is considered as the most destructive phase of the disease as it causes complete loss in outbreak conditions. In India, 75% yield loss has been reported during 1950s and is a recurrent problem in almost all paddy growing areas in the plains.

In general, the disease is favored by extended period of relative humidity of about ≥92%, cloudy weather and air temperature of 25–28°C during day and 20–22°C during night hours. During

last month i.e., September, 2020 the average monthly maximum temperature recorded was 25.4°C with monthly minimum temperature was 20.2°C during flowering and grain formation stage. The average maximum relative humidity was observed at 92.1% while minimum average relative humidity was 78.1%. The total monthly rainfall was recorded as 553.6mm which is almost the double of previous two years during the month of September. In addition, there were 17 complete cloudy days in September 2020 which aggravated the outbreak of disease.

Climatic variation seems to have acted as a catalyst. In addition, susceptible behavior of Abhishek variety in Sikkim is due to fact that it has been bred in Orissa suitable for plain conditions having ecology and altitude very much different from Sikkim, and also the population dynamics of the pathogen varies at different locations. The variety has never been evaluated for its suitability under Sikkim conditions where the virulence of the pathogen is different from the one where Abhishek is adapted to.

The neck and nodal blast is a fungal disease which can be managed effectively by cultivating local cultivars of Sikkim which are resistant for past several generations in the presence of local pathogen populations. Generally farmers of Sikkim grows local cultivar like Attey, Chirakey, Krishnabhog, Kalchanti, Khemati, Phudungey, China Dhan, Nepal Dhan, Dutkati, Tabrey, Sijali, etc. in which only leaf blast mostly occurs in the vegetative stage. The local cultivars of Sikkim have the potential to recover automatically from the vegetative stress of blast and have never been observed as a problem in reproductive or flowering stage. For the first time, this ICAR-NRRI (ICAR-National Rice Research Institute) bred variety "Abhishek" had completely succumbed to this disease when it was released for irrigated ecosystem by Jharkhand in 2006.

This problem can recur in future also and therefore, for its management ICAR-NOFRI recommends practices like 1. Field sanitation and burying of infected straw and stubbles in the field. 2. Seed treatment with Pseudomonas fluorescens @ 10g/kg of seed. 3. During nursery preparation, sprinkling 2.5kg of Pseudomonas fluorescens (talc) in stagnated water to a depth of 2.5cm over an area of 25m² for one hectare of nursery. 4. Seedling should also be treated by soaking the root system of seedlings for 30 minutes in Pseudomonas fluorescens @ 4ml/L before transplanting. 5. Spray three times Pseudomonas fluorescens talc formulation @ 0.5per cent from 45days after transplanting to grain filling stage at 10days interval. 6. Use local tolerant varieties which are adapted to Sikkim conditions and 7. In outbreak conditions, copper oxychloride @ 0.3 per cent should be applied at intervals of 10days till grain filling stage (<8kg Cu/hectare/year).

Virtual fitness championship held amid COVID-19 pandemic

PUNE, OCT 9 (PTI): In a bid to promote health and fitness, the directorate of sports and youth services of Maharashtra held a national-level athletic fitness championship virtually amid the COVID-19 pandemic, an official said on Friday.

The online national-level championship named "eNERGIZE" was organised in September and the results were announced on October 5, the official said.

At least 2,500 athletes, aspiring athletes, children, general public across the country participated in the online event.

"The aim of the event was to promote health and fitness among the general population and help athletes, aspiring and young players to keep fit amid the COVID-19 situation," said Omprakash Bakoria, the commissioner of sports, Maharashtra.

Every participant had to complete three different fitness-related exercises for 10 minutes each and upload a video of the workout, following which fitness platform Xtralive helped assess the participants, he said.

In first, second and third positions, both in male and female categories, have been awarded a prize money of Rs 75,000, Rs 50,000 and Rs 25,000 respectively.

Shraddha Talekar, a 24-year-old gymnast from a village in Raigad district, who had represented India at gymnastics tournament in Croatia in 2019, won the first prize in the women's category.

Not only professional athletes, but even school children participated in the competition.

Four students, aged between 5 and 13 years, from Pune-based Sanskriti School also won the workout challenge and bagged certificates in three different age groups, it was stated.

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Malbaisey Dak...

In an hour long speech, the CM reiterated that the SKM government is committed towards sustainable development of the state along with the mission of uplifting the downtrodden and economically weaker section of the society.

He assured that the SKM government would initiate all the developmental works in the state within five years instead of twenty-five years taken by the former SDF government. He stressed that party workers should not get frustrated because the SKM government is committed towards delivering its promises.

Mr Tamang said that the state government has started the Garib Awaas Yojana, a housing scheme to provide shelter to the needy, and added that apart from the beneficiaries of rural areas, people from urban settings will be included in the housing scheme.

On the COVID-19 crisis, Mr Tamang appealed to the people to face the crisis with necessary precautionary measures and maintained that comprehensive economic activities would resume post the crisis in the state. He said that despite the threat of COVID-1, developmental works in the state should be given utmost priority.

Even though educational institutions are closed due to COVID-19, the teachers employed on adhoc basis will get their salaries before Dussehra, said the CM. He informed that the state government has kept aside the budget to pay the adhoc employees of the state.

He also stated that the state government would encourage the online system of education in the state to facilitate the educators and students in testing situations like the one induced by COVID-19. He added that the education sector would be given the highest priority in the state.

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ANTHYESTHI KRIYA

The Anthyesthi Kriya of late Bimal Krishna Rasaily who left for his heavenly abode on 4th October 2020 falls on 13.10.2020 (TUESDAY). The final prayer service will be held at his own residence at Lachungpa Building, Top Floor, Behind A.G. Quarter, Development Area, Gangtok.



We would also like to take this opportunity to thank all our well wishers, friends and family who stood by us during the time of bereavement.

Sudha Rasaily (Wife)
Yash Raj Rasaily (Son)
Purnima Rasaily (Sister-in-Law)
Shradha Gazmer (Daughter)
Naresh Gazmer (Son-in-Law)
Daksh Rasaily (Nephew)
Kamal Nidhi Sarda (niece)
Rahul Sarda (Son-in-Law)
Siddhant Rasaily (Nephew)
Nevedita Gazmer (Grand Daughter)
Sankar Gazmer (Grandson)
Mobile No. 8918155150/6297135761

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LAND FOR SALE

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

LAND FOR SALE

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

LAND FOR SALE

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

FOR RENT

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

GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

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

Building for sale

A two storey building constructed on plot area 50×40 ft. Situated at Upper Phong near Phong SS, South Sikkim is on sale. Cost Rs 60 Lakhs (Negotiable). Interested may contact : 8145829309, 7864937800, 9749897695.



SISCO distributes KCC loan to trout farmers

GYALSHING, 09 OCT [IPR]: SISCO Bank Ltd., Gyalshing Branch distributed KCC loan to the progressive farmers of Upper Rimbi, Darap GPU, West Sikkim, today, for the purpose of Trout Farming through Darap Multipurpose Co-opera-

tive Society. The KCC for Trout Farming is the first of its kind being disbursed in the State of Sikkim.

During the disbursement, a Financial Literacy Programme following all the SOPs of Covid-19 was also conducted by

the Branch Manager, Nirmal K. Pradhan, SISCO Bank Gyalshing and the camp was attended by AGM, Reserve Bank of India, I.Y. T Namcho and Palden Bhutia, ARCS, Co-operation Department, Gyalshing as Resource Person.

Macleods Pharma donates vehicle to Health Deptt



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 09 OCT:

Macleods Pharmaceuticals Ltd donated a new vehicle to the Health Services & Family Welfare department today.

Macleods Sikkim Plant head, Manoj Mathur, HR head, Major Satish Bhatt (Retd)

& Accounts head, CN Jha handed over the vehicle to DG cum Secretary, Dr Pempa Tshering Bhutia, at Tashiling Secretariat.

The company has shown gratitude towards health workers of Sikkim for their efforts in this COVID-19 situation.

Paul Pogba admits he dreams of playing for Real Madrid one day

LONDON, 09 OCT [REUTERS]: Paul Pogba has said he would love to play for Real Madrid one day but his focus is on helping Manchester United improve on their poor start to the Premier League season.

The 27-year-old admitted in 2019 that he wanted to leave United but no major offers came in for him and he spent most of last season sidelined with injuries.

"Many things have been said," Pogba told a news conference on Thursday at France's training camp, the day after their 7-1 friendly win over Ukraine. "Of course, every footballer would love to play for Real Madrid and would dream about that. It's a dream of mine, so why not one day?"

"But I'm at Manchester United and I love my club. I play for Man-

chester United, I want to perform well for them and do everything to get them back to where they deserve to be."

Pogba has performed poorly since returning to training after testing positive for coronavirus and he gave away a penalty in his side's humiliating 6-1 home defeat by Tottenham Hotspur on Sunday.

The defeat, United's joint-worst in the Premier League, increased the gloom for the 20-times English champions after they lost their opening game 3-1 at home to Crystal Palace before scraping a 3-2 win at Brighton & Hove Albion.

"Every player goes through difficult periods but you have to be strong mentally and we all need to try and get the team back to where it belongs," Pogba said.

Rotary Club Siliguri installs sixth water cooler for CRPF



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 09 OCT:

Rotary Club of Siliguri Uttorayan installed their sixth water cooler in CRPF Group Centre Siliguri today, a press release informs.

DIG CRPF, Anil Kumar as the chief guest inaugurated the Water Cool-

er during the event. The Chairman of the Project, Kuldeep Bansal informed that the water cooler was donated by one of the club member, Suni Maheshwari and all arrangements were made with the help of Dr Koushik Bhattacharya.

President, Gopal Kayan said that the club is involved in different social activities and safe drinking water is one of them. Anil Kumar praised the effort of Rotary Club of Siliguri Uttorayan in providing a water cooler for CRPF.

Some CSK batsmen think it's a government job: Sehwal

NEW DELHI, OCT 9 (PTI):

Former India opener Virender Sehwal has taken a dig at Chennai Super Kings' faltering IPL campaign, saying that some of their batsmen think of the franchise as a "government job" in which remuneration is assured irrespective of performance.

Chasing 168, veteran opener Shane Watson struck his second successive fifty to give CSK a perfect start on Wednesday, but the team choked at the back end of the innings and was restricted to 157 for five to suffer its fourth defeat in five matches.

"It should have been chased down. But the dot balls played by Kedar Jadhav and Ravindra Jadeja didn't help," Sehwal told 'Cricbuzz'. "And, in my view, some of



the Chennai Super Kings batsmen think of CSK as a government job, whether you perform or not, they know they'll get their salary anyway," he added.

CSK added just 14 runs from 11-14 overs, a period when they lost both Watson and an in-form Ambati Rayudu. Sent ahead of West Indies all-rounder Dwayne Bravo, Kedar Jadhav laboured to seven off 12 balls as KKR won the game by 10

runs. This is not the first instance of batsmen letting the team down. Last week, the MS Dhoni-led side had lost a closely fought match to Sunrisers Hyderabad by seven runs after a top-order collapse.

The three-time champions have four losses from six games and are placed sixth in the eight-team standings. They will take on Virat Kohli's Royal Challengers Bangalore on Saturday.

OFFICE OF THE MISSION DIRECTOR
NATIONAL HEALTH MISSION
H & FW DEPARTMENT
HEAD-QUARTER
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

Memo No: **11/2/H & FW/NHM/20-21** Dated: **09/10/2020**

NOTICE

The walk-in interview for various position (for Covid-19 Package only) under NHM which was scheduled to be held on 23rd to 28th September and postponed due to lockdown during that period is hereby rescheduled and will be held as under

- 12th October 2020-Staff Nurse
- 13th October 2020-Staff Nurse
- 14th October 2020-ANM
- 15th October 2020-Clinical Psychiatric Social Worker And Medical Officer

Dr Madan Mohan Das, MD
Joint Director -HR & FW
Department of Health & Family Welfare
Government of Sikkim
R.O No. 102/IPR/PUB/Classi/2020-21, dated 9.10.20

URBAN DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

No. T(1686)UDD/TP/E/2020/27 Date: 08.10.2020

NOTICE

The Urban Development Department (UDD), Government of Sikkim is pleased to inform that the Sikkim Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Rules, 2020, has been framed and published in the Official Gazette vide No. 107 dated Wednesday 27th May, 2020.

The copy of the said Rules has been uploaded in the official website: www.udhsikkim.org.

Sd/-
Additional Chief Town Planner
Urban Development Department
Government of Sikkim
Gangtok - 737101
East Sikkim

R.O No. 98/IPR/PUB/Classi/2020-21 dated 8.10.20

Tech-enabled agri startup Unnati raises U\$ 1.7 million

GANGTOK, 08 OCT (PIB): Unnati, a tech-driven agri input and agri produce selling agritech startup, has raised \$1.7 million in Pre-Series A funding from NABVENTURES Fund. The funds will primarily be used to scale up its tech platform and to set up more partner stores.

Founded by Amit Sinha (former CFO of PayTM, IIM Calcutta alumnus) and Ashok Prasad (earlier with Tata Teleservices, IIFT alumnus), Unnati is positioned as a technology-enabled platform to provide access to competitively priced inputs to farmers and uses its reach to enable farmers to get a remunerative price for their produce by enabling them to access better markets in a fair and transparent manner. It also provides financial services to the farmer besides point-of-purchase farm advisories.

Unnati has a strong network of partner stores for selling agri inputs and produce in Eastern, Central and Western India.

Ashok Prasad, Co-founder said, "At Unnati, our overarching goal is to empower the country's farmers and bring the best of technologies to enhance their productivity. Since we cater to a multitude of farming needs, the current capital injection will allow us to expand our value proposition in terms of innovative digital tools that we offer. We are grateful for this association with NABVENTURES (NABARD) and look forward to attaining new and important milestones on the back of this funding. This funding will help us invest in technology and in increasing our geographical and crop footprint"

Speaking on the funding, Co-founder, Amit Sinha said: "On this journey of creating farmpreneurs through digital tools we are proud to have NABVENTURES (NABARD) as a partner. NABVENTURES shares our vision of bringing a positive change in the agriculture industry and creating value for all stakeholders. We look forward to gaining from NABARD's deep experience, knowledge and scale of operations in Indian agriculture and look forward to a long and mutually beneficial association."

Chairman NABARD and NABVENTURES, Dr GR Chintala said, "Unnati has created a platform to digitalize the major components in the food and agribusiness value chain. The predictive capabilities of the data captured by the platform enhance efficiencies while its transparent processes help in building trust among farmers and FPOs. Unnati has the potential to be a nationwide platform for multiple services in the agricultural value chain."

COO, Manikumar S, NABVENTURES said "Unnati team is solving some of the important problems faced by farmers like lack of access to quality inputs at transparent prices and lack of last-mile market linkage to sell produce at competitive prices. The amalgamation of a fintech layer has resulted in customer stickiness. We appreciate the agri input selling and market linkage proposition of the Unnati platform and are happy to support it on its onwards and upwards journey".

About Unnati:

Unnati is agritech startup. It is positioned as a technology-enabled platform to provide access to competitively priced inputs to farmers and uses its reach to enable farmers to get a remunerative price for their produce by enabling them to access better markets in a fair and transparent manner. It also provides financial services to the farmer besides point-of-purchase farm advisories. For further information on Unnati, please visit: <https://unnatiagri.com>.

About NABVENTURES:

NABVENTURES is a venture growth equity fund that invests in agritech, food, agri/rural fintech and rural healthtech/edutech. Apart from providing patient capital, NABVENTURES focuses on operational value additions and provides strategic advice to its portfolio companies. NABVENTURES is backed by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), the apex development finance institution of India with AUM of USD 75 billion. For further information on NABVENTURES, please visit: <https://www.nabventures.in>.

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What is Novel Coronavirus - nCoV?

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

Symptoms of nCoV

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

Treatment

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

Precautions to Prevent nCoV

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

If you seek help, you may call :

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

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

This Dasain, Consider a Real Gift for Sikkim's Young

More than gadgets, the young need spaces

Dasain shopping, because of yearlong online discounts, has kind of lost its excitement and even Dhanteras acquisitions are projected to be dull this year because not only has the lockdown snuffed out most incomes, the pandemic has also made crowded shops a no-no. At a time when keeping the vehicles running and the kitchen busy burning a hole in most pockets, gifts and treats become a luxury most homes cannot indulge. Firecrackers have been banned in Sikkim [well, except when burst by political parties in celebratory mood] since much before the Court ordered silence for Diwali, so even that wasteful expenditure is out of the way. Meanwhile, since Sikkim has given its own spin to social distancing, expect the family get-togethers and parties and maybe not the picnics just yet. Thankfully, the kids still retain some of their innocence, so this remains a time when the children of Sikkim are especially excited. This, after all, is that one time when the elders remember that there are children around.

But here again we short-change the young. After the mandatory new set of clothes and some rituals at home are over, the elders start indulging themselves. While fathers are likely to join their drinking buddies for some socially permitted binge gambling, the mothers would probably prefer to catch up with relatives and whatever rituals of the festival still survive. Yes, that sounds offensively sexist, but offense needs to be served up sometimes when we refuse to be more than our stereotypes. What this leaves us with then are children with their pocket money and their new set of clothes hunching over their smartphones or squinting into video games, munching on home-delivered snacks and treats. It is rare to even see them playing in the neighbourhood alley or take over the streets for some cricket or badminton practice. They might be squealing in delight or looking thrilled and occupied, but we would be fooling ourselves if we let ourselves believe that all is well. Think about it, for all the meetings that the task forces of the state have convened to confuse themselves and issue frequently revised notifications, one has not heard a squeak about what is discussed to address the needs of the children be out and about, outdoors and in playgrounds.

At least now we should wake up and recognise the presence and requirements of Sikkim's young. After having consistently proven ourselves as uncaring parents - given that issues related to the children are rarely taken up on priority - at least during festivals we should look into what they need... really need. Take a look around, how many parks and playgrounds have we given our kids. Even the few that do exist are unscientifically designed and although they might look pretty, are not the best of spaces to let children play around unsupervised. There are even some which have been landscaped to be children-friendly but have watchers around to tell kids not to monkey around lest they mess up the manicured artificiality of the park. Some spaces that Sikkim had have since been converted into parking lots for the excesses that we indulge in or were apportioned away as building sites for a connected few or converted into government offices. There are no spaces, private or public, designed solely for the kids. Even the occasional melas which the children looked forward to have been taken over by the adults with the emphasis more on "games of chance" and drinking than the thrills and escapes of a fete. The schools have become brainwashing institutes which look only at results and not at the holistic grooming of the students. After school, we burden them with tuition classes. And then there is the television and now the smartphones juiced up on cheap bandwidth. We even protest the times when the children let loose at MG Marg when the vehicles are pulled off so that grown-ups can loiter undisturbed.

Surely the kids deserve better.

This Dasain, maybe we should figure out what the children would really cherish and require and give it to them.

WRITE US:

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



Can colonialism be reversed? The UN's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples provides some answers

DOMINIC O'SULLIVAN
theconversation.com

Can a state built upon the "taking of another people's lands, lives and power" ever really be just? Colonialism can't be reversed, so at a simple level the answer is no.

But in my book, 'We Are All Here to Stay', published last week, I argue colonialism need not be a permanent state.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which New Zealand is currently thinking about implementing, shows how and why.

New Zealand, Australia, Canada and the United States were the only UN members to oppose the declaration when it was adopted in 2007. They were worried about the constraints they thought it would place on state authority, in particular over Indigenous land.

All four have since changed their positions. In 2010, then New Zealand Prime Minister John Key argued:

While the declaration is non-binding, it both affirms accepted rights and establishes future aspirations. My objective is to build better relationships between Māori and the Crown, and I believe that supporting the declaration is a small but significant step in that direction.

THE STATE'S RIGHT TO GOVERN IS NOT ABSOLUTE

The declaration recognises the state's right to govern. But it also constrains it by recognising self-determination as a right that belongs to everybody — to Indigenous peoples as much as anybody else.

Self-determination has far-reaching implications for rights to land, language and culture and for government policy in areas such as health, education and economic development.

The declaration's 46 articles challenge the idea of state sovereignty as an exclusive and absolute

right to exercise authority over Indigenous peoples. It parallels New Zealand's Treaty of Waitangi by affirming Indigenous peoples' authority over their own affairs and their right to meaningful influence as citizens of the state.

The fact that 144 UN member states voted for the declaration shows that the international community regards these assumptions as fair and reasonable. The declaration states:

Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinct political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions, while retaining their right to participate fully, if they so choose, in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the State.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S RIGHT TO MAKE THEIR OWN DECISIONS

The declaration provides different ways of thinking about political authority. The Māori right to make their own decisions, through iwi (tribes) and other independent institutions, and to participate as members of the wider political community implies a distinctive Māori presence in the sovereign state.

The Waitangi Tribunal, which was established in 1975 to hear alleged breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi, is a forum for thinking about these questions. In a tribunal report concerning Māori culture and identity, Justice Joe Williams, subsequently the first Māori appointed to the Supreme Court of New Zealand, argued:

Fundamentally, there is a need for a mindset shift away from the pervasive assumption that the Crown is Pākehā [non-Māori], English-speaking, and distinct from Māori rather than representative of them. Increasingly, in the 21st century, the Crown is also Māori. If the nation is to move forward, this reality must be grasped.

From this perspective, the Crown is an inclusive and unifying institution. It is neither the Pākehā political community, nor the dominant party in a bi-cultural treaty partnership.

BEYOND PARTNERSHIP TO INDEPENDENCE AND AUTHORITY

In 2019, the state's solution to allegations of racist and ineffective practices in its child welfare agency Oranga Tamariki was to call for stronger partnerships between Māori and the state.

It is too early to say whether partnership agreements will reduce the numbers of Māori children taken from their families into state care.

But in 2020 independent reports into Oranga Tamariki show measures more robust than partnership may be required to assure Māori of the declaration's undertaking that:

Indigenous peoples have the collective right to live in freedom, peace and security as distinct peoples and shall not be subjected to any act of genocide or any other act of violence, including forcibly removing children of the group to another group.

Claims to the Waitangi Tribunal, arguing for independent authority in health and education and ensuring that Māori benefit fully from international trade agreements, have had mixed success for the Māori claimants. However, the declaration gives international authority to the arguments made.

Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development. In particular, Indigenous peoples have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programs affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programs through their own institutions.

A colonial state may never be just. But as New Zealand considers its implementation of the declaration, the important moral question is whether the declaration can help people to work out what a state will look like if it no longer reflects the colonial insistence on power over others.

[the writer is Adjunct Professor, Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences, Auckland University of Technology, and Associate Professor of Political Science, Charles Sturt University]

Government in a pandemic: how coronavirus caused a dramatic shift in our relationship with the state

THOMAS HANCOCKS
theconversation.com

As we head into the colder months, the increased threat of a second spike in the pandemic has forced the UK government to reintroduce new restrictive measures, including targeted local lockdowns, new rules ("of six") and early pub closures. At the same time, compliance is fraying.

One of the deeper issues with the government restrictions, which has less often been discussed, is a moral one. It concerns the level of control we grant to the government over our individual healthcare decisions.

Understanding this dimension helps to explain why many people around the world are disobeying restrictions. Recent UK data indicates that of those who reported having COVID-19 symptoms in the last seven days, only 18.2% said they were following the self-isolation requirements. While there are a number of reasons for this growing reluctance to obey, the one I want to highlight here is the moral dimension.

The basic question is this: is it acceptable for the state to take control of our healthcare decisions in order to protect us?

There are two sides to the argument. The case against increased state control appeals to the value of individual autonomy over health choices. The case in favour appeals to the importance of paternalism and harm prevention. These values sit at opposite ends of a moral and legal spectrum. Our view on government restrictions is shaped by how we, as individuals, weigh up the rel-

ative importance of these two competing principles.

AUTONOMY AND THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE RISK

Jonathan Sumption, former Supreme Court justice, recently came down firmly on the pro-autonomy side of the issue. "What I'm advocating now," he told the BBC, "is that the lockdown should become entirely voluntary. It is up to us, not the state, to decide what risks we are going to take with our own bodies."

In ordinary circumstances, choices over our health are fundamentally ours to make. We choose whether to smoke or drink heavily, whether to exercise, whether to eat junk food, take drugs or use contraception. Governments provide education, advice and guidance on risks, and in some cases use taxes and nudges to attach incentives or disincentives to certain decisions. Yet, ultimately, the government grants us autonomy over these healthcare choices.

The coronavirus restrictions represent a significant transition away from this. Sanctions are now imposed if we choose not to wear a mask, meet too many people at the park, have a party at our house or stand too close to people.

In this respect, the coronavirus restrictions are fundamentally opposed to a contemporary system of law, ethics and policy around healthcare based on protecting autonomy and free choice. This system was birthed after the second world war, with the introduction of the Nuremberg Code. That code, which was a response to the horrors of the medical trials that took place under the Third Reich, placed informed consent as the central principle in medical treatment.

PATERNALISM AND HARM PREVENTION

Of course, certain features of the coronavirus threat make it much more difficult to grant full autonomy over healthcare choices. Unlike other ubiquitous viruses, there are a number of unknowns around coronavirus. There is also a very low level of immunity.

The ethical argument that challenges autonomy and supports government restrictions has two aspects. The first is paternalism. In government policy terms, paternalism is when governments impose restrictions on our free action in order to protect us. Many paternalistic interventions are so embedded that we forget they exist. Examples include the legal requirement to wear seatbelts or to wear a helmet on a motorbike.

These are paternalistic policies — they bypass our free choice in order to serve our best interests. The same holds of many of the coronavirus restrictions, such as pub closures or bans on social gatherings.

The other aspect to the government intervention is the protection of others. Coronavirus is, of course, highly contagious, and poses a risk not only to us as individuals but to the wider community as well, particularly those who are vulnerable.

Yet, as we are seeing, bringing in too many paternalistic and community-protecting restrictions risks a backlash. Not everyone is subject to the same risks, so blanket paternalistic measures disproportionately affect the lives of those who really face little risk. It is well known, for exam-

ple, that the young are at less risk than the old from COVID-19. This is particularly problematic if you factor in the further hidden risks posed to children by missing substantial parts of their education. Not to mention the risks to mental health and physical health that come from intense lockdown measures.

Our relationship with the state has shifted with the coronavirus restrictions. We now live in times where choices that were once entirely our own have been taken on by the government, with sanctions if we disobey. The right to make personal health decisions and decisions about risk, which has been central to our modern system of medical ethics, policy and law, has been curtailed.

For many, the threats posed by coronavirus justify this change. But if that right is curtailed for a prolonged period, there are problematic implications. It may, for example, signal a period of change to our system of civil liberties. We are already seeing this to an extent with the new legislation which increases police powers and limits rights to free movement and data control. We must be careful that these changes are temporary and not entrenched.

The government needs to strike the right balance between autonomy and harm prevention when deciding on coronavirus restrictions — to effectively combat the disease, but also to avoid the disobedience that naturally results when individual rights to autonomous choice are curtailed.

[the writer is Lecturer/Consultant in Applied Ethics, University of Leeds]

Bodo to be associate official language

GUWAHATI, Oct 08 [ASSAMTRIBUNE]: Bodo will be an associate official language for the State of Assam, while a Bodo Kachari Autonomous Welfare Council will be constituted outside the 6th Schedule Area for the welfare of the Bodo community.

The decisions were taken at a meeting of the State Cabinet today. The Cabinet also decided to request the State Election Commission to schedule the BTC elections in December. The health department had earlier said it would not be advisable to hold the elections before December given the COVID-19 situation in the State.

The State Cabinet also asked the BTC authority to extensively use Assamese along with Bodo and English in sign boards.

The Cabinet further decided that no private agency will be involved in government recruitment processes. Departments themselves will hold the exams or conduct recruitment through State or Central universities.

The number of mem-



bers of Development Councils has been increased from maximum 25 to 45.

The Cabinet also decided to regularise the services of 4,534 teachers appointed irregularly. APSC regulations have been amended to remove restrictions on the number of women members in APSC.

The Cabinet also decided to provide day boarding facilities and

free uniform for children in 428 tea garden-managed schools of Assam.

Two new ranges and 4 beat offices in Majuli were also approved by the Cabinet.

A State PSU Assam Hydrocarbon and Energy Company will acquire 10 per cent participating interest in exploration-cum-production of an OIL Block at Namrup allotted to Oil India Limited for

around Rs 30 crore.

The government also decided to acquire 30 bigha government land for setting up a regional centre of National Fisheries Development Board at Amingaon.

Remuneration of gaon burhas has been increased from Rs 6,500 to Rs 9,000 with effect from April this year.

Also, according to another Cabinet decision, students of Barak Valley

who have not studied Assamese, Bengali or Bodo, need not appear in qualifying languages in APSC Combined Civil Services Examination.

The Cabinet also decided to give Cabinet rank to the State's Advocate General, while under Vistarita Kanaklata Mahila Sabalikaran Yojana, the government will provide Rs 50,000 capital subsidy to eligible SHGs.

HC slams Assam govt for operating detention centres in jails

GUWAHATI, Oct 08 [PTI]: The Gauhati High Court has criticised the Assam government for operating six detention centres for housing illegal foreigners within jail premises, and directed it to submit an action taken report within 10 days regarding hiring of suitable accommodation for the purpose.

Justice Achintya Malla Bujur Barua rejected the state government's argument of relying on a 2018 communication by the Union Home Ministry to declare a part of jail premises as detention centres.

"It is noted that even the model manual for the detention centres provides that the detention centres shall be set up outside the jail premises. If suitable accommodations are not available, the State Government may look for hiring of private buildings for the purpose," the court order said on Wednesday, while hearing a batch of petitions.

The petitions raised the issue of how the detention centres are required to be operated by the authorities for the purpose of keeping illegal foreigners, migrants and others who are awaiting deportation or repatriation to the countries of their origin or awaiting adjudication of their respective claims.

Citing a Supreme Court order and subsequent instructions from the Union Home Ministry, the high court said the state should set up sufficient detentions centres outside the jail premises and these must have basic facilities of electricity, water and hygiene along with security.

Assam has six detention centres, which were created by making a part of the existing jails at Goalpara, Kokrajhar, Jorhat, Silchar, Dibrugarh and Tezpur, and the state government on August 31 had informed the As-

sembly that currently 425 persons are lodged in these places.

The prison procedures applicable to undertrials and convicts cannot be applied to foreign nationals who entered the country illegally or illegal migrants lodged in detention centres inside jails, the order said.

The Court noted that although the authorities cite a communication from the Centre that allows using of jail premises until setting up of detention centre is pending, but said it should be "purely temporary measure" and such premises should be "well segregated from the prisons".

"...it is discernible that more than 10 years have gone by since a part of the jail premises in Goalpara, Kokrajhar and Silchar had been declared to be detention centres. Certainly a period of more than 10 years cannot be understood to be a temporary arrangement," the court said.

Even in respect of Jorhat, Dibrugarh and Tezpur, a period of five years is almost over and it "also again cannot be strictly said to be a temporary arrangement," he added.

"We require the authorities in the State Government, Home and Political Affairs to submit an action taken report within the next returnable date on the steps that have been taken to set up detention centre outside the jail premises," the order said.

It added that the action taken report should state about alternate arrangements of hiring private premises as detention centres "if suitable government accommodations are not available for the purpose".

The court fixed October 16 to consider the action taken report to be submitted by the state government. (PTI)

17 new cases push COVID-19 tally of Andamans to 3,952

PORT BLAIR, Oct 9 (PTI): The COVID-19 case-load of Andaman and Nicobar Islands rose to 3,952 on Friday as 17 more people tested positive for the infection, a health official said.

One more person succumbed to the infection, pushing the COVID-19 death toll in the Union territory to 55, the official said.

Fifteen fresh infections were detected during contact tracing while two patients have travel history, he said.

Eleven more people have been cured of the disease, the official said.

The Union territory now has 190 active coronavirus cases, while 3,707 people have recovered from the disease and 55 patients have succumbed to the infection so far, he said.

The administration has so far sent 66,244 samples for COVID-19 tests, of which 66,094 reports have been received and 150 are awaited, the official added.

Nagaland CEO cautions against open declaration of support

Dimapur, Oct 08 [NagalandPage]: In view of the ensuing bye-election to 2 vacant assembly seats in the State, the Chief Electoral Officer Nagaland has cautioned that open declaration of support in favour of a particular candidate/political party by a village/ward/khel or community through public announcement and even through publication in electronic/print media, etc violates the Representation of the People Act 1951. The 2 constituencies going for bye-election are 14-Southern Angami-I and 60-Pungro- Kiphire.

In an order, the CEO reiterated that if any village or ward or community or group of people or media house is found violating or defying the said provisions in connection with any future elections, appropriate legal action shall be initiated against the violator(s) in the interest of free, fair, transparent election and administering social order.

The CEO added warned that whoever commits an offence of booth capturing shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than one year but which may extend to three years and with fine.

7 new COVID-19 cases in Mizoram; tally rises to 2,157

AIZAWL, Oct 9 (PTI): Mizoram has reported seven new COVID-19 cases, pushing the state's coronavirus tally to 2,157, an official statement said on Friday.

Of the seven new cases, three were reported from Aizawl district and four from Mamit district, the statement said. All the patients aged between 22 and 60 have returned from Assam, Bihar, West Bengal and Tripura, it said. All the new patients are out of danger as they are asymptomatic, it said.

The state now has 220 active cases while 1,937 people have recovered from the virus. The recovery rate is 89.80 per cent.

Mizoram has not reported any fatality due to COVID-19 so far. A total of 85,701 samples have been tested so far, according to the health department.

Arunachal reports 212 new COVID-19 cases, one more death



ITANAGAR, Oct 9 (PTI): At least 212 more people, including five security personnel, have tested positive for COVID-19 in Arunachal Pradesh, pushing the tally to 11,479, a health department official said here on Friday.

A 58-year-old man, who was diagnosed with the disease on September 29, died at a hospital in Chimpu, near here, on Thursday, taking the toll in the northeastern state to 22, State Surveillance Officer (SSO) Dr Lobsang Jampa said.

He had diabetes and suffered from acute respiratory distress syndrome, the SSO said.

Of the 212 fresh cases, 81 were reported from the Capital Complex

region, 26 from West Siang, 21 from Tirap, 13 from East Siang, 12 from Lepa Rada, nine each from Lohit and Papumpare and eight each from Changlang and Upper Subansiri.

Five cases were recorded in West Kameng, four each in Lower Subansiri, Pakke Kessang and Upper Siang, three in Longding, two in Dibang Valley and one each in East Kameng, Lower Siang and Lower Dibang Valley.

Two Assam Rifles jawans, one Army man and one personnel each of the Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and the state police are among the new patients, the SSO said.

Altogether 283 peo-

ple have been cured of the disease on Thursday, taking the total number of recoveries to 8,679, Dr Jampa stated.

Arunachal currently has 2,778 active coronavirus cases, while the recovery rate stands at 75.60 per cent.

The Capital Complex region -- comprising Itanagar, Naharlagun, Nirjuli and Banderdewa areas -- has the highest number of active cases at 1,225, followed by West Siang at 259, Papumpare at 223, Changlang at 157, East Siang at 115 and Tirap at 109, Dr Jampa said.

As many as 2,68,286 samples have been tested for COVID-19 in the state so far, including 2,416 on Thursday, he added.

Tripura reports 223 new COVID-19 cases, 7 fatalities

AGARTALA, Oct 9 (PTI): At least 223 more people tested positive for COVID-19 in Tripura on Friday, pushing the tally in the state to 27,982, a health department official said.

The COVID-19 death toll rose to 308 with seven more persons succumbing to the infection, he said.

West Tripura district, of which state capital Agartala is a part, has accounted for 166 of the 308 COVID-19 deaths, the official said.

Tripura currently has 4,200 active coronavirus



cases, while 23,451 people have recovered from the disease and 23 patients have migrated to other states, the official said.

At least 408 patients were discharged from G B Pant hospital, the main

referral hospital for the COVID19 patients on Thursday as they had recovered from the disease.

As many as 4,09,040 samples have been tested for COVID-19 in the state so far, he added.

Political realignments transpire on eve of bye-polls in Nagaland



KOHIMA, Oct 08 [NAGALANDPAGE]: Ahead of the bye-elections to 2 Assembly constituencies on November 3, the ruling Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP) and opposition Naga People's Front (NPF) suffered jolt, as many joined BJP and decided to support saffron candidate.

According to sources, several NDPP party workers in Aboi in Mon district joined the BJP to strengthen the hands of party president, Temjen Imna Along, who was recently in the

news after some party functionaries demanded that he be removed as the party chief. The NDPP president, Chingwang Konyak is from Mon district.

According to sources, several members of NPF have also resigned in Kiphire-Pungro to support the BJP candidate in the bye-election. The reason for their resignation, allegedly, was the party's inability to field a candidate. Once bitten twice shy for the party workers, the party, which did not contest the last parliamentary election and

supported the Congress candidate, which does not have a single MLA in the assembly.

No party has finalized the names of candidates but going by the seat sharing in the last State Assembly election, this time also BJP will contest the Kiphire-Pungro bye-election and NDPP in Southern Angami-1.

So far there was no report of takers for NPF and Congress tickets, but there are several intending ticket seekers for BJP and NDPP.

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Georgia beats Belarus, advances to Euro 2020 playoff finals

TBILISI (GEORGIA), OCT 9 (AP): Georgia became the first team to advance to the European Championship playoff finals by beating Belarus 1-0.

A seventh-minute penalty kick earned and scored by Tornike Okriashvili settled the game played without fans in the stadium in Tbilisi on Thursday.

Georgia will host either North Macedonia or Kosovo next month in the lowest-ranked of four knockout brackets that will complete the 24-nation Euro 2020 lineup. All three are looking to reach their first major tournament.

Seven more playoff semifinals were kicking off across Europe later Thursday. All four finals are played on Nov. 12.

Teams in the play-offs won their Nations League groups, or had a high placing, two years ago and then did not advance to Euro 2020 directly from the traditional qualifying groups.

The playoffs were originally scheduled to be played in March before UEFA shut down its competitions and postponed Euro 2020 by one year because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Messi penalty gives Argentina winning start over Ecuador

BUENOS AIRES, 09 OCT (REUTERS): Argentina got their World Cup qualifying campaign off to the perfect start on Thursday when Lionel Messi's early penalty gave them a 1-0 win over Ecuador in a lacklustre match in Buenos Aires.

The Argentine FA piped fan noise around the empty Bombonera stadium and the chants of "Messi! Messi!" were vindicated as early as the 12th minute when he put Argentina ahead from the spot after Lucas Oc- ampos was fouled inside the penalty area.

Argentina had lost just one of their last eight World Cup qualifi- ers against Ecuador and although they could not add to the scoreline they never looked in danger of losing in a scrappy game against limited oppo- nents. "It was important to start with a win be- cause we know how diffi- cult the qualifiers are and all the matches are going to be as hard as this one," Messi said.

With the South Amer- ican qualifiers twice pushed back from the scheduled start in March, it was al- most a year since either team had played a full inter- national and Messi said that inaction contributed to the poor spectacle.

"We hoped the level of play would be differ- ent but it's been almost a year since we played to- gether, this was our first game back and the ner- vousness makes it com- plicated," the Barcelona striker said.

The three points, however, were more than welcome for a side that hasn't won a major ti- tle since lifting the Copa America in 1993.

Calvert-Lewin scores on fine England debut to set up victory over Wales

LONDON, 09 OCT [THEGUARD- IAN]: Gareth Southgate need- ed this. England needed this. And after all the focus on the squad's misbehaving players, on what Southgate had called the off-field "circus", how grat- ifying it was to see a cohesive performance and a clutch of dream-come-true moments.

There was a debut goal for Dominic Calvert-Lewin, which embossed an assertive display from him, and first England goals for Conor Co- ady and Danny Ings on the occasions of their second and third caps respectively. Both were beautifully taken. Co- ady's joy knew no bounds.

To top it all, there was Jack Grealish, who stole the show, gliding with menace off the left of Southgate's 3-4-3 system, which functioned a whole lot better than it did in the 0-0 draw in Denmark last month.

Everything was better, with England threatening through Calvert-Lewin at the outset and shifting to- wards total control in the sec- ond-half when a Wales team missing Aaron Ramsey, Joe Allen and Gareth Bale could not live with them. The move- ment, passing and pressing came to be on point, which was not bad for such an ex- perimental lineup.

Southgate had warned that the performance was not "going to be perfect" mainly because of his players' lack of familiarity with each other. The inexperience of his start-



ing team was pronounced – there were just 54 caps be- tween them at kick-off and Michael Keane, Joe Gomez and the stand-in captain, Ki- eran Trippier, had 41 of those. The manager wanted to keep the powder of his big guns dry for the Nations League ties with Belgium on Sunday and Denmark next Wednesday. It was not perfect but, at the same time, there was plenty to enjoy.

The buildup had been dominated by the Covid-19 breaches from Tammy Abra- ham, Ben Chilwell and Jadon Sancho, which had come hard on the heels of the errors of judgment by Phil Foden and

Mason Greenwood in the pre- vious camp, not to mention Harry Maguire.

Southgate's players shaped a different narrative here, with the other debut- ant in the starting XI, Bukayo Saka, overcoming a nervous start to almost get on the scoresheet – Wayne Hen- nessey denied him with one of a string of fine saves – and even the largely untroubled Nick Pope stepped up when needed. The goalkeeper left his line to block bravely at the feet of Kieffer Moore in the 30th minute. Southgate knows that defensive solidity is a prerequisite for tourna- ment success and he could be

pleased at what was a sixth clean sheet in succession.

Calvert-Lewin was deter- mined to showcase the clev- er movement and power that has lit up the early weeks of the Premier League season and he had advertised the opening goal. From an early Trippier corner, he rose un- marked only to see his Ever- ton teammate, Keane, stretch to reach the header in front of him and succeed in flick- ing the ball away from him. There was also the dart on to an Ings pass that enabled him to go round Hennessey only to find the angle was too acute to score.

Although Wales looked

comfortable on the ball in the first half, Jonny Williams catching the eye with his bal- ance on the ball, Calvert-Lew- in's breakthrough was a fair reflection of the first 45 min- utes. Its creation was all about Grealish, who was the out- standing player on the pitch.

As he has done for Aston Villa so far this season, espe- cially in Sunday's 7-2 win over Liverpool, Grealish sniffed out spaces and drove his team on with the ball at his feet. His balance in possession was lovely to watch and he bought himself a yard against Ethan Ampadu, having moseyed over from left to right, before whipping over a precision

cross for Calvert-Lewin, who was already on the move. The downward-headed finish was a formality. All he really needed to do was to slow the thump of his heart.

Moore had half a chance in the 22nd minute after Saka had headed weakly out to him but he could not get hold of the volley and the big one came when Keane lost the flight of a high ball and he tore in on goal. Pope was alert, tak- ing Moore's knee to his face as he smothered, and it was the striker who came off worse, picking up a knock that would force him off.

England's lead at half- time might have been greater had Coady been able to keep his shot down after a corner had been recycled by Keane, but he did score early in the second period. He sprinted on to Trippier's free-kick, in front of two Wales defend- ers, and the half-volleyed finish in the roof of the net was almost nonchalant.

Ings could also look back on a positive evening's work, his movement dangerous throughout, and his goal was a beauty, a well executed over- head-kick after the substitute Tyrone Mings had headed back a corner.

Southgate got Reece James and Harvey Barnes on for their first caps and Wales would have gone under had it not been for Hennessey. His saves at 3-0 denied Grealish, Saka, Ings and James Ward- Prowse.

Kenin, 21, will face unseeded Swiatek, 19, in French final

PARIS, OCT 9 (AP): Sofia Kenin entered 2020 with an 11-11 record in Grand Slam action. Never had made the quarterfinals at any clay-court tourna- ment until this trip to Rol- land Garros and lost her only tuneup match on the surface 6-0, 6-0 last month.

Look at the 21-year- old American now.

Already the owner of a major trophy from this year's Australian Open, the No. 4-seeded Kenin moved into the French Open final by beating No. 7 Petra Kvitova 6-4, 7-5 Thursday.

Kenin will carry a 16-1 mark in Grand Slam action this season into Saturday's championship match against Iga Swi- atek of Poland.

I'm going to be, like, an 'underdog,' Swiatek said, using her fingers to make air quotes.

Swiatek is just 19. She's ranked 54th. She's never won a tour-level title. She'd never been past the fourth round at a Slam. And she's been as dominant as can be so far at the French Open.

Swiatek became the lowest-ranked women's finalist at Roland Garros since the WTA computer rankings began in 1975, advancing with her lat- est lopsided win, this one 6-2, 6-1 against Ar- gentine qualifier Nadia Podoroska.

It seems unreal. On one hand, I know that I can play great tennis. On the other hand, it's kind of surprising for me. I never would have thought that I'm going to



be in the final. It's crazy, Swiatek said.

I just kept believing in myself. It's amazing for me. She has won all 12 sets she's played in the tournament and dropped merely 23 games.

Kvitova, a two-time Wimbledon champi- on, came in having won every set, too. But she hadn't played anyone close to Kenin's caliber.

The lefty from the Czech Republic had grabbed 77% of her ser- vice games in the tourna- ment, but Kenin stole two of the first three. Part of it was strong returning. More of it was the man- ner in which Kenin was moving Kvitova around, pushing her this way and that and pinning her to the baseline with well- struck forehands and backhands.

Also working in Kenin's favor was an abil- ity to sense where a ball was headed and use her speed to track it down, repeatedly stretching points that seemed lost.

Eventually, that ap-

peared to make Kvitova play as if she felt that she needed to try to do more, maybe do too much, be- cause she would cut off points early by attempt- ing to end them and, too often, she would miss the mark.

By the end, Kvitova produced 31 unforced errors, to 20 for Kenin, whose shouts of

Come on! grew loud- er as the end grew clos- er. Her intensity also came through when she chucked her red-white- and-blue racket.

When Swiatek's 70-minute tour de force ended before a crowd in the hundreds at Court Philippe Chatrier there was a daily limit on spec- tators because of the coronavirus pandemic she asked for more noise, waving her arms and cupping a hand to her ear.

Swiatek vs. Podoros- ka was the first women's semifinal at Roland Gar- ros between unseeded opponents since 1983 and only one, Swiatek,

the doubles semifinals with American Nicole Melichar, too, giving her a chance to become the first player since Mary Pierce in 2000 to win the women's singles and doubles trophies in Paris in the same year.

Swiatek does it with tremendous play at the baseline, picking up balls early and smacking big groundstrokes with thick topspin. Her power was too much on this breezy afternoon, accounting for a 23-6 edge in win- ners against Podoroska, a 23-year-old from the same town as soccer su- perstar Lionel Messi.

Another key to suc- cess for Swiatek, whose father was an Olympic rower, is her returning ability.

She broke for a 3-0 lead by smacking a back- hand return winner, fol- lowed by another return so good that it forced Podoroska into a mis- take. Swiatek entered this contest averaging 5.4 breaks per match and she added five more to her total.

And then there's a less-measurable factor Swiatek's competitive- ness and grit. The one time she lost a service game, making it 4-1 in the second set, she swiped at the dirt near the baseline with her racket.

Then she buckled down and broke right back. I'm staying super focused. I'm, like, not letting my opponents play their best tennis, Swiatek said.

So I hope I'm going to do that on Saturday.

Djokovic eyes 27th Grand Slam final, Tsitsipas and injuries block path



PARIS, 09 OCT (REUTERS): Novak Djokovic will be favourite to reach his 27th Grand Slam final when he faces Stefanos Tsitsipas in the French Open semis on Friday but what had been a smooth path through the draw has suddenly got a little rocky.

After his humiliating disqualification in the U.S. Open fourth round when he inadvertently struck a ball in frustra- tion into the throat of a line judge, Djokovic's French Open campaign has been remarkably un- eventful.

But after winning his opening four matches without dropping a set he had to come from a set down to beat Pablo Car- reno Busta in the quar- ter-finals, the player who directly benefited from his moment of madness in New York.

Djokovic, bidding for a second French Open and 18th Grand Slam ti- tle, still reached his 38th major semi-final relative- ly comfortably but for a set and a half against the obdurate Spaniard he struggled physically.

Afterwards he spoke of neck and shoulder problems and should he not be 100% fit against 22-year-old Tsitsipas, who is in only his second Grand Slam semi-final, it could be a long night on the Philippe Chatrier Court. "I think Novak's injury is a big worry," for- mer French Open cham- pion Mats Wilander, a Eu- rosport analyst, said. "It's a legitimate injury and if he doesn't get a good start then that could be a problem."

Tsitsipas, the fifth seed, was thrashed by Rafa Nadal in his previ- ous Grand Slam semi-fi- nal last year in Mel- bourne, but ended 2019 by winning the presti- gious ATP finals.

After a stuttering start in Paris when he trailed Spain's Jaume Mu- nar by two sets, Tsitsipas has been blemish-free, winning 15 consecutive sets although one was not completed after Aljaz Bedene retired injured in the third round.

Tsitsipas will need his renowned shot-making skills to break through the Djokovic wall, how- ever, whether the Serb is fully fit or not. He has done it twice before in Masters 1000 events but has never met Djokovic on a Grand Slam stage.

Remarkably, Djokov- ic's only "defeat" in 36 matches this year was his default, but he will be wary of a player hungry to make his Grand Slam breakthrough.

As virus fills French ICUs anew, doctors ask what went wrong

PARIS (AP): Over the course of a single overnight shift this week, three new COVID-19 patients were rushed into Dr. Karim Debbat's small intensive care ward in the southern French city of Arles. His service now has more virus patients than during the pandemic's first wave, and is scrambling to create new ICU beds elsewhere in the hospital to accommodate the sick.

Similar scenes are playing out across France. COVID-19 patients now occupy 40% of ICU beds in the Paris region, and nearly a quarter in ICUs nationwide, as several weeks of growing infections among young people spread to vulnerable populations.

Despite being one of the world's richest nations — and one of those hardest hit when the pandemic first washed over the world — France hasn't added significant ICU capacity or the staff needed to manage extra beds, according to national health agency figures and doctors at multiple hospitals. Like in many countries facing resurgent infections, critics say France's leaders haven't learned their lessons from the first wave.

"It's very tense, we don't have any more places," Dr. Debbat told The Associated Press. His hospital is converting recovery rooms into ICUs, delaying non-urgent surgery and directing more and more of his staff to high-maintenance COVID patients. Asked about extra medics to help with the new cases, he said simply, "We don't have them. That's the problem." When



protesting Paris public hospital workers confronted French President Emmanuel Macron this week to demand more government investment, he said: "It's no longer a question of resources, it's a question of organization."

He defended his government's handling of the crisis, and noted 8.5 billion euros in investment promised in July for the hospital system. The protesting medics said the funds are too little and too slow in coming, after years of cost cuts that left France with half the number of ICU beds in 2020 that it had in 2010.

ICU occupancy rates are con-

sidered an important indicator of how saturated the hospital system is and how effective health authorities have been at protecting at-risk populations.

And France's numbers aren't looking good. It reported more than 18,000 new daily cases Thursday, and virus patients now occupy 1,427 ICU beds nationwide — a figure that has doubled in less than a month. France's overall ICU capacity is 6,000, roughly the same as in March, according to national health agency figures provided to the AP.

For comparison, Germany entered the pandemic with about five

times as many intensive care beds as France, which has a similarly well-developed health care system and slightly smaller population. To date, Germany's confirmed virus-related death toll is 9,584 compared to 32,521 in France.

Getting ICU capacity right is a challenge. Spain was caught short in the spring, and has expanded its permanent ICU capacity by about 1,000 beds. Britain expanded ICU capacity by building emergency field hospitals. Because they were barely used, the so-called Nightingale hospitals have been mothballed. However, the British government says they can be utilized

again if required.

France added extra makeshift beds in the spring — including some built by the military in the country's first-ever peacetime field hospital — and the health agency said French hospitals could eventually double ICU capacity if needed this fall.

Compared to March and April, doctors say French intensive care wards are better armed this time around, both with protective equipment and more knowledge about how this coronavirus works. Medics put fewer patients on breathing machines now, and hospitals are practiced in how to rearrange their operations to focus on COVID-19.

The number of virus patients in ICU quickly doubled last month in the New Civilian Hospital in Strasbourg, but the atmosphere is surprisingly calm. An AP reporter watched teams of medics coordinating closely to manage the trajectory and treatment of each patient according to strict protocols they're now accustomed to.

But that extra practice doesn't mean managing resurgent virus cases in ICUs is easy. In addition to extra breathing machines and other equipment, adding temporary ICU beds also takes time and labor — as does treating the COVID-19 patients in them.

"The work is harder, and takes longer" than for most other patients, said Pierre-Yves, head of the intensive care ward at the Laveran Military Training Hospital in Marseille. He was not authorized to be

identified by his last name because of military policy.

Seven or more of his 47 staffers are needed each time they slowly and carefully rotate a patient from back to stomach or vice versa. Entering and leaving the ward now involves a lengthy, careful dance of changing full-body gear and disinfecting everything they've touched.

Dr. Debbat in Arles said that training ICU staff takes several months, so he's relying on the same personnel levels as in the spring, and he worries they could burn out. "I'm like a coach and I have just one team, with no reserve players," he said.

He also worries about non-virus patients, who were already put on the back burner earlier this year. And he worries about the upcoming flu season, which sends about 2,000 patients to ICUs in France every year.

The head of emergency medical service SOS Medecins, Serge Smadja, doesn't think France will again face the situation it saw in the spring, when more than 7,000 virus patients were in intensive care at the peak of the crisis, and nearly 10,000 infected people died in nursing homes without ever making it to hospitals. But he said the French public and its leaders were wrong to think "the virus was behind us."

"There aren't enough beds ... and there is especially a lack of personnel," he said. And with his service seeing a steady uptick in cases and the pandemic wearing on, he warned, "what's missing is an end date."

UN World Food Program wins Nobel Peace Prize

ROME (AP): The United Nations' World Food Program on Friday won the Nobel Peace Prize for its efforts to combat hunger and food insecurity in regions of conflict and hardship around the globe. The Rome-based organization provided assistance to almost 100 million people in 88 countries around the world last year.

"With this year's award, the (committee) wishes to turn the eyes of the world to the millions of people who suffer from or face the threat of hunger," said Berit Reiss-Andersen, the chair of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, announcing the award in Oslo. "The World Food Program plays a key role in multilateral cooperation on making food security an instrument of peace."

The organization, known as WFP, has long been headed by an American, and in 2017 U.S. President Donald Trump nominated the former Republican governor of South Carolina, David Beasley, for the post.

A giddy Beasley praised the WFP "family" and said they deserved the award. "I think this is the first time in my life I've been without words," Beasley told The Associated Press by phone from Niger. "I was just so shocked and surprised." Beasley said he found out about the award from a WFP media officer who had just been informed by the AP.

"Talk about the most exciting point in time in your life, it's the Nobel Peace Prize. And it's because of the WFP family," he said. "They're out there in the most difficult, complex places in the world, where there's war, conflict, climate extremes. ... They deserve this award. And wow. Wow. Wow. Wow."

Brazil strains at quarantine as virus cases pass 5 million

RIO DE JANEIRO, OCT 9 (AP): Dozens of people converged on the cobblestone streets of downtown Rio de Janeiro for its traditional Pedra do Sal samba party the first since the pandemic began and it seemed Brazil was returning to normal.

Among those dancing Monday were Luana Jatob and two friends, all of whom overcame COVID-19. As a nurse technician caring for coronavirus patients, she knows better than most that occupancy rates at Rio's intensive-care units have surged as the city's seven-day average number of cases reaches its highest level since June.

But, she said, everyone is desperate for a respite from the gloom. We take care of the people who are sick with COVID, but something that isn't discussed is that there's a very serious disease all over the world, which is depression, said Jatob.

After confinement, this samba circle is really to rescue those who felt downbeat and were oppressed. It's not just the virus that kills. Brazilians, like many across the world, are burned out on quarantine.

The somewhat slower pace of COVID-19's spread, combined with less media coverage after it moved beyond Brazil's two biggest cities, has helped people put the disease out of mind. But it continues to rip through Latin America's largest country, and mayors many of

whom aren't keen to keep restrictions in place ahead of November elections are reopening their cities. And experts are warning of a possible second wave.

At its height, Brazil was registering more than 45,000 cases and 1,000 deaths per day. Those totals took the shape of a months-long plateau, unlike most other countries whose viral curves had defined peaks. While Brazil's figures have fallen to about 27,000 cases and 700 deaths daily significant improvement, clearly they're still nothing to sneeze at.

Brazil surpassed 5 million confirmed cases on Wednesday night and is verging on 150,000 dead, the second-most in the world, according to the tally from Johns Hopkins University.

People thought it unacceptable that 1,000 people were dying every day two months ago, and now they are fine with 700 people dying every day. It simply doesn't make any sense, said Pedro Hallal, an epidemiologist who coordinates the Federal University of Pelotas' testing program, by far the country's most comprehensive.

We can say the worst part of the first wave is done, and now obviously we need to continue to be monitoring to see if numbers go up again. Hallal added that a second wave of infections is unlikely this year, because of how long Brazil's

crest lasted, but that tens of millions remain susceptible. As such, a second wave is very likely in 2021, he said. The University of Miami's observatory for COVID-19 in the Americas indicates that, at Brazil's state level, the number of policies adopted to counter infection has fallen to the third-lowest in the region, behind Nicaragua, which declined to muster any meaningful response, and Uruguay, where virus incidence is among the world's lowest.

The phenomenon is visible in Brazil's cities, too, as campaigning mayors allow bars, restaurants and movie theaters to reopen, encouraging people to emerge from quarantine. Brazil's statistics institute released data last week showing that the percentage of people in strict isolation or leaving home only when necessary dropped to 57% in mid-September, from 68% in early July.

Mayors running for reelection have no interest in imposing any kind of lockdown or restrictions, said Miguel Lago, executive director of Brazil's Institute for Health Policy Studies, which advises public health officials. Their incentive now is to roll back pandemic measures, he added. Limitations that ostensibly remain are often ignored. For example, Rio's beaches have been packed on recent weekends, despite the fact sunbathing remains prohibited.

Iran foreign minister on China visit following US sanctions

BEIJING, OCT 9 (AP): China says Iran's foreign minister will visit the country from Friday to Saturday, a day after the Trump administration blacklisted virtually all of Iran's financial sector in the latest step aimed at the oil-rich country's economy.

In a brief announcement, China's foreign ministry said only that Foreign Minister Javad Zarif was visiting at the invitation of his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi.

China has been a staunch Iranian ally and remains a party to the 2015 Iranian nuclear agreement from which the US has withdrawn while unilaterally reinstating punishing sanctions on Iran. Thursday's

US move hits 18 Iranian banks that had thus far escaped the bulk of re-imposed US sanctions and subjects foreign, non-Iranian financial institutions to penalties for doing business with them. That effectively cuts them off from the international financial system.

The blacklisting has been opposed by European nations because it will open up their biggest banks and other companies to US penalties for conducting business with Iran that had previously been allowed.

Zarif reacted angrily to the designations, calling them a crime against humanity at a time of global crisis. The move

comes as the US has stepped up efforts to kill the 2015 Iran nuclear deal by steadily increasing pressure on through sanctions on its oil sales, blacklisting top government officials and killing a top general in an airstrike.

Almost the entire rest of the world has vowed to ignore the latest US sanctions but violating them will come with significant risk of losing access to the US financial system.

The Chinese ministry said Indonesia's presidential special envoy for China, Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan, and Philippine Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr are visiting Beijing at the same time as Zarif.

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AB FAB! The model, Irina Shayk is seen in a crop top with bright pink kicks while around town in The Big Apple.

Neetu Kapoor Rehearses To Ghagra Song



Neetu Kapoor found a spot on the trends' list recently, all thanks to a video of hers dancing to the song Ghagra. The video was recently shared on Instagram by choreographer Rajendra Singh, who is primarily known for choreographing sangeet performances for celeb weddings. The video of Neetu Kapoor rehearsing to the song prompted netizens to enquire if she's already prepping for her son Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt's much anticipated wedding. Alia and Ranbir, who have been dating for quite some time now, often feature in speculative reports about a possible wedding. Neither Alia or Ranbir have responded to the rumours so far. Meanwhile on the Instagram video, comments such as these poured in: "Alia-Ranbir wedding?", "Is it one of the dances for Ranbir's wedding?" and "You have to dance at Alia-Ranbir's wedding."

Choreographer Rajendra Singh shared the video with a shout-out for Neetu Kapoor, who can be seen rehearsing to the peppy number. "Amazing dance choreography with the one and only my favourite Neetu Kapoor," wrote

Rajendra Singh. Ghagra, a dance number from Ranbir Kapoor's 2013 film Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani, originally featured Madhuri Dixit and Ranbir.

Alia Bhatt is very much part of the Kapoors' family functions - she was spotted at the Kapoors' Rakhi celebrations this year and was also part of the big fat Christmas celebrations. Alia had also accompanied Neetu Kapoor to Armaan Jain and Anissa Malhotra's wedding reception in February. In April 2019, Alia featured in headlines for reports that the actress has already placed an order with designer Sabyasachi for her wedding lehenga.

In February, an article by film critic and entertainment journalist Rajeev Masand in Open Magazine, stated that Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor are reportedly looking forward to a wedding in December. Alia and Ranbir have reportedly zeroed in on a date after Brahmastra arrives in theatres in December 4. Directed by Ayan Mukerji, Brahmastra is Alia and Ranbir's first film together.

Pixar's 'Soul' bypasses theaters, will stream on Christmas

NEW YORK (AP): The Pixar film "Soul" will skip theaters and instead premiere on Disney+ on Christmas, the Walt Disney Co. announced Thursday, sending one of the fall's last big movies straight to streaming.

The move, widely expected after the recent exodus of most major upcoming releases, marks one of the final dominoes to fall in Hollywood's disastrous autumn. Following the exit of the James Bond film "No Time to Die" from November, the next big movie on the calendar is Warner Bros.' "Wonder Woman 1984," currently set for Dec. 25.

The successive delays of the film industry's would-be blockbusters has only made the dire circumstances of movie theaters more acute. Earlier this week, Cinemark said it would again shutter the U.S. and U.K. locations of its Regal cinemas, the country's second-largest theater chain.

On Thursday, the National Association of Theatre Owners, the trade group of exhibitors, said its #SaveYourCinema campaign has flooded Congress with more than 300,000 letters. Filmmakers including Steven Spielberg, James Cameron and "Wonder Woman" director Patty Jenkins have joined the campaign lobbying Congress to bring financial relief to theater owners. Without aid, the organization said, 69% of small and mid-sized movie theater companies will close or go bankrupt. "The stark reality

is that many movie theaters will not be able to open again if they don't receive government help," says Esther Baruh, director of government relations for the association. "This is as urgent as it gets." "Soul" will be available for Disney+ to

streaming content in a letter to Disney Chief Executive Bob Chapek.

Expectation had been high for "Soul," directed by Pete Docter, Pixar's chief creative officer and the filmmaker behind "Up" and "Inside Out." The film, about a



subscribers at no further charge. Disney last month steered "Mulan" to its streaming service of 60 million-plus subscribers but charged \$30 for early access.

Disney has been hit hard by the pandemic. It recently announced that it would lay off 28,000 workers, most of them at Disneyland Resort in Anaheim, California, and Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida. On Wednesday, the activist investor Daniel Loeb, founder of hedge fund Third Point, urged the company to more than double its budget for

middle school teacher (Jamie Foxx) with dreams of becoming a jazz musician, was originally to premiere at the Cannes Film Festival. Its theatrical release had been scheduled for Nov. 20.

"The world can be an exhausting and frustrating place - but it's also full of unexpected joys, even in seemingly mundane things," said Docter in a statement. "'Soul' investigates what's really important in our lives, a question we're all asking these days. I hope it will bring some humor and fun to people at a time when everyone can surely use that."

Benedict Cumberbatch to play Doctor Strange in Spider-Man 3

LOS ANGELES, OCT 9 (PTI): British star Benedict Cumberbatch is set to reprise his role of Marvel's magic-wielding superhero Doctor Strange in the much-anticipated third installment in the Spider-Man franchise, led by actor Tom Holland.

Cumberbatch's casting is third major crossover between films produced by Marvel Studios and Sony Pictures Spider-Man movies, after Robert Downey Jr's Tony Stark appeared in Spider-Man: Homecoming (2017) and Samuel L Jackson's Nick Fury featured in last year's Spider-Man: Far From Home as Peter Parker's mentor.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, production on Spider-Man 3 is set to begin in November in Atlanta with director Jon Watts. The film is being made by Marvel Studios and Sony Pictures.

Spider-Man 3 is also bringing back Jamie Foxx as Electro. The actor last played the role in 2014's The Amazing Spider-Man 2, which featured Andrew Garfield as the titular hero.

The upcoming will mark the return of actors Zendaya, Marisa Tomei, Jacob Batalon and Tony Revolori.

The movie, scheduled to be released on December 17, 2021, will be produced by Kevin Feige and Amy Pascal.

Helena Bonham Carter to narrate animated version of Quentin Blake's 'Clown'

LOS ANGELES, OCT 9 (PTI): Actor Helena Bonham Carter is set to narrate a new animation based on celebrated writer-cartoonist Quentin Blake's kids book Clown.

The Channel 4 Christmas special will be created with hand-drawn animation techniques to capture the essence of Blake's original artwork, reported Variety.

The half-hour animation will focus on the adventures of a little toy clown, thrown away with a bunch of old toys, as he embarks on a jour-

ney to find a new home for himself and his friends. Eagle Eye Drama is producing the show. Clown' has always been one of my favourite characters, and it's wonderful now to see him off the page and running about on his own, Blake said.

Luigi Berio will direct the program, supported by a grant from the BFI's Young Audiences Content Fund.

Eagle Eye Drama's Jo McGrath and Walter Iuzzolino are overseeing the project as joint creative directors.

Kate Mulgrew to return as Captain Janeway in animated series Star Trek: Prodigy



LOS ANGELES, OCT 9 (PTI): Veteran actor Kate Mulgrew will reprise her iconic role of Captain Janeway in animated series Star Trek: Prodigy, Nickelodeon and CBS Studios have announced.

The casting was revealed as a surprise announcement during the Star Trek Universe virtual panel at New York Comic Con.

Mulgrew, who played Captain Kathryn Janeway for 170 episodes on Star Trek: Voyager (1995 -2001), said she is excited about her return to the beloved franchise.

I have invested every scintilla of my being in Captain Janeway, and I can't wait to endow her with nuance that I never did before in Star Trek: Prodigy'. How thrilling to be able to introduce to these young minds an idea that has elevated the world for decades. To be at the helm

again is going to be deeply gratifying in a new way for me, she said.

According to the announcement shared on the franchise's official website, Janeway will be a central figure in the show, which will follow a group of lawless teens who discover a derelict Starfleet ship and use it to search for adventure, meaning and salvation.

The animated series is developed by Emmy Award winners Kevin and Dan Hageman.

Ben Hibon will direct, executive produce and serve as the creative lead.

Star Trek: Prodigy is produced by CBS' Eye Animation Productions, Secret Hideout and Roddenberry Entertainment.

The series will premiere sometime next year on Nickelodeon.

ARIES: Leaving something you're "this" attached to is seldom easy. Aries, yet it is what you need to do in order to liberate yourself from this cycle. So let go, and let go with love. Know that your ancestors are by your side and are guiding you to a better place. Trust that you will soon gain clarity on your true purpose too. Daunting as it is, you must find the courage to take the first step. Everything else will be figured out as you go along.
Tip: Let go with loving awareness.

TAURUS: It's a 'find what you love and let it kill you' kind of day in the Taurus HQ. Bukowski's wisdom is inspiring you to immerse yourself in your art and be intoxicated by what you are creating. Remember, what you are engaging in is a personal dialogue between you and the Universe. Don't let those around you influence your thought process in any way. Remember, the more authentic you are to your message, the greater impact you will have on the world around you.
Tip: Allow yourself to be intoxicated by your art.

GEMINI: Gemini, this is a time to pause and look back at what you have created. Reassessment and re-evaluation is the need of the hour—a process that will provide you with much-needed perspective. There are certain methods that have worked for you, and there are certain methods that have not yielded good results. Knowing what you need to let go of before you enter into the new phase is an integral part of the growth and evolution process.
Tip: Step back and reassess.

CANCER: We tend to think of karma as the bad guy, but it's neither good nor bad. It simply is. Understanding the higher reason behind why things are unfolding in a certain manner will help you honour the soul lessons you are meant to integrate at this time. But that doesn't mean you have to be stuck in this loop forever. Call upon your higher self. Liberate yourself from this vicious cycle. Maintaining a balance between your head and your heart will help you make the right decisions and move forward in the most graceful manner.
Tip: Understand the higher reason behind the circumstances you have attracted into your Universe.

LEO: We spend so much time comparing our lives to that of others, agonising over the fact that somebody else has a better job, more money, or a partner we perceive as perfect. But the truth is, we never really know anything about anybody by looking at their circumstances superficially. So let go of this toxic inner dialogue, and honour what your life is revealing to you at this moment. It may not be picture-perfect, but it's helping you evolve and become the most magnificent version of yourself.
Tip: This is a time of inner alchemy, Leo.

VIRGO: They say your vibe attracts your tribe—a cliché that holds true for where you are now. You're surrounded by all the people you love. People who are holding space for you to evolve and become the most magnificent version of yourself. A prayer of gratitude is in order! In the days to come, you, or somebody close to you, could be getting ready to tie the knot. If this doesn't call for a celebration, what does, Virgo?

Tip: You are surrounded by your good vibes tribe.

LIBRA: Like the bulls, you're having a 'find what you love and let it kill you' kind of day. You're at an important juncture in your journey, one that's inspiring you to take a leap of faith into the unknown. Acting in time will prove to be the key to your transformation. Remember, your art is your prayer to the Great Mystery—the medium through which you experience a sense of oneness with the Universe. Let your creations be a reflection of your truth.
Tip: Find what you love and let it kill you.

SCORPIO: Some of you may be feeling a sense of stagnation with respect to your career. However, it's never too late to expand your skill set and unravel your hidden potential. If this journey requires you to go back to your books for a while, so be it. What you will gain in the process is much larger than what you could lose out on. Yes, there is a way to balance your education alongside work. Learning to compartmentalise your week will make all the difference, Scorpio.
Tip: This is a good time to get back to your books.

SAGITTARIUS: There are points in our lives when everything we consider sacred is taken away from us, leaving a sense of emptiness behind. Daunting as it is, you're being asked to embrace this experience fully. To have a dialogue with your demons and listen to what they have to say. Understanding the root of your trauma is the first step to liberating yourself from the vicious cycle. What you want to keep in mind when you're unable to see a way out is that the light of dawn always chases away the darkness of the night.
Tip: This too shall pass.

CAPRICORN: We're all a part of a divine play—lila, as some might say—one that reminds us that all the world is but a stage. The dualistic nature of our life ensures that we receive both 'the good' and 'the bad' in equal proportion. You will witness this theme playing out beautifully in your life today. So without getting attached to a specific outcome, do what you do best, and do what brings you joy. If things work out in your favour, well and good. If they don't, know that the divine forces are orchestrating something better.
Tip: It's all a part of the divine play.

AQUARIUS: It's easy to judge others on the basis of our preconceived notions or resort to harsh words because we're being triggered. You know what takes an insane amount of courage? Leaving your biases at the door, tapping into that space of unconditional love, and listening with an open heart. You will find a way to put your differences aside once you transcend the ego, Aquarius. A Baba Ram Dass favourite to get you through the tough times: "Treat everyone you meet like God in drag."
Tip: Tap into that space of unconditional love.

PISCES: They've left you on 'read' more than a few times, they reach out only when it's convenient to them, and when you ask for accountability, they immediately take a few steps back. It doesn't take a genius to figure out what's happening here, Pisces. Maybe it's time to choose your head over your heart. Coupled Pisceans may find that healthy boundaries can actually help their relationship thrive. So honour your own need for solitude as you hold space for them to find their bliss.
Tip: Read the signs.