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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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COVID-19: India records over 1 lakh single-day recoveries for first time, fresh cases dip below 76k



NEW DELHI, SEPT 22 [PTI]: India reported over 1 lakh coronavirus recoveries in a single-day for the first time, improving the recovery rate to 80.86%, while fresh cases also dropped below 76,000 after two weeks, according to the Health Ministry data updated on Tuesday.

The data updated at 8 am showed that during the past 24 hours, 1,01,468 COVID-19 patients recuperated, while 75,809 new cases were recorded, pushing the overall figures to 55,62,663 infections and 44,97,867 recoveries.

Also, 1,053 patients died during the period, taking the cumulative death figures to 88,935, the data showed, reporting a COVID-19 case fatality rate of 1.60%.

There are 9,75,861 active coronavirus cases in the country, which make 17.54% of the total caseload, the data stated.

India's single-day coronavirus cases had dipped below 76,000 on September 8 also, when 75,809 cases were reported.

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

16.

According to the Indian Council of Medical Research, a cumulative 6,53,25,779 samples have been tested up to September 21 –9,33,185 of them on Monday.

The 1,053 new deaths include 344 from Maharashtra, 122 from Karnataka, 88 from Uttar Pradesh, 62 from West Bengal, 60 from Tamil Nadu, 51 from Andhra Pradesh, 47 from Punjab, 37 from Madhya Pradesh and 32 from Delhi.

A total of 88,935 deaths reported so far includes 33,015 from Maharashtra, followed by 8,871 from Tamil Nadu, 8,145 from Karnataka, 5,410 from Andhra Pradesh, 5,135 from Uttar Pradesh, 5,014 from Delhi, 4,421 from West Bengal, 3,336 from Gujarat, 2,860 from Punjab and 2,007 from Madhya Pradesh.

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

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

Sikkim's caseload crosses 2500 mark with 66 new cases

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 22 SEPT:**

The number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 reported so far in Sikkim has crossed the 2500-mark and stands at 2513 with the detection of 66 fresh cases in the State in the last 24 hours ending 8 AM Tuesday. The number of active cases of novel coronavirus has now increased to 556 in the State.

Out of 66 new cases in the State, 54 have been reported in East District, 06 in West District and 06 in South District.

In the meantime, 23 more patients were discharged on Monday from isolation facilities in the State to further improve the figure of discharged patients of COVID-19 in Sikkim to 1928.

In the daily health bulletin on Tuesday, Health Department State IEC Officer, Sonam G Bhutia informed that 45 new cases of COVID-19 positive were reported in RT-PCR testing of 175 samples here at VRD Lab in STNM hospital on Monday. Likewise, five more cases were detected in the TrueNat testing of 27 samples, while 16 of 59 samples were found positive for COVID-19 in the rapid antigen testing. He mentioned that three patients were in the ICU facility.

In the break-up of new cases reported in RT-PCR, Mr Bhutia informed that one person from Church Road area, four patients admitted in STNM hospital, one from Kazi Road area, one from below psychiatric ward of old STNM hospital, one from near Cooperative Shop in Navey, one from below Manjushree School in Lower Sichey, one from end of the road at Lumsey, one from Upper Rey in Rey-Mindu and one from near Manjushree School in Ranka Road were



tested positive for COVID-19. He added that a person from Mam Gaon in Middle Shyari, two from near Brahma Kumaricentre in Development Area, one from near Housing quarter below Taxi Stand, one from near Cooperative Dara in Sichey, one from opposite Sera Gumpa in Chandmari, one from below Police Reserve Line near Paljor Stadium and one from near Marigold School in Upper Sichey were also found COVID-19 positive in RT-PCR testing.

Likewise, one from Kerabari in Sangkhola, three from near Police outpost in Arithang, one from BarpipalDara in Sichey, two from College Valley in Tadong, one from Pani House area, one from near Marigold School in Sichey, one from above Bike Garage in Bye pass area, two from near Forest check-post on Adampool Road, three from the containment zone in Arithang, one from near Beraach House of Worship in Tadong, one from below Gas Distribution Centre on Bye pass road in Lingding, three primary contacts from VIP colony and five health staff posted at Rangpo Screening Centre also tested positive for COVID-19, he

added.

Mr Bhutia mentioned that Member Secretary in-charge of Sikkim Women's Commission from Sichey area has also tested positive for COVID-19. On the same, he urged those who may have visited the commission's office or come in direct contact of the Member Secretary in the last seven days, to monitor their health. If they get symptoms they should go for testing at Flu Clinic at STNM hospital or call the toll free number of the Health department for any enquiry.

Similarly, one staff of STNM hospital, one from near police outpost in GairiGaon, Tadong, one from behind Kanchenjunga Shopping complex in Lal Bazaar area, one from opposite BSNL telephone exchange near Forest check-post reported COVID-19 positive, and one person from North Regu, tested positive he said.

Mr Bhutia informed that a person from Army quarter in Samdur, one from the containment zone in ITBP Metro Point, Tadong and one from near Mayfair resort in Ranipool were found COVID-19 positive in rapid antigen testing at CRH, Tadong.

Six cases were detected in South Sikkim; two from near petrol pump on Jorethang road, one from near Boomtar Primary School and one from near Kopchey school and one from Jorethang bazaar and one from Lower Boomtar area in South District also tested positive in RAT.

Similarly, six cases were also detected in West Sikkim; three persons from Gyalshing, one from Budang in Soreng, one from Malbasey, Soreng and one from KharkaBazaara in Soreng.

CM congratulates Denjong Charities for founding Khangchendzonga Buddhist University

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 22 SEPT:**

Chief Minister PS Tamang [Golay] has congratulated Denjong Charities on having founded Khangchendzonga Buddhist University, the Bill for which was passed by the Sikkim Legislative Assembly on Monday.

A press release issued by the Chief Minister's Office today, while pointing out that Denjong Charities has also founded Taktse Internation School in Gangtok, adds that the CM has also expressed gratitude towards members of the Legislative Assembly for creating the first private Buddhist University of India and the first

University of Sikkim founded by Sikkimese people by supporting the Khangchendzonga Buddhist University Bill of Sikkim, 2020.

"This is a fulfilment of the SKM party's manifesto to build a Buddhist University in Sikkim and will place Sikkim prominently on the map of higher education in India and the world," the release states.

KBU, the release states, will advance Buddha Dharma in Sikkim, India and the world while also focussing on development of teachers of Sikkim and adjoining regions through "innovative models of education and offer cutting

edge vocational programmes with a broad based foundation in liberal arts so that students of lower and lower middle class can be prepared for rewarding careers in India and outside."

The release goes on to contend that this will also be the first university which will model itself along the guidelines of the National Education Policy and also aid the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals.

KBU, the release states, will fulfill the SDGs of Quality Education, Decent Work and Economic Growth, Sustainable Cities and Communities and Partnerships to Achieve Goals.

Rajya Sabha passes 7 key bills in three and half hours

New Delhi, Sep 22 (PTI):

IN ONE OF THE MOST PRODUCTIVE DAYS IN ITS HISTORY, RAJYA SABHA ON TUESDAY IN A MATTER OF THREE AND HALF HOURS PASSED seven key bills including one that removes cereals, pulses and onion from the essential commodities list and another that abolishes penalty for certain offences by companies.

This after most of the opposition including the Congress, Left parties, the TMC, the Samajwadi Party and the NCP decided to boycott House proceedings in protest against the suspension of eight MPs for the remainder of the session for unruly behaviour.

Only members from the ruling BJP and its ally JD-U and those of parties such as AIADMK, BJD, YSR-Congress and TDP, which have been extending support to the Modi government

on various issues, participated in the debates on the bills.

In most bills, the members participation was sparse and the minister's reply brief.

The Upper House took up government legislative business after nearly an hour of discussion over the conduct of opposition MPs during the passage of two agriculture reform bills on Sunday, with Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu saying the suspension could be revoked if the members expressed regret over their action.

First, it passed a bill to declare five newly-established Indian Institutes of Information Technology (IIITs) as institutions of national importance.

The crucial Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, which removes cereals, pulses, oilseeds, edible oils, onion and potatoes from the list of essential



commodities and removes stockholding limits on them, was passed next.

This bill is part of the agriculture reforms bills that the government is pushing to raise farm incomes.

The bills passed on Sunday gave farmers the freedom to sell produce anywhere in the country and enter into forward contracts with companies.

Rajya Sabha also passed amendments to the Bank Regulation Act to bring cooperative banks under the supervision of the RBI in a bid to protect the interest of depositors.

T h e r e a f t e r

the Companies (Amendment) Bill, 2020, which removes the penalty for certain offences, was passed.

The National Forensic Sciences University Bill, 2020 and the Rashtriya Rakash University Bill were passed in quick succession.

Thereafter the Taxation and Other Laws (Relaxation and Amendment of Certain Provisions) Bill, 2020 to relax time limit on compliance with tax laws, GST payment and filing in view of the coronavirus pandemic.

T h e E s s e n t i a l C o m m o d i t i e s

(Amendment) Bill, 2020 as well as the Taxation and Other Laws (Relaxation and Amendment of Certain Provisions) Bill, 2020 replace emergency ordinances.

The sitting of the Rajya Sabha was extended by just over an hour beyond the scheduled time to allow the passage of the bills. The legislative business started at 10.29 hours and ended at 14.03 hrs - 214 minutes in all.

All the seven bills have already been passed by Lok Sabha and will now be sent to the President for assent. Once he gives his assent, they will become the law.

LS passes three labour codes amid boycott by Opposition

NEW DELHI, SEP 22 (PTI): The Lok Sabha on Tuesday passed three labour codes amid boycott of the House proceedings by several Opposition parties, including the Congress, in protest against the suspension of eight Rajya Sabha members.

Labour Minister Santosh Gangwar said the House is witnessing a historic day as these codes would provide salary security, social security and proper environment at workplaces to 50 crore workers of the country.

He said people who have walked out from the House did nothing for workers when they were in power.

The objective of these laws are to provide all kinds of facilities and healthy environment to workers, Gangwar said, adding that in the last six years, the government has taken several steps for employees such as increase in maternity leave period to 26 weeks, allowing women to work in mines sector and pension scheme for small traders.

"With these steps, we had started work for labour reforms," he said.

While moving the bills on the codes for consideration and passage, the minister said the government has come out with the changes in the legislations after extensive consultations with state governments and other stakeholders.

He said about three-fourth

of the recommendations of the Parliamentary standing committee, which scrutinised the codes, have been incorporated in the bills by the government.

On Saturday, Gangwar introduced the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020, the Industrial Relations Code, 2020, and the Code on Social Security, 2020.

Over 29 labour laws have been merged into four codes and one of them -- Code on Wages Bill, 2019 -- has already been passed, according to the minister.

The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020, will consolidate and amend the laws regulating the occupational safety, health and working conditions of persons employed in an establishment and related matters.

The Industrial Relations Code, 2020, seeks to consolidate and amend the laws relating to trade unions, conditions of employment in industrial establishments or undertaking, investigation and settlement of industrial disputes.

The Code on Social Security, 2020, will amend and consolidate laws relating to social security with the goal to extend social security to all employees and workers either in the organised sector or the unorganised sector.

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ECI hosts webinar on Issues, Challenges and Protocols for conducting elections during COVID-19

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 22 SEPT:**

On completion of one year of Chairmanship of the Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB), Election Commission of India today hosted an International Webinar on the Theme ‘Issues, Challenges and Protocols for Conducting Elections during COVID-19: Sharing Country Experiences’, a press release informs.

It was an occasion for democracies world over to come together to share experiences of conducting elections during Covid-19, the release states.

It may be recalled that last year on 03 Sep, 2019 India had taken over as Chair of A-WEB for 2019–2021 term during the 4th General Assembly of A-WEB held at Bengaluru. Inaugurating the Webinar, Chief Election Commissioner of India and Chairperson, A-WEB, Sunil Arora spoke of the ‘tough predicament’ faced by Election Management Bodies across the world - whether and how to hold scheduled elections in a state of public health emergency.

He said the contextual framework of every country was different, the extent and trajectory of the disease varied and

so did the capacity of each country to respond to the novel corona virus and its catastrophic impact. He mentioned countries such as South Korea, Australia, Malawi, Taiwan, Mongolia and many others who went ahead with scheduled elections even as they put in place the enormous arrangements required to ensure the health and safety of people while conducting election.

Sunil Arora mentioned that Elections in India pose formidable challenges on account of large electorate, geographical and linguistic diversity and differing climatic conditions. Explaining in detail the scale of the upcoming elections to the Legislative Assembly of Bihar, he mentioned that the total number of electors is 72.9 million.

Explaining the impact of Covid-19 on the election, Shri Arora highlighted how Covid-19 exigencies and social distancing measures necessitated a revisit of ECI’s extant instructions. The maximum number of electors at a polling station was reduced from 1500 to 1000, and consequently, the number of polling stations jumped by 40 per cent, from 65,000 to 100,000. These changes have huge logistics and

manpower implications. CEC mentioned that the Commission would take a decision within the next two to three days, on visiting Bihar.

Chief Election Commissioner also mentioned that ECI has placed a lot of emphasis on extending facilitation to senior citizens, women, Persons with disabilities and in current circumstances, ensuring franchise to Covid-19 positive voters and those in quarantine. In this context, the CEC mentioned how, beginning with the elections to the Legislative Assembly of Jharkhand in November–December 2019, and elections to the Legislative Assembly of Delhi in February 2020, the postal ballot facility was extended to voters who are aged more than 80 years, persons with disability and those who engaged in specified essential services. This facility of postal ballot has been extended to Covid-19 positive electors who are in quarantine/hospitalized.

Sunil Arora mentioned the specific and detailed guidelines that have been drawn up on conducting election during the time of Covid-19. He also mentioned the

successful conduct of elections to 18 seats of the Rajya Sabha in the month of June, 2020. He noted that elections are due in the states of West Bengal, Assam, Kerala, Puducherry and Tamil Nadu in the first half of the year 2021.

CEC recalled the AWEB General Assembly, held in Bengaluru in September 2019. He noted that the Webinar today is being held under the aegis of India A-WEB Centre on the occasion of completion of one year of ECI’s term as Chair of A-WEB.

Mentioning the two publications being released today viz. ‘Brief Profiles of the Countries, member EMBs and Partner Organisations of A-WEB’ and ‘COVID 19 and International Election Experience’, he said these would be a useful tool for researchers and practitioners alike. He said that A-WEB India Centre has also progressed considerably towards publishing a world class journal called ‘AWEB Journal of Elections’. The first issue of this journal will be released in March 2021.

Over 120 delegates from 45 countries across the world (viz. Angola, Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh,

Bhutan, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Cambodia, Cameroon, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Dominica, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Georgia, Indonesia, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Republic of Korea, Kyrgyz Republic, Liberia, Malawi, Maldives, Moldova, Mongolia,

Mozambique, Nigeria, Palestine, Philippines, Romania, Russia, Sao Tome and Principe, Solomon Islands, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Taiwan, Tonga, Turkey, Uzbekistan and Zambia) and 4 international organizations (viz. International IDEA, International Foundation of Electoral Systems (IFES), Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB) and European Centre for Elections) participated in the Webinar today.

The Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB) is largest association of Election Management Bodies (EMBs) worldwide. At present A-WEB has 115 EMBs as Members & 16 Regional Associations/Organisations as Associate Members. ECI has been very closely associated with the process of formation of A-WEB since 2011–12.

to offer and being relatively unaffected by the pandemic, the North Eastern region would be hub for the tourist who used to visit European resorts for holidays.

Speaking on this occasion Secretary NEC, Moses K Chalai indicated that the event is one of the high points in the NEC calendar but owing to the situation this time it had to be carried out on the virtual platform. However with technology, we hope to reach a widespread audience across the country and globe.

encouraged party leaders and workers to stay connected with each other in principle and thoughts to work on the hopes and aspirations of the people of Sikkim.

The SDF president urged party workers to make people aware and help them stay safe from coronavirus.

It is informed that GaribUnmulanDiwas was also celebrated in West District office of the party at Gyalshing. The party workers from different parts of the State have also extended their best wishes to the party president on his birthday.

The number of rapid-antigen tests conducted on Monday stood at 49,554 while the RT-PCR, CBNAAT and True NAAT tests figures were 9,459 in all, adding to 59,013, according to the bulletin.

The number of tests done per million, as on Tuesday, was over 1.38 lakh while the total number of tests stood at over 26.37 lakh.

Health Minister Satyendar Jain took a meeting with medical directors and medical superintendents of all Delhi government hospitals to review the status of testing.

Delhi Chief Secretary Vijay Dev took a review meeting with all district magistrates on COVID-19 management.

Riders of Namthang provide Covid relief



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 22 SEPT:**

The Riders of Namthang, #TRON has organised COVID-19 awareness cum lunch distribution program today, a press release informs.

Members of the association along

with the executives distributed packed lunch, tetra soft drink packs, washable face masks to the road construction workers of Public Works Department from Mamring to Phongla. They also distributed these items to the Police personnel under

Namthang OP, staff from Power department, plumbers under PHE&RDD, Namthang.

The face masks were sponsored by ZillaPanchayat, Yadunath Mishra. The program concluded with a short briefing by president #TRON, Sagar Tamang.

World powers set to take the stage, virtually, at UN debate

UNITED NATIONS (AP): The U.N.’s first virtual meeting of world leaders was set to start Tuesday with pre-recorded speeches from some of the planet’s biggest powers, kept at home by the coronavirus pandemic that will likely be a dominant theme at their video gathering this year.

Among those expected to speak Tuesday are U.S. President Donald Trump and Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, whose countries have reported the highest and second-highest coronavirus death tolls, respectively. Also on deck are President Xi Jinping of China, where the virus originated, and President Vladimir Putin of Russia, which has raised international eyebrows with its rapid vaccine development.

After Monday’s introductory session marking the U.N.’s

75th anniversary, the meeting’s central event — speeches from each of its 193 member nations — start Tuesday. They traditionally serve as a platform for countries to tout accomplishments, seek support, stoke rivalries and express views on global priorities.

This year, the platform is online, and there is a pressing new priority in the pandemic that has killed over 960,000 people worldwide.

“When we met in New York a year ago, no one could have imagined that 2020 would arrange such a powerful crash test for our world,” Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy remarked in his video speech for Monday’s anniversary commemoration.

By custom, Brazil speaks first and the U.S. second as the host country in the annual meeting’s “general debate,” which is

generally less a dialogue than a series of declarations.

The coronavirus has inflicted heavy tolls on both countries, close to 200,000 people in the U.S. and over 136,000 in Brazil, according to statistics collected by Johns Hopkins University.

Both Bolsonaro and Trump have been at odds, at least at times, with governors and health experts over the pandemic and have emphasized the economic consequences of shutdowns.

Both also are contending with plenty of other issues that command world attention, including Bolsonaro’s plans to develop the Amazon and Trump’s 2018 decision to pull the U.S. out of Iran’s nuclear deal with world powers. Washington took a further step this weekend with a unilateral, and disputed, declaration that all U.N.

Logo and theme song launched for Destination North-East 2020

GANGTOK, 22 SEPT (PIB):

The launch of theme song and logo for ‘Destination North East’ an annual event for promoting tourism by the collaborative effort of North Eastern Council (NEC), Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and North East Region Community Resource Management Project (NERCORMP) was held at a virtual platform at the North Eastern Council Secretariat on 21 Sept, 2020.

The event was

attended by Minister of State (Independent Charges) Ministry of DoNER, Govt of India, Dr Jitendra Singh, Secretary DoNER, Inderjit Singh, members NEC Prof Biman Kumar Dutta, Air Marshal Anjan Kumar Gogoi, Secretary NEC, Moses K Chalai and other officials of NEC and NERCORMP.

While addressing the meeting Minister Dr Jitendra Singh said that back in 2014 everyone one was saying that we must do something for North East so that the rest of

the country can come closer to North East, we decided to take North East closer to the rest of India with the purpose to let people living in different parts of India acquaint with its cultural heritage, resources, entrepreneurship potential and its excellent natural beauty.

He also mentioned that Destination North East 2019 was held last year in Varanasi for four days where it was very well appreciated to the point that there was popular demand for extending it. The

theme was “Celebrating Brahmaputra in the Banks of Ganges.”

He further added that this time, owing to the pandemic the event would be carried out semi virtually with the opening ceremony to be inaugurated by Home Minister, Amit Shah on 27 September and the closing ceremony which would be graced by Union Ministers, Rameshwar Teli and Kiren Rijiju on 30 September. Dr Singh mentioned that post Covid-19, Northeast would have a lot more

SDF celebrates Garib Unmulan Diwas virtually

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 22 SEPT:**

Sikkim Democratic Front organized a virtual interactive programme through Zoom app on the occasion of GaribUnmulanDiwas which is also the birthday of SDF president, Pawan Chamling on Tuesday.

The three-hour programme had the participation of leaders and party workers from all four districts, who also expressed their best wishes to the party president on his birthday, informs a SDF press release issued by general secretary [press & publicity affairs],



Kavita Subba.

The release informs that in his address the party president mentioned that SDF was

successful in eradicating poverty from the State during its 25 years of government but mental and intellectual poverty

still exists in the State. He stressed upon the need to remove mental poverty from the State. Mr Chamling

Delhi records 3,816 cases; COVID-19 tally over 2.53 lakh

NEW DELHI, SEP 22 (PTI): The national capital’s COVID-19 case count mounted to over 2.53 lakh on Tuesday with 3,816 more people contracting the viral disease, while 37 fresh fatalities pushed the death toll to 5,051, according to the Delhi health department bulletin.

In total, 59,013 samples were tested on Monday, and results of 3,816 came positive today, it said.

The number of active cases on Tuesday rose to 31,263 from 30,941 on the previous day. The death toll from COVID-19 in Delhi stood at 5,014 on Monday.

The Tuesday bulletin said that the death toll due to the coronavirus infection has

risen to 5,051 and the total number of cases has climbed to 2,53,075.

The number of containment zones in Delhi jumped to 1,937 on Tuesday from 1,889 on Monday.

The positivity rate on Tuesday stood at 6.47 per cent while the recovery rate was over 85 per cent, the bulletin said, adding that the case fatality rate stood at two per cent.

The Delhi government has significantly ramped up testing in the past few days.

The number of tests conducted and corresponding fresh cases reported, ranged from 24,198 (2,312) on September 1 to 61,973 (4,071) on September 19.

BUILDING FOR SALE

A two storey house building constructed on plot area 50×40 ft. Situated at Upper Phong near Phong SS , South Sikkim is on sale. Cost Rs 56 Lakhs (Negotiable). Interested may contact : 8145829309, 7864937800, 9749897695.

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LAND FOR SALE

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

LAND FOR SALE

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

LAND FOR SALE

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

FOR RENT

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

GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

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

Lingtam Sec School organizes Virtual Talent Show 2020

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 22 SEPT:

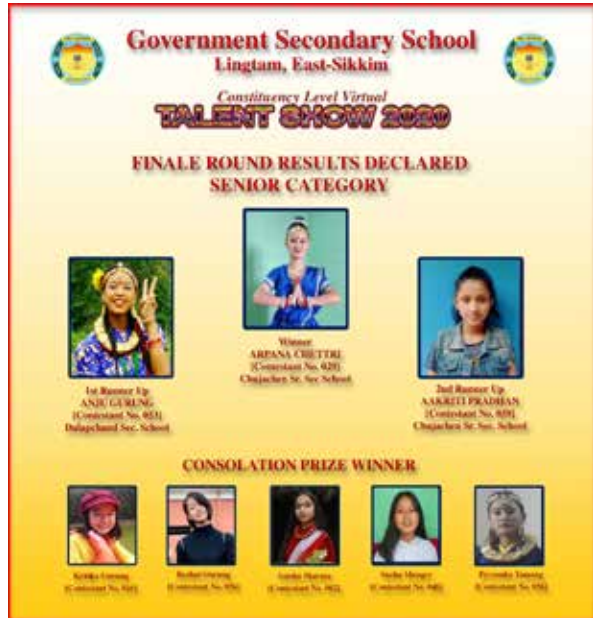
With an aim to provide platform to the hidden talents of rural areas, a constituency level Virtual Talent Show, 2020, organized by School Managing Committee (SMC) of Government Secondary School, Lingtam, East Sikkim came to an end on 21 Sept, 2020.

The show aimed to connect with students during this time of isolation amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, a press release informs.

The show was conceived and initiated by the SMC member, Dorjee Sherpa Pinasa. As per Mr Sherpa, the SMC decided to give children a platform to showcase their talents as the schools are shut and students are not utilizing their time properly.

The show which started on 22 Aug had the participation of more than 100 contestants and after one month of selection process it has finally come to an end on 21 Sept, 2020 on the occasion of World Peace Day.

MD of Riyaaz Sangitalaya from Gangtok,



Manoj Rai, Director & Choreographer of Twist Your Toe Dance Academy from Daramdin, Sushma Yonzon, Renowned Actor of Kollywood film industry from Sikkim, Timothy Rai and Model/Actress and MD of Shriaadi Entertainment Company from Pakyong, Januka Sharma Rizal were the judges of the show.

The show was divided into three rounds viz: Preliminary Round, Gala Round and the Finale Round.

In senior category the winners are; Arpana Chettri from Class XI, Chujachen Senior Secondary School in 1st position,

Anju Gurung from Class X, Dalapchand Sec School in 2nd position, and Aakriti Pradhan from Class VIII, Chujachen Sr Sec School in 3rd position. Winners were awarded with cash reward of Rs. 10,000, Rs6000 and Rs3000 respectively along with certificate.

Similarly, Kritika Gurung from Lingtam Sec School, Roshni Gurung from Chujachen Sr Sec School, Anisha Sharma from Chujachen Sr Sec School, Sneha Manger from Lingtam Sec School, Priyanka Tamang from Lingtam Sec School won the consolation prizes.



In junior category the winners are; Himakshi Dawari from Class III, St Mary's School, Sungdungin 1st position, Rizongla Sherpa from Class IV, Nimachen Primary School in 2nd position, and Anjali Rai from Class IV, Rainbow Elementary School, Dalapchandin 3rd position.

The winners were awarded with cash reward of Rs. 9000, Rs5000 and Rs3000 respectively along with certificate.

Similarly, Trinesh & Arina from Bethal Academy, Mulukey, Akanksha Gurung from Posakey Primary School, Priyansha Gurung from

Bosko English School, Lingtam, Neha Subba from Bethal Academy, Mulukey and Choden Sherpa from Lingtam Sec School won consolation prizes.

The organizing committee thanked all the supporters who sponsored the prizes. They also thanked Shabnum Goley, Headmistress of the school for her support along with teachers of the school, SMC Members and the parents of the participants.

Organizers also thanked SKM Area In-Charge, Damber Pradhan and Panchayat Vice-President, Nim Tenjee Sherpa for their support.

SJA holds discussion on Divorce Law for Judges

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 22 SEPT:

Sikkim Judicial Academy [SJA] organized a discussion on Divorce Law for the District & Sessions Judges of Sikkim through Video Conferencing facility on 19 Sept, 2020. The Resource Person was Judge, Justice Meenakshi Madan Rai, High Court of Sikkim, a press release informs. The Resource Person discussed the Special Marriage Act, 1954 and divorce law applicable to Tribals and Christians in Sikkim.

The Resource Person discussed the Historical background on position of women in the World and in India particularly. While discussing Registration of Marriages solemnized in India, it was informed that the Apex Court has made registration of Marriages mandatory in the country which is contained in the Hindu Marriage Act as well as the Special Marriage Act. This judgment was necessitated due to the rampant desertion of married women. A registered marriage made it easier for deserted women to claim maintenance as well as custody of children, etc.

The provisions of

the Special Marriage Act, 1954 were discussed. It was informed that a Hindu marrying a non Hindu, the Special Marriage Act, 1954 applies. Landmark judgments on Maintenance were also discussed by the Resource Person. It was informed that it is the husband's duty to provide maintenance to his wife as per her social status and standard as held by the Supreme Court. Further it was also held by the same Court that the income of the wife must also be considered at the time of granting of maintenance. Further the Supreme Court in 2011 acknowledged the concept of "Live-in relations" and held that a woman in live-in relation is entitled to maintenance provided it was with an unmarried man.

Resource Person emphasized that once a marriage is registered under one law, divorce cannot be granted under another law. If a couple have their marriage registered under Hindu Marriage Act, they cannot be granted divorce under the Special Marriage Act, 1954, or vice versa. It was informed that Christians in

Sikkim have no respite at present since the Christian Marriage Act has not been extended to Sikkim.

Ladyship also discussed the Rules to provide for Registration and Solemnization of a Form of Marriage in Sikkim, 1963. With respect to divorce of tribals it was informed that Hindu Marriage Act does not apply to Tribals. Accordingly, in divorce matters involving parties belonging to tribal communities, the participants were asked to analyse the evidence properly. Resource Person also discussed pre-nuptial agreement and post nuptial agreement and its legal status in India. It was informed that such agreements are not enforceable in India. Resource Person informed the participants that the Supreme Court in a historical judgment struck down Section 497, Indian Penal Code, which penalises adultery since it was against Articles 14, 15 and 21 of the Constitution of India.

The Resource Person discussed all the Landmark Judgments of the Supreme Court. The programme was highly engaging and interactive.

Parliament's Monsoon session likely to end on Wednesday

NEW DELHI, SEP 22 (PTI): The Monsoon Session of Parliament is likely to conclude on Wednesday, eight days before it is scheduled to end, amid concerns of spread of coronavirus among lawmakers, sources said.

Rajya Sabha is likely to adjourn sine die after taking up five bills on Wednesday, the sources said on Tuesday.

Lok Sabha, which will meet at 3 pm on

Wednesday is likely to be adjourned sine die around 5 pm after taking up an extended Zero Hour, they said.

The session which began on September 14, witnessed passage of several bills in both Houses, including those which sought to replace ordinances issued recently.

The decision to curtail the session has been conveyed to floor leaders of parties in the

lower house, the sources said.

The Monsoon Session was otherwise scheduled to end on October 1.

Several MPs, including a few ministers, have tested positive for COVID-19 in the last few days.

On Monday, eight members of Rajya Sabha were suspended over their "unruly behaviour" during the passage of the two key farm bills on Sunday.

A number of opposition parties on Tuesday staged a walkout from Rajya Sabha and decided to boycott proceedings of the House till the suspension of the eight members is revoked, even as the government insisted on their apology.

In Lok Sabha too, various opposition parties, including the Congress and the TMC boycotted the House in

solidarity with the suspended Rajya Sabha members.

Congress leader in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said all opposition parties are boycotting Parliament in solidarity with the suspended Rajya Sabha members.

Opposition parties, including the Congress, the TMC, the BSP and the TRS, walked out of the Lok Sabha after Chowdhury's announcement.



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Fresh lot of rapid information

TMC protests against farm bills in Kolkata

KOLKATA, SEP 22 (PTI): Members of the Trinamool Congress women's wing staged a sit-in demonstration in Kolkata on Tuesday over the farm bills.

Around a hundred activists protested near the Mahatma Gandhi statue on Mayo Road with empty plates on which slogans such as "krishokder jonyo lorchi lorbo" (will continue to fight for the farmers) were written.

TMC women's wing president Chandrima Bhattacharya said her party will continue the protest against the "anti-farmer bills" through various programmes in the coming days.


"These two bills reveal the true intent of the Modi government. They are opening the farm sector to the big

corporations, which will break the backbone of the ordinary farmers. We won't let that happen," Bhattacharya, also a state minister, said.

Two key farm bills, dubbed by the government as the biggest reform in agriculture, were on Sunday passed by the Rajya Sabha by voice vote amid chaotic scenes by opposition members who demanded that they be referred to a House panel for greater scrutiny.

The Trinamool Congress in a tweet also said that the BJP was pursuing an agenda of "pseudo-nationalism" and carrying out "fascist attack" on grassroots workers of the society.

"We will fight your fascism from the pavement to Parliament," it said.



What is Novel Coronavirus - nCoV?

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

Symptoms of nCoV

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

Precautions to Prevent nCoV

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

Treatment

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



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Noninvolvement Feeds Arrogance

...a prescription which poisons democracy

The dictionary defines “noninvolvement” as a lack or emotional engagement and failure or refusal to become involved.

In most contexts, this term takes a more policy/political term in that it applies to nations in the line of “nonalignment”. When so practiced, it is mostly a good thing so long as it is about distancing from “politics” and not humanitarian situations because had it been followed, USA would not have been fighting so many wars instigating the creation of monsters like ISIS and then so overtly undermining the significance of the UN... or even ignoring the science of climate change for that matter, or not even opting for a fig leaf excuse in ignoring the brazen murder of a journalist by an offensive regime on foreign soil.

The same principle, however, does not apply to the citizenry with the same merits. In fact, noninvolvement among a people has the opposite effect of what it does on nations. When a people refuse to engage, democracy gets reduced to election cycles, accountability is replaced by bombast and the sense of service among representatives is subsumed by the arrogance of “leaders”. When things come to such a pass, policy decisions become diktats, the noxious fringe crawls out from under the rocks and dances madness in the public domain. And no, social media activity does not really qualify as involvement; if anything, it is a false equivalent for public participation because what it seeks to do is abuse/ shout discourse into meek acceptance or vent into an echo chamber and think humanity has been served. And as the troll army wins more and more battles, it helps create a mob of bots programmed not to analyse or challenge but applaud the demagoguery of flag-waving chauvinists and end up subverting democracy so much that the idea of supreme and all-powerful leaders does not offend anymore and no one even blinks when the term in office of an elected government is referred to as “rule”.

A people self-assured in their ignorance make for easy pickings when it comes to seeding fears because when one refuse to get involved and hence get informed, they cannot handle complexities anymore and gravitate towards the black & whites of the alt-Right. We know we are in trouble when hate can be peddled as righteousness and not even get called out. You know democracy is being compromised when dictation replaces consultation and no one has a problem with it.

Democracy is supposed to ease people’s minds, allowing them their disagreements and differences and still providing the space where they can be themselves without having to constantly look over their shoulders. Fail to remain involved, and every expression of democracy becomes conditional and violence punctuates the lives of lay people more often than should ever be allowed. We have seen this trend gather pace in the recent past when suspicions, bans, deregulation, demonization (okay, also demonetization), forced nationalism, increased supervision bordering on surveillance and pulpit-mongering have come to define governance and gain meek acceptance. Arrogance is an undesirable quality in anyone, but when it comes to leaders, it is dangerous. And we continue feeding it with our noninvolvement.

DAN GORDON

THECONVERSATION.COM

The menstrual cycle, the pill and their potential impact on sporting performance have long been considered a taboo subject. Yet for most females who undertake any form of exercise or high-performance sport, there are a range of challenges that can affect their athletic performance, including from their menstrual cycle and their use of contraceptive pills. But a historic lack of scientific research in these areas still means we have very limited knowledge of the specific effect that both have on athletic performance. However, what research we do have on these subjects shows both can have an impact on athletic performance – which may be especially important for elite athletes.

During the average menstrual cycle, levels of the sex hormones oestrogen and progesterone change throughout each phase. These hormonal fluctuations cause changes in body temperature, the storage and use of energy, and the ability of muscles to produce force.

The cycle is divided into three phases. Menses (days one to five of the cycle) is where both oestrogen and progesterone levels are low. This is followed by the follicular phase during which oestrogen concentration rises to a peak (between days 10-14). Immediately preceding is ovulation, where progesterone remains almost unchanged. Thereafter, during the luteal phase, the concentrations of both oestrogen and progesterone are high (days 19-24). If no implantation of a fertilised egg occurs, both oestrogen and progesterone levels fall, and the cycle recommences.

It’s the fluctuations in oestrogen and progesterone which are thought to have an impact on sporting performance. Research shows both oestrogen and progesterone promote the uptake and storage of muscle glycogen. Both hormones also change the ability to use this stored form of carbohydrate for energy – both during exercise and at rest.

Glycogen is the stored form of



carbohydrate in the muscle which plays a significant role in supplying energy to the body during exercise. Use of muscle glycogen appears to be more proficient during the luteal phase, when oestrogen and progesterone are high. This suggests that during menses and the follicular phases exercise requires us to use more of our stored glycogen, so may cause more fatigue.

Another common aspect of the menstrual cycle is the fluctuation in body temperature, largely because progesterone induces heat production. Increased progesterone concentrations is associated with an increased core body temperature. When core temperature is raised, blood is directed to the skin in order to remove heat and lower internal temperature. However, this can compromise oxygen delivery to the muscles, resulting in greater perceived effort and potentially earlier onset of fatigue. The luteal phase in particular is characterised by higher core temperature and increased heart rate.

Several studies have also observed that muscular strength is lower during menses compared to the other phases. This time it’s oestrogen causing this effect. Indeed, a number of the key cellular structures involved in generating muscular force are sensitive to fluctuations in oestrogen. Low concentrations of oestrogen circulating during menses may

make strength training feel harder, and fatigue likely to occur earlier. Some evidence also suggests that there’s both increased sensations of pain and exertion during the follicular phase as well, making exercise feel more challenging.

However, recent reviews have concluded that despite these biological responses, the impact on sporting performance seems to be minimal. But given that at the elite level differences between winning and losing are themselves minimal, this should potentially be taken into consideration.

THE PILL

Not only is the pill a common contraceptive method it’s also used by many women to alleviate symptoms of dysmenorrhoea (painful cramps) and menorrhagia (abnormal, heavy, or prolonged bleeding). Many athletes also use the pill to regulate and manipulate their cycles to coincide with training and competition schedules.

In general, pills work by downregulating the production of sex hormones through a constant release of low doses of synthetic oestrogen and progesterone. Throughout the so-called pseudo-cycle, the hormone concentrations for both oestrogen and progesterone stay at levels comparable to the menstruation phase of women who do not take the pill.

Recent research suggests that performance levels while taking

the pill remain the same. However, there’s potentially a slightly negative impact of suppressing the ovarian hormones while taking the pill on athletic performance compared with non-pill users. This suggests that the consistently elevated concentrations of progesterone and oestrogen, as seen with a mono-phasic pill may impact on energy availability and use.

This could potentially impair both strength and endurance exercise performance. However, pill use (or non-use) should be judged on an individual basis, especially given that the benefits of taking the pill can outweigh possible performance detriments from taking it. But in general, the pill may have less overall impact on athletic performance.

However, researchers still know very little about the impact of the pill on athletic performance, including downsides, because the area is vastly under-researched. Currently, there’s also no research into the impact that other forms of contraception – such as injections, the coil and implants – have on athletic performance.

In the end, the impact a woman’s period or contraceptive use has on her performance is highly subjective. For example, former British tennis player Heather Watson exited the first round of the Australian Open in 2015 due to what she called “girl things” (“dizziness, nausea, low energy levels and spells of feeling light-headed”) – highlighting how the menstrual cycle is still a taboo topic. By contrast, when Paula Radcliffe first broke the marathon world record in Chicago in 2002, she was actually suffering period cramps in the final parts of the race.

But even in this day and age, scientific research on how periods and the pill affect athletic performance is lacking in both quantity and quality – meaning clear solutions and practical recommendations for those affected haven’t really been found yet.

[the writer is Principal Lecturer Sport and Exercise Sciences, Anglia Ruskin University]

Explainer: How clinical trials test COVID-19 vaccines

CHARLES WEIJER

THECONVERSATION.COM

On Sept. 4, 2020, President Donald Trump announced that we will have a vaccine for COVID-19 “before the end of the year and maybe even before Nov. 1.” As an election looms in the United States, the declaration fuelled worry that a COVID-19 vaccine may be approved before scientific vetting is complete.

In the United States, review and licensure of vaccines is the responsibility of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). But the agency’s handling of emergency use authorizations for two anti-malaria drugs and convalescent blood plasma for the treatment of COVID-19 have led to claims it has become politicized.

Such is the worry about the impartiality of the FDA that pharmaceutical companies drew a line in the sand and pledged publicly to “only submit [a vaccine] for approval or emergency use authorization after demonstrating safety and efficacy through a Phase 3 clinical study.”

“Hell has frozen over,” remarked commentators.

But what is a Phase 3 clinical study? And how does scientific testing provide us with reliable evidence that vaccines not only work but are safe?

VACCINE DEVELOPMENT

Vaccine development can be thought of as the process of separating the parts of an infectious agent that make us sick, from those that induce an immune response and protect us from future infection. As this separation can be accomplished in myriad ways, vaccines are diverse.

Vaccine candidates for COVID-19 illustrate these diverse approaches. Some, such as SinoPharm’s inactivated coronavirus vaccine, use killed whole coronavirus. Others, such as the Oxford University-AstraZeneca vaccine, modify a different virus (in this case, chimpanzee adenovirus) to express coronavirus proteins. Yet others, such as Moderna’s mRNA vaccine, use only small bits of viral genetic material.

In Canada, the oversight of vaccines is shared by Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada. The scientific evaluation of vaccines involves animal testing, human clinical trials and post-approval surveillance. In many regards, the evaluation of vaccines is the same as the process for drugs. Because vaccines are given to healthy people, however, there is an even greater emphasis in vaccine testing on safety.

ANIMAL TESTING

The first step in evaluating a vaccine is animal testing. Animals are given differing doses of vaccine to check for adverse events and an immune response.

As the virus that causes COVID-19 is new, there was no animal model for the disease. Recent work has demonstrated that ferrets, cats and some non-human primates are prone to infection and can spread it to others. Animal testing provides information about safety (and perhaps efficacy) before a vaccine is tested on humans.



HUMAN CLINICAL TRIALS

Human testing in clinical trials is divided into three phases. Ensuring the safety of a vaccine is the prime concern through all phases of clinical trials. Vaccine efficacy is evaluated in different ways across the trial spectrum. Early-phase trials look for the production of antibodies against the virus, while late-phase trials evaluate whether the vaccine in fact prevents people from getting sick.

Phase 1 trials are the first evaluations of a vaccine in humans. These trials recruit 10 to 100 healthy volunteers who receive different doses of vaccine. Common adverse events to a vaccine include redness or soreness at the injection site, muscle pains, headache and fever. Blood is also drawn from the volunteers to assess the immune response to the vaccine, particularly the rise in antibodies and whether antibody levels are similar to those in people who have had the disease.

Phase 2 vaccine trials are similar to Phase 1 trials in terms of their focus on adverse events and immune response. Phase 2 trials, however, include hundreds of healthy volunteers who are more diverse to give a better indication of the safety and immune response in people likely to receive the vaccine in the future.

As Phase 1 and 2 trials involve relatively small numbers of people, they only give us information on vaccine side-effects that are very common (affecting more than 10 per cent of people) and common (affecting more than one per cent of people). Vaccine efficacy is only evaluated indirectly through measuring antibody levels.

It is only the Phase 3 trials that can provide a pivotal demonstration that a vaccine both works and is safe. Phase 3 vaccine trials are large randomized controlled trials conducted in the community. In these

trials people either receive the vaccine or a placebo. If fewer people who received the vaccine become sick compared to those who received placebo, we have direct evidence that the vaccine prevents disease.

A Phase 3 trial may involve tens of thousands of volunteers who receive the vaccine, further providing reliable information on adverse events, including those that are uncommon (affecting fewer than one per cent of people) or rare (affecting fewer than 0.1 per cent of people).

A vaccine may be licensed for use after a successful Phase 3 trial.

Of the 321 vaccines for COVID-19 in development, 27 are in Phase 1 or 2 trials and six are being evaluated in Phase 3 trials. In total, these trials seek to enrol 280,000 people from 34 countries. No COVID-19 vaccine has been licensed in Canada or the United States.

POST-APPROVAL SURVEILLANCE

Once a vaccine is licensed, continued monitoring for safety is critical. Reliable detection of very rare (affecting fewer than 0.01 per cent of people) vaccine adverse events requires information on hundreds of thousands of people. The Canadian Adverse Events Following Immunization Surveillance System monitors the safety of marketed vaccines, publishes reports regularly and identifies the need for further study should a safety issue be identified.

Provided that a COVID-19 vaccine successfully navigates human clinical trials and is subjected to continuing safety monitoring after it is licensed, we have good grounds to believe that the vaccine both works and is safe.

[the writer is Professor of medicine, epidemiology & biostatistics, and philosophy, Western University]

Colleges to remain closed in Nagaland

KOHIMA, SEPT 20 [NAGALANDPAGE]: Even as Nagaland Government in consonance with Union Ministry order has permitted partial reopening of schools for classes 9 to 12 as part of the Unlock-4 process from today, the higher and technical educational institutes will take more time to reopen.

Nagaland Chief Secretary Temjen Toy on September 18 had issued an order allowing the partial reopening of Class 9 to 12 on voluntary basis for taking guidance from their teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The order had also permitted reopening of the skill or entrepreneurship training institutions or centres and the preventive measures required to be taken for containing spread of COVID-19 in these institutions/centres.

Sources said though partial reopening of schools for classes 9 to 12 started today, many schools remain shut while those open also didn't have students as parents were also unwilling to send pupils due to COVID scare.

Meanwhile, interacting with media-persons here today, Minister for Higher & Technical Education, Tribal Affairs, Temjen Imna Along said that reopening of colleges and technical institutes at the present moment would be difficult.

Still four colleges in interior districts are being used as quarantine and COVID care centres, therefore immediate reopening of colleges would be difficult, he said.

Maintaining that management of

classrooms would be difficult in colleges as students would be coming from different places, he said "we do not want community transmission to happen from colleges".

However, he asserted that the Government would be working out strategies to reopen the colleges.

On other hand, Along said that reopening of technical institutions can be considered keeping in mind that the trainees stay in hostels. They can be called back and after taking all precautionary measures and strict adherence of SOPs, the candidates can be kept in hostels to reopen the institutes.

All educational institutions in the State had been closed since March 25 as precautionary measures in the fight against COVID-19 pandemic.

Centre rejects fresh demand for Nagas' flag, constitution

GUWAHATI, SEPT 21: The Government of India has reportedly rejected the NSCN (IM)'s fresh demand on Naga flag and constitution.

The Deccan Herald reported that the Government of India in its ongoing informal talks with NSCN (IM) has made it clear that Centre was not going to concede to their demand for a separate flag and constitution and now the ball is in their court to take call.

Asserting that the GoI was going to stick to its stand on which an agreement was made on October 31, 2019, the report citing security sources in the ministry of home affairs said talks with NSCN (IM) have already been completed on all the issues.

Pointing out that the GoI has assured them to keep the option open for talks on demand of separate flag and constitution even after



signing of the peace accord, security sources said that NSCN (IM) leadership has also been told categorically about the deadline of September to conclude the peace-process.

Admitting that a joint council meeting of the NSCN (IM) held at its Hebron camp in Dimapur recently reiterated their demand for a separate flag and constitution as to be the part of the final

settlement in the ongoing Naga peace talks with the Centre, security sources said that the issue came up for discussion in the ongoing informal talks with NSCN (IM) leadership through the officers of Intelligence Bureau but subsequently it was turned down.

The talks with NSCN (IM) had concluded on October 31, 2019 with an understanding that the issue of a separate

by underground groups and accusing them of extortion. It is significant that Ravi's letter came after reports of massive corruption and extortion started creating unrest in the civil society of Nagaland, said the report.

Though, now NSCN-IM has also claimed that the talks were running smoothly, in Nagaland demands for an early resolution have been growing from civil society organizations and tribal heads. All these bodies have also made it clear that a final agreement without a separate flag and constitution is acceptable to the public, stated the report.

The conglomerate of seven insurgent groups indigenous to Nagaland-the Naga National Political Group (NNPG) has already announced that they have concluded the peace-deal with the Centre and now prepared to sign the peace accord any day. (Agencies)

2 nonagenarian men defeat COVID-19 in Odisha

BHUBANESWAR, SEP 22 (PTI): Two nonagenarian COVID-19 patients have been cured of the highly infectious disease in Odisha, bringing cheers to the medical fraternity in the eastern state.

The two patients -- Satchidananda Mohanty and Dhirendranath Das -- both aged 91, were admitted to dedicated COVID-19 hospitals in Cuttack and Bhubaneswar respectively.

Both the men were admitted to the hospitals on September 5 after being diagnosed with the disease. They were discharged on Sunday night.

Mohanty, an eminent advocate in Kendrapara town, was also suffering from hypothyroid and neurological ailments. He was immediately shifted to the ICU after his admission to the hospital.

"We were worried about his condition as his

oxygen level had dropped a day after his admission. However, his condition improved gradually after we put him under oxygen support," a doctor who treated Mohanty said.

"I must thank Additional Chief Secretary, Health and Family Welfare, P K Mohapatra and National Health Mission, Odisha Director Shalini Pandit for making provision of extra care for elderly COVID-19 patients," Mohanty told PTI over the phone on Tuesday.

He also thanked Kendrapara District Magistrate-cum-Collector Samarth Verma and health personnel for their dedicated service to the patients.

"Doctors and other health personnel at the hospital were like my family members," Mohanty said.

His 60-year-old son Debdas, a type-II diabetes patient, also recovered from

COVID-19 after being treated at the same hospital.

The other nonagenarian patient, Dhirendranath Das, a former senior official with the Press Information Bureau and the All India Radio, was also shifted to the ICU.

Das had developed a breathing problem after contracting the disease.

A team of doctors including Dr Pradipta Kumar Patra, Dr Santosh Singh, Dr Asish Malla and Dr Arun Rath treated Das.

PPE-clade nurses had fed the patient as he was unable to eat by himself.

"While my father was being taken to the hospital, he had told us he would defeat coronavirus. It became a reality because of the relentless efforts of the doctors and the nurses," Das's daughter Debadatta said.

210 fresh cases take Arunachal's COVID-19 tally to 7,595

ITANAGAR, SEP 22 (PTI): Arunachal Pradesh's COVID-19 tally rose to 7,595 on Tuesday as 210 more people, including 13 security personnel, tested positive for the disease, a health department official said. The Capital Complex region reported the highest number of new cases at 101, followed by Changlang at 18, Pakke Kessang at 12, Lower Siang at 11 and West Siang at 10, State Surveillance Officer Dr Lobsang Jampa said.

Nine fresh cases each were detected in East Siang and Papumpare, eight in Tawang, seven in Longding, five in Upper Subansiri, three each in Upper Siang, West Kameng, Kurung Kumey and Namsai, two each in Leparada, Lower Subansiri and East Kameng and one each in Lower Dibang Valley and Anjaw districts, he said.

Barring 29, all are asymptomatic and have been shifted to COVID Care Centres, he said.

"Five Army men, three



Indian Reserve Battalion jawans, two Indo Tibetan Border Police personnel and three state police employees were among the new patients," the official said, adding that a health worker was also diagnosed with the disease.

At least 235 more people were cured of the infection and discharged from hospitals on Monday, taking the total number of recoveries to 5,643, Jampa said.

The recovery rate among the COVID-19 patients in the state stands at 74.29 per cent, he said.

Arunachal Pradesh now has 1,939 active coronavirus cases, while

13 patients have died.

A total of 3,350 people, including 466 security personnel, have been diagnosed with the disease since September 1, while 2,621 people have been cured of it during this period, the official said.

The Capital Complex region, comprising Itanagar, Naharlagun, Nirjuli and Banderdewa areas, has 830 active COVID-19 cases, followed by West Siang (170), Papumpare (165) and Changlang (138), Jampa said.

The state has so far tested over 2.25 lakh samples for COVID-19, including 2,899 on Monday, he added.



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VIDEO NEWS SECTION

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Climate of suspicion returns to Tour de France to dampen celebrations

JEREMY WHITTLW
PARIS, 22 SEPT [THEGUARDIAN]: The Tour de France peloton woke up with a hangover on Monday, not only from over-indulgence in the brasseries around the Champs Élysées, but also because of the headache caused by a growing anxiety looming over this year’s race.

The French media reported that public health officers had searched team hotel rooms in Méribel occupied by Nairo Quintana – a former Giro d’Italia and Vuelta a España winner – and his Arkea Samsic team, after stage 17. The team manager, Emmanuel Hubert, confirmed the search, but would not comment. Quintana finished 17th overall in the 2020 Tour.

A preliminary inquiry over suspicions of doping was subsequently opened by the public health department in Marseille. The prosecutor Dominique Laurens cited the “discovery of many health products including drugs and especially a method that can be qualified as doping”.

Nor was everyone in France in the mood to send Tadej Pogacar birthday greetings on Monday, as the new Tour de France champion celebrated turning 22, the morning after becoming the first Slovenian to head home from Paris with a yellow jersey.

Pogacar’s victory, founded on a storming time trial performance at La Planche des Belles



Filles, that topped off his strong riding in the Pyrenees and Alps, had both elements of shock and awe. The awe was based on how much time he was able to take back from a woeful Primoz Roglic and his Jumbo-Visma teammate, the former world time trial champion Tom Dumoulin, the shock on the worrying histories of some members of his management team.

Some, to borrow the phrase used by one sceptic, are, for now, keeping their hands by their sides. The main reason for that is the continuing presence of those with their own dark histories working within the engine rooms of leading teams, including Pogacar’s UAE Team Emirates.

The UAE Team Emirates operation is run by Mauro Gianetti, team principal and CEO. The Swiss former professional, who spent three days in a coma in 1998 after being taken to hospital during the Tour de Romandie, has been at the heart of a series of notorious

incidents over the past 25 years.

The most infamous would be the Saunier Duval scandal of 2008, when the Gianetti-managed team quit the Tour after their star rider Riccardo Riccò tested positive for a new generation EPO. Riccò was also fired, along with his teammate Leonardo Piepoli, and the sponsorship ended soon afterwards.

But neither the UCI nor ASO, the promoter of the Tour, could say they hadn’t been warned, given that the British professional David Millar, making his own comeback from a two-year doping ban, had written to both organisations expressing misgivings about Gianetti’s management, while riding for the team.

Gianetti and the Saunier Duval team manager, Matxin Fernández, later moved on to the Geox-TMC team, which included a rider called Juan José Cobo. The Spaniard had also raced for Gianetti at Saunier Duval. In 2011, to general surprise,

Cobo burst through the ranks to win the Vuelta a España at the expense of Chris Froome.

It took nearly a decade for Cobo to be finally stripped of that victory, to the benefit of Froome. The four-times Tour de France winner was recovering in July 2019 from his serious crash when he heard the news that Cobo had been found guilty of “a violation of the anti-doping rules [use of a banned substance] based on irregularities found in his Athlete Biological Passport in 2009 and 2011”.

On Monday, the scepticism towards Pogacar’s success was noted, but not dwelt on, in the pages of L’Équipe, the French sports newspaper owned by ASO. Gianetti’s management career, it said, had “often been tainted by doping scandals”, while Fernández was described as “dragging several ‘casseroles’ of doping cases”.

Pogacar responded to questions by saying: “I am too young to remember that era.” He told L’Équipe: “I

was 10 in 2008 and it’s strange to be talking about it because it goes against everything I believe in. I know that doping puts the health of athletes in danger, I’ve always been aware of that. We have nothing to hide today and I think that cycling, despite the climate of suspicion, has done a lot to fight doping. In truth it saddens me that people doubt my performances. My only defence is that I am happy with my conscience.”

The Tour director, Christian Prudhomme, shrugged off the scepticism. “We have carried our cross for many years,” he told Le Figaro. “In a way, it’s part of the game that some voices rise up, asking questions. I won’t be offended.”

Yet there were also signs during this Tour that the omertà, the law of silence that reached its peak during the Lance Armstrong years, may be creeping back. Direct questions on credibility and trust are now criticised by riders for “lacking respect” and even discouraged by others.

The move towards even greater restrictions on media access, essential to preserve sanitary “bubbles” during this Tour’s unique circumstances, has been welcomed by many teams and may remain, pandemic or not. Having somehow pulled off the Tour de Covid, the mentality within cycling’s bubble seems to mostly be cheer, clap and don’t ask questions.

KXIP co-owner Wadia calls for better umpiring standards, optimum use of technology in IPL



NEW DELHI, SEP 22 (PTI): Kings XI Punjab co-owner Ness Wadia wants the BCCI to ensure better umpiring standards and optimum use of technology in the IPL, following an umpiring howler which cost his team a match against Delhi Capitals.

Wadia expressed his views after KXIP appealed against on-field umpire Nitin Menon’s controversial ‘short run’ call at a crunch time of the game held on Sunday night in Dubai.

Before the match went into Super Over, the TV footage showed that square leg umpire Menon had erred in calling Chris Jordan for a ‘short run’ in the third ball of the 19th over, bowled by Kagiso Rabada.

The TV replays showed that Jordan’s bat was inside the crease when he completed the first run, starting from the non-striker’s end.

“It is exceedingly unfortunate that today with tremendous use of technology, we still do not use technology to ensure the total fairness and transparency in cricket game like several

other leagues across the world including EPL, NBA, etc,” Wadia said in a statement to PTI.

“I would request BCCI to ensure better umpiring and to ensure henceforth that technology is used to the maximum so as to ensure fairness and transparency in a game which is used across the best leagues in the world.”

The short run call was not reversed despite technological evidence that it was a wrong call. As per the IPL rules, the third umpire does not have a say in reversing the decisions except ‘no balls’ and ‘stumping’.

In the final over, Punjab needed 13 runs to win and Agarwal managed 12 runs in the first three balls.

If that one ‘short run’ was credited to their total, Punjab would have won with three balls to spare but they lost two wickets in the final two balls after a dot fourth ball and it spilled to a Super Over, which they lost.

“VAR (Video Assistant Referee) has become something which is used across the world. The game of yesterday in

question between Kings XI and Delhi had two umpiring mistakes which cost KXIP the game,” Wadia said.

“The first came in the first few overs of the match where a leg bye went for four. It was given as leg bye by the umpire but it was actually a wide ball. That one run would have helped Kings XI win the game versus losing.

“The second disastrous decision came at the end of the game in the last couple of overs, when a run was deemed as not being a run even though TV replays showed that it had been a run. Unfortunately, these two decisions cost Kings XI the game.”

Wadia hoped the BCCI will tweak the IPL rule book to ensure the incident is not repeated.

“I do hope that BCCI implements a system and process so that the other teams do not suffer the same plight as Kings XI did yesterday.

“If technology is not to be used for the fairness and transparency of the game and to ensure that it is equitable to all, then why use technology at all?” he asked.

Gabriel Jesus ensures Manchester City start with a win despite Wolves rally

BARNEY RONAY
WOLVERHAMPTON, 22 SEPT [THEGUARDIAN]: On a gripping night at Molineux Manchester City were, by turns, brilliant and brittle. Undercooked and depleted by injury, City were still good enough to come away with a 3-1 win against powerful opponents in their first game of the season, prompted by another masterclass from Kevin De Bruyne.

It might have been different. How Nuno Espirito Santo will wish his Wolves team had started with the level of aggression they showed in the second half. Or indeed that Adama Traoré had been instructed to abandon a diffident turn as a deep defensive wing-back and attack City’s obvious tender spot on the left flank.

At the end Pep Guardiola was a little sombre, praising the performance of his midfielders – particularly De Bruyne – but cautious too, and no doubt a little worn by a second half defensive rearguard. “Every training session I feel his commitment and right now he’s an important player for us – always will be,” Guardiola said.

“I’m very pleased with the performance and the way we played. All the team were really good, especially in the first half,” the City



manager added. “The period that we are in and the situation we’ve had in these last two weeks, I expect in some moments we would suffer, but in general we controlled the game.”

There has been little opportunity for Guardiola to refresh his team over the summer, although the distraction of trying to sign the greatest club footballer of all time clearly hasn’t helped. Here City were missing not just their outstanding cutting edge in Sergio Agüero, but the key figure of Aymeric Laporte at the back. In his absence Guardiola gave a debut to Nathan Aké, newest arrival in a four-man £190m defence that also included Benjamin Mendy, Kyle Walker and John Stones. Well, Pep has always been more of a midfielders man.

Molineux was another eerie, echoey Premier League ghost-ship at kick-off, those empty rows of gold and black extra-poignant given the rousing atmosphere the last time these two

teams met here. And in a way Wolves were both the worst possible opponent for City at this stage and also the most tactically interesting, a team geared to test how and to what degree City have fixed the problems that afflicted them last season.

Most notable of these was a weakness against opponents who break quickly; and also those who can keep the ball, take the game deep, and make City fret a little, losing themselves in their own passing rhythms.

It was notable here that City allowed Wolves to do neither in the first half. Fernandinho and Rodri provided a smothering central midfield pivot. Whatever Aké does from here he has already given City back their best central midfielder. Further forward the ball was funnelled with real urgency from flank to flank, with De Bruyne the great throbbing mobile brain at the heart of every passing sequence.

City were aided by

the spectacle of Traoré playing so deep in what was most of the time a five-man Wolves defence. Is this the best use of his supreme attacking drive? No doubt the nation’s left-backs would enthusiastically agree. But it was on that right side City made early inroads.

Raheem Sterling wriggled through on goal inside two minutes but took a heavy touch. And for a while City worried away at the Wolves defensive lines, keeping the ball, switching from flank to flank in search of an overload.

The breakthrough came on the other flank with 18 minutes gone. De Bruyne showed pretty much the complete midfield hand in that first half. Here he appeared briefly as a winger, sprinting down the right channel then drawing a foul as Romain Saïss slid in, taking both his feet.

It was a hare-brained moment from the left-sided centre back. De Bruyne stepped up and smashed the penalty into the corner. City kept on going, moving Wolves around the pitch with a calm severity, waiting for the stitches to come apart. The second goal arrived on 32 minutes from a beautiful team move.

This time it came down the left. Gabriel Jesus dropped deep and played a neat lay-off to De

Bruyne. He slid the ball into the path of Sterling’s run. Sterling’s pull-back found Phil Foden in front of goal, with time to place his shot into an unguarded net.

By half-time City had taken 68% possession and reduced the home team to an extra in their own game of pass and move. At which point Wolves came back out transformed, playing suddenly without fear. Pushed further up the pitch, Traoré finally got away, brushing Mendy aside like a man sashaying through a set of saloon bar doors, and finding Daniel Podence in the centre. He turned and smacked a shot just past the post. Another sortie down the right saw Rúben Neves’s shot kicked off the line by Kyle Walker.

Podence hared through again on goal but scooped a showy finish on to the roof of the net. With 77 minutes gone Fábio Silva came on for his league debut. And within 60 seconds Raúl Jiménez had made it 2-1, heading past Ederson’s left hand after Podence had nutmegged De Bruyne and floated a cross to the near post, a wonderful piece of assist-work.

Wolves pressed hard. City held on. At the death Jesus made it 3-1 with a deflected finish to seal a fine win, albeit one shot through with its own notes of caution.

BEN FISHER AND DAVID HYTNER

TOTTENHAM, 22 SEPT [THEGUARDIAN]: The majority of Leyton Orient’s first team squad have tested positive for Covid-19, leading to the expectation that their Carabao Cup game at home to Tottenham on Tuesday will be called off, with a decision set for the morning, and serious questions being asked about the biosecurity of League Two.

The testing of players is not mandatory in the English Football League – as it is in the Premier League – with the authorities content to insist on stringent hygiene measures and work-place social distancing. They say that the evidence shows there is a minimal risk of transition of the virus via training and playing outdoors.

Spurs, though, wanted a degree of reassurance before the third-round tie and they paid for Orient’s first-team squad to be tested after the 2-2 draw at home to Mansfield on Saturday. The huge number of positive results – understood to be well into double figures – have shocked the east London club, with Orient announcing on Monday lunchtime that they had closed their stadium and made arrangements to further notice.

The Guardian understands that

Mansfield plan to lodge a formal complaint with the EFL, arguing that Orient players should have been tested before Saturday’s match given their manager, Ross Embleton, revealed there were a “number of people suffering with illnesses” in his pre-match press conference.

At the time Embleton stressed it was “not a Covid issue for any of us to worry about” and after the game he revealed that as many as “nine players” were struggling to play because of a “bug”. Orient’s doctor and head physio conducted regular medical checks and are understood to have felt comfortable the symptoms reported by players were unrelated to Covid-19 until last Friday, when it became apparent a couple of players were suffering from symptoms linked to the virus. As a precaution those players were not involved against Mansfield; they are thought to be among the positive tests.

Orient say they would have paid for tests before the Spurs tie and have since tested all behind-the-scenes staff, including stadium personnel. Mansfield will test players and staff in the next 24 hours and Plymouth, who played Orient last Tuesday, have also made arrangements to undertake precautionary testing, although no players

or staff have reported Covid symptoms. It is understood some Orient players played against Plymouth despite not feeling 100%.

EFL clubs did have to test before returning to pre-season training, at its midway point and before their first competitive games. Players also have to be tested on their return from international duty. The league is adamant compulsory testing was removed not because of prohibitive costs but on the strength of medical evidence after more than 99% of tests following last season’s restart were negative.

Orient said in a statement they had notified Mansfield, Plymouth and Oldham – whom they played the previous Saturday – before they went public with the news of their positive tests. The implications, given the high number of positives, are hugely worrying for the league.

Orient added that the “priority is the health and well-being of players and staff. Those who have tested positive will now strictly follow government self-isolation guidelines.”

What to do with the cup tie against Spurs was discussed throughout Monday with both clubs, the EFL, Public Health England and the director for public health in Waltham Forest, the local authority, all involved.

Australia state leader welcomes Israeli extradition ruling

CANBERRA, SEP 22 (AP): An Australian state leader on Tuesday described an Israeli court decision to extradite a former teacher wanted in Australia on charges of molesting children as a victory for abuse victims. Daniel Andrews is premier of Victoria state where Malka Leifer is accused of molesting three sisters Dassi Erlich, Nicole Meyer and Elly Sapper while they were students at a Melbourne ultra-Orthodox school. Andrews welcomed a Jerusalem District Court ruling on Monday that Leifer could be extradited to Australia to stand trial for 74 charges of child sex abuse, potentially paving the way for the Israeli citizen to stand

trial in Victoria after a six-year legal battle.

This is a very, a very significant day for victims of child sexual abuse across our entire state, and to come, as it does, so close to Jewish New Year, can I say Shanah Tovah to Dassi Erlich and her sisters, Andrews said, using a Hebrew New Year greeting.

They're heroes. The courage, the grace, and the dignity of those Victorians is quite amazing. Quite amazing, Andrews said.

This is a really, really good outcome for victims of child sexual abuse. And to Dassi and her family, to her sisters and extended family, they have our praise.

We admire them, their strength is an inspiration, he added.

Andrews could not say if a trial would be expedited if Leifer returned to Melbourne, where the court system has been disrupted by a pandemic lockdown.

Erlick described the Israeli court decision as a huge, huge moment.

Nine years (have passed) since we gave our police statement, Erlick told Australian Broadcasting Corp.

We never imagined at the time how long it would take and how big this moment would be, but we are finally here, she added.

Leifer, a former educator, has been

fighting extradition from Israel since 2014. Leifer maintains her innocence and the battle surrounding her extradition has strained relations between Israel and Australia.

Earlier this month, Israel's Supreme Court rejected an appeal by Leifer's attorney over a Jerusalem court's ruling that she was mentally fit to stand trial, saying it was putting an end to the saga that has been drawn out for many years.

On Monday, the Jerusalem District Court ruled that Leifer could be extradited. The formal extradition now requires an order by Israel's justice minister.

Leifer's attorneys

said they would appeal an extradition order to Israel's Supreme Court, saying it would be a political decision.

Critics, including Leifer's alleged victims, have accused Israeli authorities of dragging out the case for far too long.

There are said to be victims other than the three sisters.

The Associated Press does not usually identify alleged victims of sexual abuse, but the sisters have spoken publicly about their allegations against Leifer.

As accusations surfaced in 2008, Israeli-born Leifer left the school and returned to Israel, where she has lived since.

Tokyo needs to convince sponsors Olympics will really happen

TOKYO (AP): The only thing more difficult than staging next year's Tokyo Olympics in a pandemic might be convincing sponsors to keep their billions of dollars on board in the midst of economic turbulence and skepticism.

To make the point this week, IOC President Thomas Bach will join a number of Japanese government and city officials, local organizers and other top International Olympic Committee leaders in repeating a message they've failed to convey forcefully enough to deep-pocketed sponsors: Trust us, the Tokyo Olympics will open on July 23, 2021.

Bach and IOC vice president John Coates — who oversees Tokyo preparations — are expected to speak remotely to Japanese officials as they meet on Thursday and Friday. The agenda includes plotting countermeasures against COVID-19: quarantines, rules for athletes entering the country, testing, vaccines and the presence or absence of fans.

Few firm details are expected until late in the year or early in 2021, which accounts for the uncertainty.

The subtext is assuring sponsors that the Olympics will happen. Tokyo organizing committee CEO Toshio Muto has acknowledged the word's not getting out.

"The fact the Olympics are going to take place — the fact itself — is not fully distributed to the public," Muto, speaking in Japanese, said last week. "People need to be more convinced that, yes, the Olympics will be taking place for sure."

A former deputy governor of the Bank of Japan, Muto has been vague about how many domestic sponsors are

renewing their contracts. He says of the 68 sponsors: "They are all positive."

"We're still in the middle of negotiations. We're not in the phase of speaking about any concrete results," he said.

Surveys have shown a majority of Japanese companies and the public don't think the Olympics will happen next year — or should happen. A poll published in June by Japanese broadcaster NHK said two-thirds of sponsors were undecided about extending for another year.

Keeping domestic sponsors on board is financially critical. Recruited by the giant Japanese advertising agency Dentsu Inc., domestic sponsors have paid a record \$3.3 billion — at least twice any previous Olympics — to the local organizing committee. This is over and above a dozen permanent Olympic sponsors who have signed long-term with the IOC. Some also have individual contracts with Tokyo organizers.

John Grady, who teaches sports law at the University of South Carolina, said the postponement has "created countless problems and ripple effects."

"With the uncertainty of the Tokyo Games occurring with few or limited fans, local sponsors would be right to be cautious in investing more sponsorship dollars if they cannot reach fans on site," Grady wrote in an email to The Associated Press. "The lack of a wider international fan base that is typical at an Olympics would shrink the global audience who has access to seeing local sponsors' activation efforts around Olympic venues in the host city."

Despite the uncertainty, it will be difficult for sponsors to step away in a country where conformity and teamwork are valued and national loyalty could be called into question.

Japan also has a long history of supporting the Olympics, and many in decision-making roles recall fondly the positive impact of the 1964 Tokyo Games, which showed the country's rebirth just 19 years after defeat in World War II.

"There's a strong underlying narrative that this event is really good for the country," Robin Kietlinski, who teaches and researches Japanese sports and history at LaGuardia Community College in New York, said in an interview with the AP.

"I think there is almost historic pressure to have it go smoothly and to benefit Japan in some way," she added. "Whether that's financially, or whether that is getting their companies seen. There is something, too, about the rising China and — especially compared to 1964 — how Japan is somewhat in the shadow of this huge economy next door."

Japanese organizers are saying little about how 15,400 Olympic and Paralympic athletes, staff and officials will be safe in Tokyo.

"The environment, when it comes to Tokyo, will be different than from the environment today," Bach said this month. "We only do not know which way."

Bach has said that even if rapid tests and a vaccine were available, they will not be the "silver bullet."

A study last week from the University of Oxford showed Tokyo to be the most expensive Summer Olympics dating from 1960. And the meter is still running.

Duterte extends virus calamity status by a year

MANILA, PHILIPPINES (AP): President Rodrigo Duterte says he has extended a state of calamity in the entire Philippines by a year to allow the government to draw emergency funds faster to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and harness the police and military to maintain law and order.

Duterte first placed the country under a state of calamity in March when the number of confirmed infections was approaching 200 with about a dozen deaths. The country now has more than 290,000 confirmed cases, the highest in Southeast Asia, with nearly 5,000 deaths.

The tough-talking president lashed anew at critics in his televised remarks late Monday for accusing his administration of not doing enough to contain the outbreak.

"What 'enough' do you want? There are hospitals, beds and funeral parlors. Everything is there," Duterte said, specifying Vice President Leni Robredo, who leads the opposition, in his tirade.

"You know Leni, if you want, if you really want to do away with COVID, let's spray the Philippines or Manila over with pesticide to kill all. ... The only thing that we can do, really, is to wear a mask,



wear a face mask, and that's it and wait for the vaccine," Duterte said in his southern hometown in Davao city.

The state of calamity in place until September 2021 will be used mainly to draw emergency funds quickly anywhere in the country. Officials can also control the prices of basic commodities like rice and cooking oil.

Quarantine restrictions such as social distancing remain as they are now.

Duterte also said a ban on the deployment of Filipino nurses, doctors and other health workers with finalized work contracts abroad has been lifted. Those without signed contracts remain prohibited from leaving the country to ensure an adequate supply of medical workers amid the

outbreak.

The Philippines is a leading source of global labor, including medical personnel.

In other developments in the Asia-Pacific region:

— Health officials say India will have to exercise caution during its upcoming festive season. Autumn is the festival season in many parts of India, a nation where religious celebrations and rituals are a big part of peoples' lives. October includes Diwali, a festival of lights celebrated by Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and others. Dr. V.K Paul, who heads a coronavirus taskforce, said Indians need to exercise physical distancing and wear masks while celebrating. He said people congregating during festivals provides the perfect

conditions for the virus to spread. The next two to three months will be critical for India, he said. India has been forced to relax virus restrictions despite rising cases due to its devastated economy, which contracted nearly 24% in the second quarter. A harsh nationwide lockdown ordered by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 24 caused a severe economic crisis. The festive period is also deeply linked to the economy, with businesses hoping that sales will pick up. India announced more than 75,000 new coronavirus cases on Tuesday along with 1,053 more deaths, taking total fatalities to 88,935.

— South Korea has added 61 coronavirus cases, its lowest daily increase since mid-

Trump threatens to cut off TikTok if deal doesn't go through

WASHINGTON, SEP 22 (PTI): US President Donald Trump has threatened to cut off TikTok if the popular Chinese video sharing app's tentative deal with two American companies Walmart and Oracle does not go through.

Trump has for weeks threatened to ban TikTok, which is owned by China's ByteDance, on national security grounds unless an American company takes control of its US operations. TikTok has roughly 100 million users in the US, and Trump says the app gives China access to the personal data of Americans.

Trump's latest remark came a day after he announced a possible deal between Oracle and Walmart to share the US

operations of TikTok, which was placed on a ban list due to security concerns.

That's working its way through. I've given a preliminary okay, the president told reporters at the White House on Monday

They will work -- they're two great companies -- Oracle and Walmart. (Oracle CEO) Larry Ellison is a great genius at that kind of thing. The technology is incredible.

So if we can save it, we'll save it. And if we can't, we'll cut it off. But they have (a) preliminary (deal). We'll see what they can do. We have to have total security. That's the only thing -- very important. We have to have total security,

Trump said in response to a question.

Meanwhile, House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy praised Trump for his move on TikTok.

He is standing up and keeping us safer by not allowing China to spy on Americans through their devices of TikTok and others, keeping the ability of Americans to use it, but keeping you safe, he told Fox News.

White House Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany said that the US is working through the deal.

But rest assured that this president is putting the safety of the American people first. The Chinese Communist Party having access to the data of millions of Americans is not a tenable situation. But

I'll leave it to him to announce exactly what that deal looks like, she said.

The proposed deal of TikTok with Oracle and Walmart mandates the creation of a new American company -- incorporated in Texas -- and the prospect of 25,000 new jobs. Further, TikTok will give USD 5 billion to fund the education of American youths.

The US last week issued orders to ban popular Chinese social media apps - TikTok and WeChat - to safeguard national security. The ban on downloading TikTok, originally scheduled to take effect on Sunday, was postponed to September 27, according to the US Department of Commerce.

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SummitTIMES

Kevin Hart inks new multi-platform deal with SiriusXM

LOS ANGELES (AP): Kevin Hart is bringing more of his funny back to SiriusXM.

The satellite radio company announced on Tuesday a new multi-platform deal with Hart and his comedy network Laugh Out Loud. The superstar comedian-actor will host new regular and live programs on his channel, Laugh Out Loud Radio, while expanding additional comedic programming that includes radio shows, podcasts and on-demand video.

Hart said the deal with SiriusXM will give him more creative control. He said the new programs will enable him to provide more “real, raw and authentic conversations.”

“That’s our priority,” said Hart, who launched LOL three years ago. His radio show “Straight From The Hart” debuted on Pandora through SiriusXM last year. “If we can continue to engage at a very high level, being ourselves and being true to who we are, the success is endless.”

As part of the deal, Hart will interview top comedians on his new regular show. He will also host more live editions of his bi-weekly program with his longtime friends called the Plastic Cup Boyz, who



include Will “Spank” Horton, Na’im Lynn, Joey Wells, Harry Ratchford and Wayne Brown.

“We’re just a group of guys that are opinionated,” Hart said. “Our views mesh sometimes, and they don’t. But having the conversations and talking about the topics that most are afraid of is where we basically strive.”

Hart called working alongside the Plastic Cup Boyz a bonus.

“This is about giving my team a chance to shine, giving my team a chance to grow,” he said. “The men that they all have grown into and

become, it’s dope to see, myself included. As a group, we’ve shared so much and done so much. So to give people a bird’s eye view into our world, our life and conversations that we normally have daily, I think it’s special.”

Scott Greenstein, SiriusXM’s president and CCO, said he believes the collaboration with Hart can create a “bold vision of what comedy should be in the audio world.”

“When Kevin does something, he goes all in, and so we’re absolutely thrilled to enter this exciting new chapter with such a massive talent,” Greenstein said.

Joel Edgerton to headline ‘Florida Man’ adaptation

LOS ANGELES, SEP 22 (PTI): Actor Joel Edgerton will play the lead role in the series adaptation of Tom Cooper’s novel “Florida Man”.

The actor, who has featured in movies such as “Warrior”, “Zero Dark Thirty”, “The Great Gatsby” and “The King”, will also serve as executive producer on the project, reported Deadline.

The adaptation will be penned by Graham Gordy. It hails from Anonymous Content.

“Florida Man”, which was published by Penguin Random House in July this year, is a darkly comedic generation-spanning story about how a man decides to live his life, and how despite staying landlocked and stubbornly in one place, the world nevertheless comes to him.

Tiffany Haddish joins Nicolas Cage in The Unbearable Weight of Massive Talent



LOS ANGELES, SEP 22 (PTI): Actor Tiffany Haddish has boarded the cast of Nicolas Cage-starrer action-comedy The Unbearable Weight of Massive Talent.

The Lionsgate production, which also features Pedro Pascal and Sharon Horgan, will see Cage playing a fictionalized version of himself who accepts a USD 1 million offer to attend the birthday of a super fan (Pascal).

But when things take an unpleasant turn, Cage is forced to re-live his most iconic on-screen characters in order to save himself and his loved ones.

Haddish will portray an “eccentric” rogue government agent who forces Cage to go undercover to bring down one of the largest criminal organisations in Europe. Horgan will essay the role of Cage’s ex-wife.

Tom Gormican will direct the film from a screenplay he co-wrote with and Kevin Etten.

The film is expected to go into production next month with makers eyeing a March 2021 release.

Zarina Wahab discharged from hospital after testing positive for COVID-19



MUMBAI, SEP 22 (PTI): Veteran actor Zarina Wahab was discharged from a city hospital on Sunday, five days after she tested positive for coronavirus, according to Dr Jalil Parkar.

The 61-year-old actor, best known for films “Chitchor”, “Gharonda”, “My Name is Khan” and “Dil Dhadakne Do”, was admitted to Lilavati Hospital last week after complaints of fever and breathlessness.

“She was admitted last week, around September 14-15. She was COVID-19 positive. She had fever, breathlessness. I gave her all the treatment and after five days she became well and went home. She was discharged on Sunday,” Dr Jalil Parkar, who treated Wahab, told PTI.

When asked if the actor had tested negative for the virus, Parkar said doctors can discharge patients if they’re recovering from COVID-19.

“We don’t need COVID negativity now. Those were the norms earlier. We can send them home. Even if they’re positive, you need to be isolated for 14 days from the first day of being COVID-19 positive. That way, she was fine and so we sent her home,” he added.

Wahab, apart from featuring in Hindi films, has worked extensively in Malayalam, Telugu and Tamil cinema.

She was last seen on the big screen in Varun Dhawan-Shraddha Kapoor starrer “Street Dancer 3D”, which released earlier this year.



TOTALLY GAGA! The music icon, Lady Gaga steps out looking super cool after some shopping in The Big Apple.

Natasha Lyonne, Alia Shawkat to develop Amazon series on Iraqi immigrants

LOS ANGELES, SEP 22 (PTI): Actors Alia Shawkat and Natasha Lyonne are developing a series titled The Desert People for Amazon.

The series will follow an Iraqi immigrant family running a gentleman’s club in Palm Springs, California.

Shawkat will star in, write and executive produce the series along with Lyonne, reported Variety.

The 31-year-old actor will play the family’s elder daughter who is trying to come to terms with her sexuality and identity as a first generation American.



Maya Rudolph, Danielle Renfrew Behrens, and Dianne McGunigle are also serving as executive producers on the half-hour series.

Lyonne’s Animal Pictures is currently under a first-look deal at Amazon. The banner is also developing the animated comedy The Hospital for the studio.

ARIES:

They say everything happens at the right time and in the right place, and you are beginning to see proof of your own manifesting power in your outer reality. Become aware of the opportunities you are attracting, dear Aries. There is a good chance your higher self has pulled a few strings on your behalf. Remember, fortune favours the brave. So, don’t be afraid to take a risk or to step out of your comfort zone. Realising your highest potential is going to a big theme for you in the months to come.

TAURUS:

You look exhausted, Taurus, and that weariness isn’t going to go anywhere until you do something about it. Revitalising on a mind, body, and soul level is an important theme for you right now. Keep your to-do list aside and ask yourself the question, “What do I need to do for myself right now?” In moments of deep contemplation, you will find your answers. Remember, nature is the best healer. Give yourself the permission to venture into the wild and the unknown, knowing that you will return feeling more optimistic about your surroundings.

GEMINI:

The Universe works in mysterious ways, providing us with the help, assistance, and guidance we need at the precise moment that we are in need of it. Become aware of the signs and symbols around you. They are revealing to you your soul’s purpose. Consciously connecting with Source energy is also going to be a big theme. Remember, we all have our own ways of experiencing transcendence. What works for one person, may not work for the other. Word for the wise: find your own unique method to raise your vibrations.

CANCER:

The past few months have been a time of deep inner contemplation. A time of letting go of the old and meeting your true self. Releasing yourself from past trauma has been anything but easy. You found the courage required to integrate your shadows anyway. What the days ahead will bring forth: clarity on your mission and your purpose. The more you connect with your deep inner knowing, the more clarity you will receive from your ancestors and your guides.

LEO:

The past few months have been anything but easy. You may have felt like everything is being taken away from you. Has it really, though? Trust your inner guidance that’s saying you are making space for a new dawn. On the cards for you this week: a sudden turn of fortune. Trust that the abundance you have been working towards will find its way into your life unexpectedly, along with fulfilling opportunities

VIRGO:

You’re on the right track, Virgo, one that’s helping you fulfil your mission and purpose. Channel your warrior spirit and continue walking the path armed with courage. You will receive the fruits of your labour in due course of time. For now, focus on strengthening the foundation. Those on a yogic journey will find that grounding practices and asanas are especially beneficial at this time. Not a fan of movement meditation? Consider walking barefoot in the park in order to connect with the element of Earth.

LIBRA:

Tranquility promises to be a constant in your world, Libra,

along with the wisdom required to make peace where there has been war. The compassion to be receptive to the other side will make all the difference. So listen with an open heart and vow to leave your judgements at the doorstep. Connecting with the element of water will also invoke a sense of calm in the midst of this storm. Consider a ritualistic bath (if you don’t live near a natural body of water) or meditating with a blue-hued crystal such as aquamarine, Larimar or turquoise.

SCORPIO:

The cards are urging you to reconsider your relationship with your body. Do you believe that a workout has to be punishing in order to be effective, or that you need to count every calorie to a level that’s borderline obsessive? Consider the art of moderation, Scorpio. Resist nothing. Be mindful of everything. Oh, and while you’re at it, allow yourself a simple treat! PS: a warm cup of cocoa with a bit of sea salt and honey sounds like just the indulgence you need today.

SAGITTARIUS:

There are things that have helped you reach the epitome of success, and then there are things that made you realise what rock bottom is made of. However, no experience is inherently good or bad. Each of them played a significant role in making you the person you are today. So, instead of looking outside for answers, look within and assimilate the learnings. This will help you tap into your own reservoir of wisdom and make decisions that are in alignment with your greatest good.

CAPRICORN:

There are choices that helped you emerge victorious, and then there are choices that made you question your abilities endlessly. But, if you look at your life from a higher perspective, you will realise, no decision is good or bad. Each of them played a significant role in making you the person you are now. Today, instead of looking outside for answers, turn inwards and review your life story. This will give you clarity on your mission and purpose. Given that you are at an important juncture, making the right decisions will help pave the way for success.

AQUARIUS:

It’s true that movement is essential for the circulation of chi through the energy pathways of the body, but who says workouts have to be punishing in order to be effective? The cards are urging you to examine your relationship with both, your vessel and physical activity. If you’ve been pushing yourself to your limits, bring gentleness into the equation. Just for today, consider engaging in an activity that your body enjoys—swimming or dance movement therapy, for instance. When it comes to your diet, practice moderation. Resist nothing.

PISCES:

Take a moment to examine your dreams—your wildest and most outrageous dreams. Do you believe you are capable of manifesting them in your reality, or fear the outcome of creating your best life? It’s time to break past the mental prison and align yourself with the life you were always meant to live. Spirit is pulling more than a few strings on your behalf. Work with, rather than against, the energy of miracles.