



**DAISY EDGAR-JONES TO STAR IN  
'WHERE THE CRAWDADS SING'**  
*pg 08*

**IN THESE TIMES OF TALL  
CLAIMS**  
*pg 04*

**'TERMINATOR 3'  
DIRECTOR JONATHAN  
MOSTOW TO HELM  
REFUGEE THRILLER**  
*pg 08*



# SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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## India records 55,839 new COVID-19 infections, 702 deaths

**NEW DELHI, OCT 22 (PTI):** The number of coronavirus infections reported in a span of 24 hours remained below 60,000 for the fourth consecutive day on Thursday as India's caseload went past 77 lakh, while recoveries have crossed 68 lakh, according to data updated by the Union Health Ministry.

The COVID-19 caseload mounted to 77,06,946 with 55,839 new infections being reported in a day, while the death toll climbed to 1,16,616 with 702 more fatalities, the data updated at 8 am showed.

A total of 68,74,518 people have recuperated from the disease so far pushing the national recovery rate to 89.20 per cent, while the case fatality rate stood at 1.51 per cent.

The active cases of coronavirus infection remained below eight lakh for the sixth consecutive day.

There are 7,15,812 active cases of coronavirus infection in the country which accounts for 9.29 per cent of the total caseload, the data stated.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 230 lakh on August 23 and 40 lakh on September 5. It went past 50 lakh on September 16, 760 lakh on September 28 and crossed 70 lakh on October 11.

According to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), a cumulative total of 9,86,70,363 samples have been tested up to October 21, of which 14,69,984 were tested on Wednesday.

## Govt restores all existing visas, barring electronic, tourist and medical categories



**NEW DELHI, OCT 22 (PTI):** The government on Thursday decided to restore with immediate effect all existing visas, except electronic, tourist and medical categories, almost eight months after their suspension following the coronavirus outbreak and subsequent imposition of a nationwide lockdown.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) also announced giving permission to all Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) and Person of Indian Origin (PIO) card holders and all other foreign nationals to visit India for any purpose, except on a tourist visa.

The ministry said in a statement that in view of the situation arising out of the COVID-19 pandemic, the government had taken a series of steps to curtail the inward and outward movement of international passengers since February, 2020.

The government has now decided to make a graded relaxation in visa and travel restrictions for more categories of foreign nationals and Indian nationals who wish to enter or leave

India. Under this graded relaxation, the government has decided to restore with immediate effect all existing visas, except electronic visa, tourist visa and medical visa, the statement said.

If the validity of such visas has expired, fresh visas of appropriate categories can be obtained from Indian mission or post concerned. Foreign nationals intending to visit India for medical treatment can apply afresh for a medical visa, including for their medical attendants.

Therefore, this decision will enable foreign nationals to come to India for various purposes such as business, conferences, employment, studies, research, medical purposes etc.

The government has also decided to permit all OCI and PIO card holders and all other foreign nationals intending to visit India for any purpose, except on a tourist visa, to enter by air or water routes through

authorised airports and seaport immigration check posts.

This includes flights operated under 'Vande Bharat' mission, air transport bubble arrangements or by any non-scheduled commercial flights as allowed by the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

All such travellers will, however, have to strictly adhere to the guidelines of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare regarding quarantine and other health / COVID-19 matters.

While the restrictions on visas were imposed following the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic in February, commercial flight operations were suspended when the nationwide lockdown came into effect on March 25.

However, the government has been allowing limited operations of Air India flights under the 'Vande Bharat' mission for certain categories OCI and PIO card holders and those Indians who were stuck due to COVID-19 outbreak since June.

## TN's COVID-19 tally breaches seven lakh mark

**CHENNAI, OCT 22 (PTI):** Tamil Nadu on Thursday became the fourth state in the country to cross seven lakh coronavirus cases with 3,077 new infections while the death toll touched 10,825 with 45 more fatalities.

While the tally of positive cases stood at 7,00,193, the state capital accounted for 1,93,299, a bulletin said. Reflecting the declining trend, it has taken 21 days for the

state to register the last one lakh cases as against the 17 days it took to climb from five lakh to six lakh cases.

Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka are the other three states with a caseload of over seven lakh.

A 91-year old man was among those who succumbed to the virus on Thursday and 43 had co-morbidities.

The toll in Chennai stood at 3,569 while the infection count touched

at 1,93,366.

The fresh cases included Chennai's 833, Coimbatore 285 and Chengelpet 193.

Recoveries continued to outnumber new cases and with 4,314 patients getting discharged from various hospitals, 6,55,170 people have got cured till date and the active cases were 34,198.

As many as 81,259 samples were tested, taking the total specimens examined to 92,75,108.

## 49 new cases take Sikkim's COVID tally to 3,727

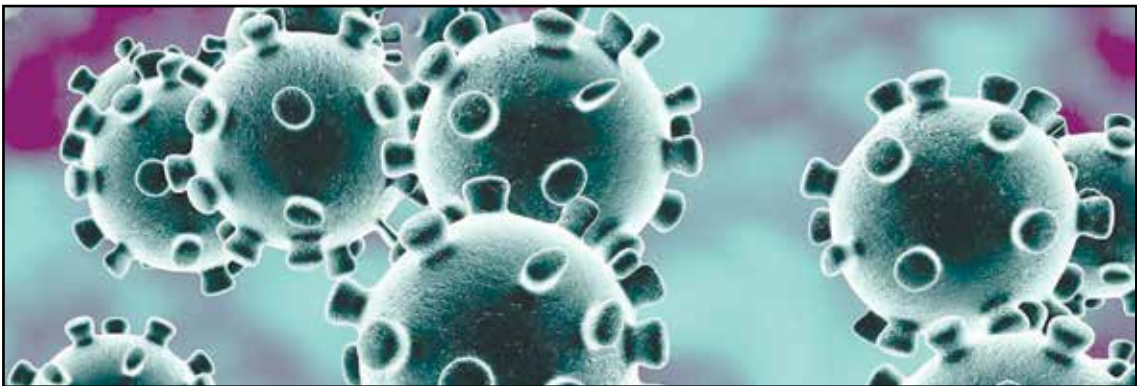
**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 22 OCT:**

Forty-nine fresh cases of novel coronavirus took the number of COVID-19 cases detected in Sikkim thus far to 3,727 on Thursday. Of these, 12 were symptomatic enough to require hospitalization while the rest have been directed to undergo isolation at their respective homes.

Meanwhile, 48 more patients were discharged from isolation facilities on Wednesday to further improve the figure of discharged patients to 3,328. With these figures, there are now 254 active cases of novel coronavirus in the State, of whom 130 are in home isolation and 124 in facility quarantine. Three patients are currently in the ICU facility at STNM Hospital.

Tadong and Deorali in Gangtok posted among the higher numbers today with seven new cases, 3 via RTPCR and 4 through RAT, being reported from "near police outpost" in Deorali. Tadong meanwhile, in the spread from 6th Mile to Daragaon reported 12 cases.

Providing a more detailed break-up of the new cases, Health Department State IEC Officer, Sonam G Bhutia, informed that of the 49 new cases, 43 were reported from East District, four in South District and two from



Mangan in North Sikkim.

While 26 cases were found through RT-PCR testing of 177 sample, two cases were detected in TruNat testing of 13 samples and 21 via rapid antigen testing of 47 samples.

Among the new cases are an ambulance driver and another staff member of STNM Hospital, both of whom were working from quarantine facilities. A patient admitted in the cardiology wing of STNM Hospital has also tested positive for COVID-19.

Likewise, three persons from near police out-post at Deorali, two from the containment zone in Tadong, one from Sichey, two from Singtam, one from Gurung Gaon near Manbir Colony, two from Ranka, one from near Burtuk School, one from Manbir Colony, two from near 2nd Mile Army Camp in Upper Chandmari, one staff of Samman Bhawan [currently in containment zone], one from

Thapa Golai in Lower Sichey and one from 6th Mile Tadong in East District and three from Melli-Paiyong in South District were also found positive for COVID-19 in RT-PCR testing.

Mr Bhutia informed that a 67-year-old male from 6th Mile-Tadong and another 44-year-old male from Tadong, who have tested positive for COVID-19 in RT-PCR screening, could not be contacted on phone numbers provided by them. He has appealed them to immediately contact the concerned authorities.

On the same, he urged people to provide proper address when they are tested for COVID-19 to ensure that delay in communicating the test results does not delay medical attention for the patients or expose people unknowingly to the virus.

A patient admitted to the emergency ward of STNM Hospital and another person from Sirwani were found

positive for COVID-19 in TruNat testing.

As for detection through Rapid Antigen Testing, Mr Bhutia mentioned that two persons from Tadong, one from near Mandir Dara in Nimthang, one from near Tambutar in Ranipool one from above Goskhan in Chandmari, four from near the police outpost in Deorali, one from PG hostel above CRH in 5th Mile Tadong, one from above VIP colony in 5th Mile Tadong, one from near Greendale School and one from MG Marg were found COVID-19 positive.

Similarly, one person from Sikkim Milk quarters at Lumsey, Tadong, one from Ralap, one from Baluwatar NHPC and one from near CIPLA in Kumrek in East District, one person from Nandugaon in South District and one from Mangan and one from Pentok in North District were also tested positive for COVID-19 in the RAT.

## HC notice to Assam govt over media fellowship

**GUWAHATI, OCT 22 (PTI):** The Gauhati High Court has issued a notice to the Assam government over the exclusion of online media from its 'Media Fellowship' for 2020-21 and said the selection of candidates shall be subject to further orders.

Hearing a writ petition by senior journalist Anirban Roy, Justice Suman Shyam on Wednesday issued a notice of the motion, returnable on November 16.

The petitioner urged the court to allow journalists from online media houses to apply provisionally for the fellowship, the last date of which has been fixed on October 27, as interim relief.

"At this stage, I am not inclined to allow the said prayer. It is, however, made clear that the selection of candidate for conferring fellowship, if any,

made in the meantime, shall be subject to further orders that may be passed in this writ petition," the court said.

The government has now extended the deadline to November 3 in view of a fewer applications this time, a senior official of the Information and Public Relations Department said.

Issuing a corrigendum on September 18, the Information and Public Relations Department Secretary N G Sonowal excluded "Online Media" from the eligibility criteria of the 'Media Fellowship' as the said format is not a part of the existing advertisement policy.

The petition made the Assam government, represented by the Additional Chief Secretary of Information and Public Relations Department, and the Secretary of the department as

respondents in the case.

The petitioner stated in his petition that the corrigendum to deprive media fellowship to the online media journalists is illegal and not maintainable in law because the fellowship has no relation with the advertisement policy, 2008.

"The government action in issuing the corrigendum is discriminatory and arbitrary and as such the same is liable to be quashed and set aside," it added.

The petition also refuted the government's claim in the corrigendum and stated that the statement of the Advertisement Policy, 2008, not including online media or web portal is false and the department has been authorised to issue advertisements in all other media in addition to print media.

It further pointed out that

the government advertised the fellowship "only in the internet media" like Facebook and Twitter for wider dissemination, but on the other hand depriving the online journalists.

"...state government has shown a partisan attitude towards the online media/web portal journalists. They have not been given equal opportunities and status in any manner. The government has issued accreditation cards to TV journalists but the online journalists have not been given the card," it added.

From 2017-18, the Assam government started media fellowship to 20 eligible journalists every year working in the state for their research works "for their continuous improvement of professional skills and upgradation of knowledge in journalism".

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# SGAY distribution in TemiNamphing

**NAMCHI, 22 OCT (IPR):** TemiNamphing constituency saw disbursement of allotment orders for SikkimGaribAwasYojna (SGAY), GCI sheets & house upgradation along with cheques today. The program was graced by the Area MLA cum Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation, BS Panth. Present amongst others were Chairman Temi Tea board, TT Bhutia, Upadhaysha (South), BhimLakhey alongside Panchayat President TokalBermoik GPU, TashiTshering Bhutia, BDO (Temi), Prem K Subba and officials of RDD and staff from BAC

Temi RDD.

The program also saw the attended of CLC president, GopalChettri& other, CLC/BLC/WLC executive members & others. Youth Convener, TashiTshering Bhutia & others conveners also attended the program.

The Chief Guest spoke in brief about SAGY and how it is a flagship program of the Sikkim State Government which is pro people and aims to provide qualitative facility to the masses. He added that the main objective of SAGY is to improve the livelihood of the public at large.

The program was also



addressed by Chairman Temi Tea board, Upadhaysha South and other dignitaries.

The program was organised at Auditorium hall of BermoikTokal Senior Secondary School for 2 GPUs namely Bermoik Tokal & Namphing GPUs. Today was also the last and concluding day for the series of distribution for Temi-Namphing constituency. Together which isa total of 100 SAGY, 100 GCI sheets, 400 house upgradation was given to the beneficiaries for TemiNamphing constituency on 21 and 22, Oct, 2020.

## Skill Training of Rural Youth in Kabi

**SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 22 OCT:**

Under the Skill Training of Rural Youth scheme, ATMA North conducted a six-day training programme on skill development of rural youth on production and management of vermi-compost at Gairee village of Kabi Block. The training ended on 17 Oct 2020.

A total of 15 youths were selected for the training and 8 High Density Polyethylene (HDEP) Vermi beds were provided under the scheme for

demonstration purpose, a press release informs.

These trainees were taught methods involved in vermi compost and vermi cast production by BTM (Kabi), Norbu D. Bhutia under the guidance of Project Director, ATMA (N), B.D Rai and Resource person, PunitGurung, ADO Mangan.

The vermi beds were prepared using the layer method with loose soil, dry leaves, wilted green leaves, kitchen waste and well decomposed FYM and covered up with straw and banana leaves,

maintaining optimal moisture and cool favorable environment for the worms to survive and multiply in.

The vermi bed preparation was completed during the training programme and is now monitored by the farmers maintaining moisture daily and checking up on any unfavourable conditions such as ants, rotting of matter and heating up of the beds, vermi-compost production and harvest is expected within 3-4 months.

Zilla Panchayat,

Nimalhamu Sherpa and Panchayat President Lingchum-Tingda, Passang Sherpa were present in the valedictory program held on 17 Oct.

STRY is a flagship scheme of the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Govt. of India, in compliance with National Policy on Skill Development & Entrepreneurship 2015, under Sub-Mission on Agricultural Extension (SAME) of National Mission on Agricultural Extension & Technology (NMAET)

It is Coordinated

by National Institute of Agriculture Extension Management (MANAGE), Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare at National level via SAMETI and ATMA at State level and district Level respectively.

Skill Training of Rural Youth (STRY) is aimed at imparting skill-based training to rural youth on agri-based vocational areas in agriculture & allied areas to promote employment and skilled manpower to perform farm and non-farm operations.

## SGAY distribution program in South District



**NAMCHI, 22 OCT (IPR):**

A benefits distribution programme was held at South District Zilla Panchayat Bhawan under the Chairmanship of Incharge, Ganesh Rai, 11-Namchi-Singhithang Assembly Constituency duly covering 5 GPUs and Namchi Municipal Council. The programme

was attended by the Gram Panchayat concerned, Party Dignitaries comprising of District Level Officials, CLCs, WLCs and local gentries.

In total, 400 House Upgradation Allotment Order alongwith cheque worth Rs. 20,000 and 100 GCI allotment orders

were distributed by the Chief Guest of the day.

Though large number of public were found present in the Zilla Panchayat premises, the organizing committee ensured all possible Covid19 Protocol duly ensuring the social distancing and wearing of mask and using of sanitizers.

## SGAY distribution for Rakdong-Tintek

**GANGTOK, 22 OCT (IPR):**

A two-day long distribution programme under the flagship Garib Awas Yojana of the state government for Rakdong-Tintek Block under 16-Tumin Lingee Constituency concluded today.

Held at the Conference hall of the BAC, the distribution programme had Area in-Charge of Tumin Lingee Constituency, Samdup Tshering Bhutia as

the Chief Guest who distributed upgradation cheques and allotment orders for GCI sheets to the beneficiaries of the area.

BDO / Rakdong Tintek, Tshering Norgyal Theengh, CLC President, Nari Convenor, CLC and WLC Committee members, the BAC Staff and the public were also present at the distribution programme.

The Garib Awas

Yojana which is initiated and modelled by the Rural Development Department is a Flagship programme of the government of Sikkim.

The two-day long programme saw a total of 277 house upgradation cheques and 72 allotment orders for GCI sheets being distributed to the beneficiaries and the public of all 4 GPUs under Rakdong-Tintek Block of 16 Tumin-Lingee Constituency.

## SKM provides equipments to Yuksam PHC

**PRITAM LAMA**

**GYALSHING, 22 OCT:**

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM) donated furniture and necessary medical equipments to the Yuksam Primary Health Centre (PHC), West Sikkim, today.

SKM District Coordinator-West, NanduGurung handed over the furniture, including chairs, tables, cupboards, stools, visitors' chairs, lockers, stainless almirah, computer stand, etc. to the Yuksam Primary Health Centre.

"District Hospital



is 47kms away from Yuksam and in emergency we want good treatment and facilities for the public at the only health centre of Yuksam. As

a tourist destination, visitors also visit the PHC in case of medical emergency so the centre needs to be well equipped," said MrGurung.

Earlier, the SKM team provided computers, printers and furniture to the Yuksam BAC Engineering cell. MrGurung handed over 2 sets of Computers

along with printers and furniture to the Engineering cell of Yuksam BAC.

Yuksam Primary Health Centre, Medical Officer In-charge, Dr Raman Riwati Pokhrel lauded the initiative by SKM and thanked the party for fulfilling the furniture requirements of Yuksam PHC.

"We are encouraged to serve the people well, better and efficiently with such gestures from SKM," he expressed. He also thanked the SKM district coordinator, NanduGurung.

## Stop blame game, resolve college admission problem: SDF

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 22 OCT:**

Sikkim Democratic Front spokesperson, JB Darnal lashed out against the State government on various issues in a video conference held here at the party headquarters on Thursday.

An SDF press release informs that in his video conference, the party spokesperson alleged that thousands of students will not get college admission this year due to the weakness of the government.

He further alleged

that instead of working out solutions the ruling party is busy blaming the previous government for the same. He has also condemned the statement of SKM party spokesperson Jacob Khaling wherein he had blamed the SDF government of opening casinos instead of schools.

On the same, he added that SDF started five universities and 27 colleges in its 25 years in government. He asserted that instead of blaming the previous government, the State government should

immediately start working on resolving the admissions issue.

MrDarnal alleged that SKM has been violating the SOPs of COVID-19 by conducting party meetings in the State and increasing the threat of novel coronavirus. He also said that advance salary was the right of government employees and the SKM government is only claiming credit by bringing out a notification. He demanded advance salary for MR, Adhoc employees and workers of different private companies.

## MP adopts Damthang GPU under SAGY

**NAMCHI, 22 OCT (IPR):**

As part of Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) the entry point visit of Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) Indra Hang Subba was held at Chemchey, Indian Himalayan Centre for Adventure and Eco-Tourism (IHCAE), today. Present amongst others were Zilla Adhyaksha (South), Tshering Dem Bhutia, ADC (Dev) Namchi, Dr. Chandra Prakash Rai, HoDs, staff, panchayat and public of Damthang GPU.

Addressing the gathering, MP, Indra Hang Subba congratulated on Damthang GPU being adopted under SAGY. He informed that Prime Minister, Narendra Modi launched the SAGY on 11th October, 2014 on the birth anniversary of Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan. The goal of SAGY is to develop three Adarsh Grams or model villages complete with state of art facilities.

The SAGY scheme encourages MPs to identify and develop one village hence, Damthang GPU has been selected.

The MP also said that for SAGY funding is not provided so the public of the GPU need to absorb and harness the GPUs potential which can vary from farming, milk production to various skill development projects so that the masses can earn incentives and be self-reliant.

The MP urged the Panchayats and the public to work with vigour along with much efficiency and underlined that SAGY aims to holistically develop Damthang and for the same collective responsibility is needed. As for unemployed masses the MP said that they will be introduced and trained in various skill building schemes which can assist these unemployed people to develop career opportunities while increasing the knowledge and understanding of the local industry thereby creating business out of these schemes.

He further spoke about various ways to upgrade the GPU and

strongly advocated to start on cluster farming, maintain proper sanitation, reserve water resources. As for the tourism industry, Mr Subba informed that the GPUs needs to start on sustainable and responsible tourism activities. Since the GPU is filled with organic farms and ample greenery the same should be harnessed and advertised to the incoming tourist. He also encouraged the public of this GPU to join a Non-Governmental Organization or to start with a sports club as these falls under personal growth indicator which can keep the mind, body and soul healthy.

As for education sector, MP elucidated that the school should offer ample spaces namely that of reading corner, a vibrant section for Kindergarten, well equipped library, should have a safe and sound structure, adequate teaching staff and many more. He highlighted the fact that education

should be given priority for development of a society and a nation as a whole. Furthermore, he said that Damthang School will be provided with the basic amenities after prior inspection. He also lauded the GPUs efforts in establishing a library where children as well as the adults can explore books and experience new ideas. The MP did inform that he will be visiting the GPU frequently in the coming future and facilitate on the growth of the GPU.

Nodal Officer SAGY, Sagarika Pradhan presented an overview about this scheme and how the Rural Development Department will aid in successfully implementing various schemes and projects in the GPU so that it can be a model GPU. She also added that in order for the GPU to be formed under SAGY viable convergence plan of various line departments should be put in force.

Resource person Dr. Subash Dhakal explained

in detail about SAGY via a PPT presentation. He also highlighted about the timeline and plans to be achieved by the GPU.

Panchayat President, Lalit Rai outlined about Damthang GPU and presented a brief demographic of the area. He also put the spotlight on the revered "Tendong Hill" which is in Damthang and asserted that this hill can be turned into a natural pilgrimage tourism site.

K.B. Rai shed light on various amenities that Damthang GPU requires. He emphasized that during the COVID-19 lockdown the farmers from this GPU were consistently supplying vegetables and dairy produce to different parts of the state and added that these kind of activities need to be utilized so that the public of the GPU can be self-sufficient.

The MP along with officials also visited various places in Damthang including a church, Damthang school and market.

programme, conducted by SICB, was chaired by Area MLA, Aditya Golay, and attended by the Advisor and Chairman of Skill Development Department, Satish Chandra Rai and Binod Basnett respectively.

Secretary, Skill Development Department, Ganga Devi Pradhan, Chief Administrator, SICB, Bishal Rai, ADC (Dev), Soreng, SDM, Soreng, and departmental heads of the Subdivision were amongst the attendees.

Speaking on the occasion, Secretary, Skill Development Department talked about the need for gainful employment, especially in the post Covid-19 scenario, and the absolute requirement for Skill Development for employability.

She went on to inform the gathering that four trainings, viz. Driving cum Tour Guide, Basic Computer Training, Mason Training (Marble & Tiles Fitting) & Home Stay Hospitality,

are commencing. The Department has many trainings lined up for commencement throughout the State immediately after the Dussehra break, she added.

Delivering the key note address, the MLA congratulated the Department on the training and conveyed to the gathering the importance given to Skill Development & other youth issues by the present Government.

Aditya Golay flagged off the driving training vehicles and inaugurated the Training Centres for Computer & Home Stay Trainings.

During the course of the programme, a hamper consisting of blankets, pressure cooker, helmets etc., were handed over to Roads & Bridges staff by the chief guest. These items were provided through convergence by the Roads & Bridges and Labour Departments.

Binod Basnett and Satish Chandra Rai also addressed the gathering.



## Two-Tier Cricket Club Tournament update

### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 22 OCT:**

In the ongoing Two-Tier Club Tournament being organized by Sikkim Cricket Association, Black Eagle (SAP) played against Cricket Association of Tathangchen (CAT) today, a press release informs.

CAT won the toss and chose to field first. In the first innings, Black Eagle scored 207 runs with the loss of 5 wickets in 30.0 overs, where Bijay Subba scored 63 runs off 71 balls including 4 sixes and 3 fours, followed by Captain Palzor Tamang who scored 59 runs off 33 balls, SonamBhutia



scored 41 runs of 51 balls. Sonam Tshering Bhutia took 2 wickets and Bhim Luitel 1 wicket for the CAT.

In the second innings CAT were all-out for 115 runs in

25.5 overs. Captain Lee Yong Lepcha was the highest scorer for the side with 25 runs off 26 balls. Bhim Luitel scored 16 runs, Tshering Wangdi 14 runs, Galpo Sherpa 14 runs not-out,

Sonam Tshering Bhutia 11 runs. Brilliant spell was bowled by Palzor Tamang who took 4 wickets and was the match winner. Sonam Bhutia and Sunny Kumar took 2 wickets each and

Prashant took 1 wicket. Black Eagle (SAP) won the match by 92 runs. Palzor Tamang was announced Man of The Match for his all-round performance of 59 runs and 4 wicket.

## Jal Shakti Ministry assesses mid-term progress of mission in Sikkim

**DELHI, 22 OCT (PIB):** The Ministry of Jal Shakti is in the process of assessing the progress made by all the States and Union Territories towards achievement of the goal of universal coverage under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), the flagship programme of Union Government which aims to provide tap water connection to every rural household of the country by 2024. In order to assess the progress of implementation, a mid-year review is underway through video conferencing. All States and UTs are presenting the status of the provision of tap water connection to rural households as well as the institutional mechanisms in place and the way forward to ensure universal coverage under JJM.

Sikkim presented their mid-term progress today to the National Jal Jeevan Mission. Sikkim has around 1.05 lakh households, out of which 70,525 (67%) households have tap water connections. State has planned to provide 100% tap connections in all households by the year 2021-22. The State also has a good water supply infrastructure and has water supply schemes in 411 villages. The State plans to saturate all the SC/ ST dominated villages and villages in aspirational districts by year 2020-21. Out of the villages with PWS systems, only

81 have achieved the status 'Har Ghar Jal' Village. By providing 7,798 tap water connections, around 211 more villages will become 100% tap connections enabled. State needs to plan to complete this task at earliest, so that all PWS Villages become 100% saturated with tap water connections.

The issues like preparation of Village Action Plan, constitution of Village Water & Sanitation Committee (VWSC) were highlighted in the meeting. Emphasis was given on engaging voluntary organizations, NGOs, women SHGs as implementation support agencies to handhold the local community for planning, implementation and operation & maintenance of water supply systems. State was asked to organize training for capacity building of Gram Panchayat functionaries as well as other stakeholders and also to focus on skill development training in villages to create a pool of trained human resources at village level, which will be very helpful in implementation as well O&M of water supply systems. The State was advised to carry out the mandatory chemical testing and bacteriological testing of drinking water sources.

In 2020-21, Sikkim has been allocated Rs 31.36 Crore for

implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission, out of which Rs 7.84 Crore has been released. To avail the second tranche of first release, the State has to expedite their fund utilization. Sikkim has also been allocated Rs 42 Crore under 15th Finance Commission Grants to rural local bodies and 50% of it

is to be used for water supply and sanitation i.e. water supply, grey-water treatment and re-use and most importantly for ensuring long-term operation and maintenance of water supply schemes.

Sikkim is known for its substantial water resources. But rapid population growth

and urbanisation are affecting the water both in quantitative & qualitative ways. The State has a good water supply system in place; the need to capitalise on it so as to ensure every rural home of the State gets tap water connection, thereby improving the lives of people.

## SGAY distribution program in Gangtok



### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 22 OCT:**

The distribution of cheques for house upgradation under "Sikkim Garib Awas

Yojana" for Gangtok constituency was held at Mayur Hotel, Hospital Dara, today, a press release informs.

Gangtok MLA, YT Lepcha attended the program as chief guest while also present were GMC officers, chairperson of Khadi Board, Chung Chung Bhutia, East District president BJP Sikkim unit, Bhanu Dahal, SKM CLC president Gangtok constituency, Sanjiv Gurung amongst others.

MLA, YT Lepcha thanked the State Government, the Chief Minister, and the concerned department for the scheme.



GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM  
SOCIAL JUSTICE & WELFARE DEPARTMENT  
5<sup>TH</sup> MILE TADONG, GANGTOK

### NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The Social Justice & Welfare Department invites e-tender from Class-II B Enlisted Contractor (SPWD) for participating in the tender for "Construction of SC Girls Hostel at Government College Rhenock in East Sikkim." For further details, kindly visit the website [www.sikkimtenders.gov.in](http://www.sikkimtenders.gov.in)

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## APPEAL

The festive seasons of Durga Puja (Dashain) and Diwali, the festival of light & flowers is approaching once again. You may be aware that the Government has banned the manufacture, sale & bursting of all types of sound and light emitting fire crackers in Sikkim through Gazette Notification No. 544 dated 19<sup>th</sup> December 2014.

Further, all are aware that plastic is non bio-degradable and its use leads to environmental problems. Hence all are requested to refrain from using any plastic items during the festive occasion to prevent littering and generation of plastic waste.

The State Pollution Control Board Sikkim solicits kind co-operation of every one in making this "ban" successful and keep the State of Sikkim clean, green & pollution free. The State Pollution Control Board-Sikkim also wishes all a very happy and pollution free Dashain & Diwali 2020.

State Pollution Control Board  
Forest & Environment Department  
Government of Sikkim

RO No. 116/IPR/Pub/Classi./20-21

Date. 21.10.2020

## Rain may play 'asura' in Bengal this Durga puja

**KOLKATA, OCT 21**

**(PTI):** Rain is likely to play spoilsport in south Bengal this Durga puja, with the meteorological office here on Wednesday predicting light to heavy showers over the next 48 hours, and the government issuing alerts to farmers and fishermen.

A well-marked low-pressure area, formed over the central part of Bay of Bengal, is expected to move north-westwards during next 24 hours and north-north-eastwards thereafter, triggering rainfall in Bengal and Bangladesh, a spokesperson at Alipore met office said.

The low-pressure system is likely to intensify into depression by tomorrow, and deep depression during the subsequent 24 hours, he said.

"On October 22,

heavy rain (7-11cm) may lash one or two places in East Midnapore, North and South 24 Parganas districts. The following day, heavy to very heavy rain (7-20 cm) was expected at one or two places in the three districts," the spokesperson said.

People in Kolkata, Howrah, Hooghly, and Nadia, too, should brace for moderate to heavy rain during the two days.

"In Kolkata, skies might remain cloudy with one or two spells of light to moderate rain along with thunderstorm on October 22 and 23. Heavy rain might also occur at one or two places," the spokesperson added.

Authorities have issued an alert for fishermen, asking them not to venture into the sea between October 22 and 24.

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SOCIAL JUSTICE & WELFARE DEPARTMENT  
CHILD PROTECTION SCHEME  
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

No.204/SJ&WD/CPS/2020

Dated: 21.10.2020

### ADDENDUM

In continuation of our previous employment NOTICE No.117/SJ&WD/CPS/2020 dated 07/09/2020, the vacant post of 01 Member is added for Juvenile Justice Board (JJB), East-District. Hence the total number of vacant posts, for Member, JJB, East – District is 02(two).

The "TERMS AND CONDITIONS" and "OTHER REQUIREMENTS" have been indicated in the afore-mentioned NOTICE.

As prescribed by the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015/ Rules, the CWC/JJB Members, are required to sit on all working days unless the case pendency is less. Furthermore, the CWC Members are required to hold atleast 20 sittings in a month.

The last date for receipt of applications for the NOTICE No. 117/SJ&WD/CPS/2020 dated 07/09/2020 and this ADDENDUM has been extended to 13/11/2020(Friday) till 4.30 pm.

Please visit [www.sikkimsocialwelfare.gov.in](http://www.sikkimsocialwelfare.gov.in)

Sd/-  
Additional Secretary cum Director  
Social Justice & Welfare Department  
Govt. of Sikkim.

R.O. NO. 117/IPR/Pub/Classi./20-21  
Date. 21.10.2020



## In These Times of Tall Claims

*Enjoy the show, but...*

There is politics in the air, but of primarily one-sided type. As is routine for Sikkim, in the immediate years after an election, opposition camps begin taking extended time-offs, surfacing inconsistently and only occasionally to keep the semblance of their existence alive. The party in office meanwhile begins consolidations and acquisitions, neither of which, past history has borne out, are of any reliable durability. If one takes the steady stream of press releases at face value, there are so many people joining the party in office every day that families across the State must be regretting Sikkim's falling fertility rate. They would have had so many more to give to party if only their families had not been so small. Maybe that is also why parties have begun the practice of counting new converts by the families and not the actual number of new members. That being the new trend, now Sikkimese, like they acquire their religion and relatives through birth, will also be inheriting their political leanings through the same connections. Thankfully, as mentioned earlier, the indoctrination is very casual, and takes but the switching of the flag on the roof to also switch sides and then feature, as a family, in a press release, again.

Hmmm... If only things were really that simple... And they also are in a way. After all, who, except the “leaders” out to score political points or acquire a post of favours actually goes through the tedium of officially resigning in Sikkim? And also, if supporters in the bastis don't have a formal process of joining beyond collecting a flag and khadas, how could they know of the official processes of signing out? And so the cycle rolls on, with leaders ignoring the obvious and the coteries playing blind too, and the people, well, playing along.

In all seriousness though, if speaking into their echo-chambers and gloating over the repeats keeps them occupied and satisfied, so be it, but that is not all that happens when politics picks up. And this is true of parties in “position” and those in the opposition, both have a weakness for yes-men and don't mind the superficiality of it. Given the hesitation to engage, or perhaps because sulking is the preferred position for those whom the ballot has not favoured, the initial years after an election are political calm for the lay people [beyond the ritual of switching sides]. Post-poll Sikkim, however, has been rather fluid this time around and that has kept politics and politicking ticking longer than usual. The season of vicious rumour-mongering and tasteless name-calling has hence sustained. The medium might have grown from the poorly produced pamphlets of the past to poorly written Facebook posts complimented with shoddily photoshopped images carried over from more juvenile days, but the messaging remains as crass. What the agents of such media-management seem to overlook is that rumours serve only one purpose - entertainment. They titillate, scandalise, and then evaporate. In most cases, receivers and circulators of such gossip know that no one believes the rumours and that everyone is partaking in it only get over their boredom or to suppress their insecurities depending on which side of the conversation they sit on. It goes without saying that the best response to the rumour mill is to ignore it, but while it is easy to ignore something when it is only whispered in street corners, it becomes difficult to do so when they are palmed out in the public domain. When performance fails to prove commitment, parties resort to manufactured content and fronts to guard turfs, claim new ground and remaining relevant.

When tall claims and wild allegations become the flavor of the day, bring out the salt, because you will need to be taking pinches of it very often just to remain sane. At the end of the day, the only weapon against unsubstantiated claims is the truth. Circulate it in the public domain and embarrass those who deal in rumours. Don't do so effectively and don't demand it vociferously enough, and soon the confusion will muddy away realities beyond salvaging. Then, Sikkim could find itself in a situation where attempts to debunk falsehoods often end up strengthening the lies in the eyes of the people.

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# Corporate social responsibility commitments: All talk, no action

ANDY HIRA  
THECONVERSATION.COM

In April 2013 in Bangladesh, the Savar building collapsed, killing an estimated 1,300 garment workers and injuring another 2,500 in what became known as the Rana Plaza collapse.

The story intrigued me as an academic and global citizen wanting to find answers.

There is a long history of industrial accidents in Bangladesh factories, and there continue to be issues in the aftermath of these accidents.

This is despite decades of activism, including universities such as my own vowing to take responsibility for their supply chains. After Rana Plaza, North American and European clothing retailers, from Benetton to Joe Fresh, all claimed that this time was different.

They created two ambitious systems of auditing and supply-chain tracing, along with worker complaint lines, to reassure customers that their clothes were made safely and that major companies were taking responsibility.

In the aftermath of the accident, I worked with Maureen Benson-Rea, a business professor at the University of Auckland, to examine this supposedly game-changing set of agreements. The results, which came out in a collected volume, were not promising.

Among other things, we found an almost total lack of local labour enforcement by the Bangladeshi government, and an almost complete lack of follow-through on failed audits of multinational corporations (in this case, clothing brands), including remedial actions. Seven years later, nothing has really changed for Bangladeshi workers.

### TRENDY BUSINESS MODEL

Corporate social responsibility, or CSR, is a burgeoning business model. Spurred by a series of scandals, it has become a mainstay of our business schools.

However, CSR efforts haven't stopped the continual parade of scandals, from Boeing's 737 Max failures to the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill and the well-known gaming of financial markets by investment houses, as depicted in books and films that include The Wolf of Wall Street and The Big Short.

Instead of progress towards decency in labour and environmental

standards, we find ourselves in a continuing maelstrom of corporate social irresponsibility.

When matched with growing inequality, it's no wonder we're in a new age of populism and protest, with a reflexive reaction against big corporations. Far from being responsible citizens, large corporations are increasingly dodging paying even basic taxes.

There are three obvious sources of failure in CSR.

### FIRST SOURCE OF FAILURE: NEOLIBERALISM

The first is the general move towards neoliberalism, or the faith in markets to create self-regulation by allowing companies and investment houses to make their own bets and supposedly suffer the consequences. Anyone with common sense knows that companies are wired towards profit and, in the absence of public policy, will put it above all else.

We shouldn't forget that western labour and environmental standards were the result of government policy, not markets. In fact, the minute markets fail, companies consistently cry for government bailouts, as we saw in the 1980s-'90s savings-and-loan crisis in the U.S., the 2008 financial crisis and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic — all while financial services lobbyists block reforms to prevent future crises.

This has been enabled more generally because companies have been able to influence regulation, undoing any real reform efforts, and in many cases push false counter-narratives, such as climate change denial. In the Global South, where governments lack rule of law and institutional capacity, companies have a long history of feeding corruption and influencing governments to cut “sweetheart deals” to benefit them financially. CSR is important for marketing, not for the bottom line.

### SECOND SOURCE OF FAILURE: GLOBALIZED PRODUCTION

The second source of failure is related to the globalization of production. Governments in the Global South have consistently voiced their opposition to rigorous labour or environmental standards on the grounds that companies will simply move their factories elsewhere.

The fight for jobs, consistent investment and the desperate need for access to multinational corporation's retail outlets explains

why coffee farmers, for example, take pennies on the dollar compared to large coffee retail chains like Starbucks.

Simply put, governments and workers in the Global South have limited bargaining leverage when it comes to large transnationals, and workers and local communities have even less. Clearly, a global system is needed to better balance the scales.

CSR advocates would point to the plethora of global initiatives, from the Global Reporting Indicators to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, coming in the wake of The Global Compact, an agreement championed by the United Nations. These initiatives were ostensibly aimed at setting guidelines and demonstrating responsible behaviour.

Companies are spending an estimated US\$20 billion per year on CSR to comply with these standards, and pay an army of consultants and NGO auditors to verify such. As I argue in a recent article in Global Affairs and in a special edition of the Journal of Developing Societies, such efforts are vacuous and more effective at public relations than at changing real-life outcomes.

### THIRD SOURCE OF FAILURE: NO TRANSPARENCY

In fact, there is a continuing lack of transparency in CSR initiatives — most of them largely dependent on businesses self-reporting their efforts — that socially responsible investment indices rely upon. Audits are specious and full of conflicts of interest because companies actually employ auditors to verify their compliance. Most of the investment indicators do not even dispatch personnel to sites to verify what companies are claiming.

Governments that receive millions in royalties from multinational corporations for the right to mine, for instance, do not report what they do with the revenues, and so corruption is apparent. In short, there is no real accountability or enforcement of CSR standards.

The bottom line is that companies are in no way taking responsibility for changing anything concretely. Their CSR reports delve into taxes paid, one-off projects and related expenditures, not on changes in real-life outcomes.

In assessing mining sites over the past four years, I have seen communities without basic services — no running water, electricity or roads — located next to international mines that have been rewarded or lauded for their CSR initiatives.

A government approved by a global transparency body even censored my survey of community sentiments about mining, and questions about the use of revenues, though it could not deny the veracity of my findings. When I asked the global transparency body to intervene, they said that there was nothing they could do.

It's no surprise therefore that global mining continues to be plagued by continual conflict. Until there are global standards for outcomes, transparency through the supply and revenue chains, conflict-free auditing, enforced labour rights and environmental standards, we will continue to see local impoverishment, hazardous waste and tragic labour accidents as resources in the Global South are exploited by companies in the West.

### MAKE OUR VOICES HEARD

A handful of well-meaning activists can't make any real difference in this fight.

Consumers can make their voices heard by pushing politicians to leverage access to western markets to set up a global system that matters, with standards that can be verified.

Just as we don't allow our companies to sell products that use child labour, pollute the environment or bypass communities where resources are exploited in our own countries, we can simply apply the same principles for products made anywhere.

Extending this basic principle — already the standard for domestic products — would immediately force companies and host governments to change their practices, creating a level playing field for organizations that want to do the right thing, which would then become routine.

Such a policy shift would change the world overnight, raising the living standards for millions and saving capitalism from itself.

*[the writer is Professor of Political Science, Simon Fraser University]*

## How your behaviour in childhood predicts whether you'll be in a relationship as an adult

FRANCIS VERGUNST  
THECONVERSATION.COM

The question of how to find a steady romantic partnership is among the oldest human predicaments. There is consequently considerable interest in what factors might predict partnership success. Traits like warmth, conscientiousness, agreeableness and trust all seem to matter. But can behaviour in childhood predict your future partnering prospects?

In a new study published with my colleagues in Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry we show that children rated by their elementary schoolteachers as being anxious or inattentive were more likely to remain unpartnered from age 18 to 35 years. Children rated as aggressive-oppositional — those who fight, bully and disobey — were more likely to separate and return to unpartnered status. Conversely, prosocial children, who were rated as being kind, helpful and considerate, showed earlier and more sustained partnerships across early adulthood.

The study suggests that the seeds of future partnering patterns are planted early and are visible even before adolescence. This has important implications for children with behavioural difficulties, who already face many life challenges from unemployment to lower earnings. If they can be identified by teachers, then it may be possible to flag them for assessment and support and improve their life chances.

Good partnerships offer many advantages. They provide emotional support, co-parenting opportunities and socioeconomic security, and can lead to developmental maturation including reduced neuroticism and increased extraversion and self-esteem.

Partnership buffers against the harmful effects of stress, protects against mid-life alcohol and tobacco use, enhances mental health and well-being and is associated with a healthier, longer life. Although the health benefits may not be entirely causal, since happier, healthier individuals might be “selected” into partnership, they appear to be at least partially causal.

### WHY WE CONDUCTED THE STUDY

Previous research has shown that childhood psychiatric disorders like attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and conduct disorder are associated with future partnership difficulties, including intimate partner violence and lower relationship satisfaction. We were interested in whether common childhood behaviours — including prosocial traits —

would predict future partnership stability for children without clinical diagnoses.

Our study was based on analysis of nearly 3,000 Canadian children who were rated by teachers for behaviours like inattention, hyperactivity, aggression, opposition, anxiety and prosociality at age 10, 11 and 12 years and then followed up into adulthood so we could examine their anonymized tax return records.

Since Canadian tax regulations require people who are married or cohabiting to report this status in their tax returns, we were able to statistically identify groups of participants who followed common patterns of partnering. We then linked them with their earlier behavioural ratings. We controlled for participants' socioeconomic status because some studies show this can influence partnering patterns.

We found that participants who were predominantly unpartnered from age 18 to 35 years were significantly more likely to have been anxious children, while those who separated early (around age 28 years) and returned to unpartnered status were more likely to have been aggressive-oppositional children. Interestingly, children who were inattentive were more likely to have been in either the unpartnered group or the early separated group.

Participants in the unpartnered and separated groups fared poorly in other ways too: they were more likely to have left high school without a diploma, to have lower earnings and to be in receipt of welfare support. This raises important questions about what underlying factors might explain the link between childhood behaviour and future partnering patterns.

### WHY BEHAVIOUR MATTERS FOR PARTNERSHIP

Childhood behaviour could influence future partnering directly and indirectly. Behaviour is relatively stable across development so a direct influence might be the persistence of childhood behaviours — such as aggression or anxiety — into adulthood, which then influence the capacity to form and sustain stable partnerships. Studies show that adults who are low in agreeableness, conscientiousness and emotional stability, as measured by the big five personality structures, have less satisfying and more tumultuous relationships, and this could undermine relationship stability.

Indirect influences on partnership involve intermediate events, such as employment

status or earnings, which have a knock-on effect on accumulation of human capital that contributes to the perceived attractiveness of a partner. For instance, children with disruptive and inattentive behavioural problems typically have fewer friends, under-perform at school, are more likely to abuse substances and to have lower earnings and higher welfare receipt as adults — all of which could undermine their capacity to attract and retain romantic partners as adults.

The finding that prosocial children have more stable and sustained partnerships is perhaps unsurprising. They typically have better peer relations and academic attainment in childhood and higher earnings and perceived attractiveness in adulthood, which should enhance their appeal to prospective partners.

### MIND THE HITCH

This study should not be understood as a normative argument for partnership, implying that people should be partnered or that “longer is better.” Such decisions are highly personal and depend on individual preferences, life goals, financial circumstances, professional ambitions and so on.

Rather, we note that most people do wish to partner, and that partnership may confer important health and well-being benefits, so the persistence of early untreated behavioural difficulties should not become an obstacle to establishing stable partnerships in adulthood.

One limitation of this study is that we examined only whether participants were partnered, not the quality of those partnerships. This should be explored in future studies, since children with behavioural problems are likely to have both less stable and less satisfying partnerships.

### SUPPORTING CHILDREN

Successful partnerships are determined by a multitude of individual and contextual factors, and early behaviours are just one piece of the puzzle. Our study shows, once again, that children with behavioural difficulties face many challenges that cascade across their lives, and this includes marginalization from partnership.

Early monitoring and support are crucial and prevention programs that target children's disruptive, anxious and inattentive behaviours — and promote social-emotional skills — can produce lasting effects with benefits for individuals, families and society. After all, there are many reasons to encourage good behaviour.

*[the writer is Postdoctoral Fellow in Developmental Public Health, Université de Montréal]*



## BTC to be under Assam governor's rule till polls



**GUWAHATI, OCT 22 (PTI):** The Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) will continue to function under the governor till the elections are held, the Assam government decided on Thursday.

A meeting of the Council of Ministers, chaired by Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, approved the continuation of governor's rule in BTC till elections are held, Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and Industry Chandra Mohan Patowary said.

The state government also urged the State Election Commission to complete the poll process by December 15.

The BTC elections, earlier scheduled on April 4, were kept in abeyance due to the COVID-19 pandemic and it is being currently administered under the supervision of Governor Jagdish Mukhi.

The Council of Ministers also approved an amendment in the Assam excise rules 2016,

prohibiting inter-district shifting of liquor licensed premises.

The criteria for shifting of licensed premises within the district was approved as it was leading to an imbalance in the distribution of liquor shops, creating space for the illegal sale of liquor.

It will help in maintaining the ratio of liquor vends across all districts, the minister said.

The Council of Ministers also decided to fund 'gaushalas' (cowsheds) to fill up the gap in money required to feed the cows.

It also decided to give ex-gratia of Rs 10 lakh to the next of kin of Raben Das, the constable who died while apprehending cattle smugglers in South Salmara district recently. It also approved exemption of sand, steel and bitumen, to be used in the construction of the proposed Majuli bridge, from state GST, royalty and local taxes.

## Meghalaya CM launches 'micro ATM' service in rural areas



**SHILLONG, OCT 22 (PTI):** Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma has launched the 'micro ATM' service in rural areas of the state.

He distributed the handheld devices, through which money could be withdrawn, to banking correspondent agents (BCA) on Wednesday.

"Micro ATMs will take banking services to the doorsteps of people in rural areas.

"The implementation of various development and welfare schemes get delayed due to the absence of basic banking infrastructure, because of which people have to travel long distances

to avail the services," Sangma said.

The initiative is being promoted by the Meghalaya State Rural Livelihood Society (MSRLS) in partnership with the Meghalaya Rural Bank (MRB) and the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD).

The MSRLS had in June signed an MoU with the MRB to roll out the project in which 84 self-help groups (SHGs) functioning as 'bank sakhis' will be positioned with the bank's branches as BCAs.

As of now, every SHG will be provided with one micro ATM each, an official said.

# Covid scare, HC order shrink puja pandal crowd in city

**KOLKATA, OCT 22 (PTI):** The usual crowd of revellers was missing on the streets of Kolkata on 'Mahasasti' which marks the beginning of the five-day Durga puja festivities -- with the Calcutta High Court having declared all pandals no-entry zones, and rain playing spoilsport in the morning.

Many big-ticket pandals, including Ekdalia Evergreen, Singhi Park, Ahiritola Sarbojonin, Tridhara Sammilani, Chetla Agroni, wore a forlorn

look, as just a handful of organisers and local residents were allowed to visit the marquees.

A motley group of people were, however, seen clicking photographs of the pandal from far, and indulging in street food, even as the organisers scrambled to ensure the decor at the open-air marquees did not get soggy during the drizzle.

Piyush Saha, an IT professional in Tollygunje area, said he has downloaded apps launched by some of the award-winning pujas

as he "did not want to miss out on the fun and festivities" at these pandals.

"There is no point risking our safety amid the pandemic. As most of the pujas have launched their apps and some are live streaming events on YouTube, why take the risk? I have, however, visited the pandal near my home," he said.

Somnath Das, the secretary of Santoshpur Lake Pally, said, "Visitors will get to see our Maa Durga's idol from a distance of

10 metres, but not many have turned up so far.

"We have also arranged 360 degree live streaming of our puja on YouTube."

At Sribhumi Sporting Club, where massive public gatherings were witnessed on Saturday and Sunday, triggering concern over COVID-19 spread, organisers have pulled down a part of the dais outside the pandal to facilitate visitors catch a glimpse of the idol from a distance.

An officer of the Kolkata Police said not

many people were seen swarming the streets during the day, and no report of court order violation was received from anywhere in the city. He, however, asserted that all arrangements were in place for crowd management.

The Calcutta High Court, in an order on Monday, declared community Durga Puja pandals as "no-entry zones", disallowing visitors from entering the marquees, amid the surge in COVID-19 cases across the state.

## Bengal Hindi academy to organise poets' conference

**KOLKATA, OCT 21 (PTI):** In a bid to draw the new generation towards the Hindi language, the Paschim Bang Hindi Academy on Wednesday decided to organise conferences of poets, stage one-act plays and hold storytelling sessions, a

senior official said.

At the first meeting of the reconstituted Academy on Wednesday, it was also decided that works of famous authors will be translated to Hindi.

The Academy also set up a library

to reach out to the Hindi-speaking students and intellectuals in and around the city.

"There was a discussion especially on four points - Hindi language, literature, culture and arts. During today's meeting, we

discussed the ways to promote the language and culture in West Bengal," the official said.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has announced last month that the Paschim Bang Hindi Academy would be reconstituted.

She also formalised the structure of the Hindi Cell of her party, the Trinamool Congress, a move which is being seen as a step to woo the Hindi-speaking population in the state ahead of next year's Assembly elections.

## Bihar deputy CM tests positive for COVID-19



**PATNA, OCT 22 (PTI):** BIHAR Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi on Thursday said that he has tested positive for COVID-19 and was undergoing treatment, while also asserting that his parameters were fine and he was looking forward to hitting the campaign trail soon in the poll-bound state.

Modi, one of the tallest leaders of the BJP in Bihar, had been missing from action for quite some time and was conspicuous by his absence when Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman released the party's

manifesto earlier in the day.

"Tested positive for

corona. All parameters normal.

Started with mild

temperature (but) no temperature for last two days. Admitted

to AIIMS, Patna for better monitoring. CT scan of lungs normal. Will be back soon for campaigning," the deputy CM wrote on Twitter.

The tweet comes a day before Prime Minister Narendra Modi enters the scene in the poll-bound state with back-to-back rallies in Sasaram, Gaya and Bhagalpur districts.

The deputy CM was expected to be present at the rallies, along with JD(U) boss and Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, who has been declared as the NDA's face for the polls.

## 27 new cases push COVID-19 tally of Andamans to 4,168

**PORT BLAIR, OCT 22 (PTI):** The COVID-19 tally of Andaman and Nicobar Islands rose to 4,168 on Thursday as 27 more people tested positive for the infection, a health official said.

Five new patients have travel history, while 22 fresh infections were detected during contact tracing, he said.

Eleven more people have recovered from the disease, the official said.

The Union territory now has 199 active coronavirus cases, while 3,913 people have recovered from the disease and 56 patients have succumbed to the infection so far, he said.

The administration has so far sent 78,303 samples for COVID-tests, of which 78,040 reports have been received and 263 are awaited, the official added.

## Exotic birds rescued by BSF personnel in Bengal

**KOLKATA, OCT 21 (PTI):** At least 54 exotic birds were seized by the BSF in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas, close to the India-Bangladesh border, a statement by the paramilitary force said on Wednesday.

The birds, kept in two iron cages, were rescued by the Border Security Force (BSF) jawans during an operation on Tuesday night at Shah Para village in Tentulberia area of the district, the statement said.

The traffickers, who had smuggled the birds into India, however, were nowhere to be found.

## Modi, Patnaik banking on marketing to continue in power: Cong

**BHUBANESWAR, OCT 21 (PTI):** Launching a scathing attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, senior Congress leader A Chellakumar on Wednesday accused them of solely banking on marketing to be in power instead of working for the people.

Congress, on the other hand, lacks in marketing itself, the AICC in-charge for Odisha told reporters here.

Congress is not dependent on marketing, but it will devise its own strategies to connect to the masses to win back their confidence and counter BJP and BJD in the state, he said.

We have miserably failed in communicating our achievements to the common man ... We lack in marketing, said Chellakumar, who is on a visit to Odisha ahead of the by-poll to Balasore Sadar and Tirtol assembly seats in the state.

Without doing anything, Narendra Modi and Naveen Patnaik have been successfully marketing .... Congress on its part, is not dependent

on marketing. Our party will chalk out its own strategy to counter BJP and BJD, the senior Congress leader said after holding a meeting with partys newly appointed district unit presidents.

To begin with, Congress will make concerted efforts to strengthen its own organisation right from the state level down to the grassroots and once the party set up gets rejuvenated and is in proper form, a mass contact programme will be launched across Odisha, he said.

Chellakumar said he himself will undertake an intensive tour of the state which will begin from the Hinjili Assembly segment in Ganjam district, the chief ministers constituency.

Despite being the constituency of the chief minister, the area does not have a proper hospital to provide health care facilities to the people, he said.

Naveen Patnaik has not done anything for the benefit of the people of Ganjam district, particularly his own constituency Hinjili, he claimed.

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# Aus scraps plans for games in Europe amid COVID spike

**SYDNEY, OCT 22 (AP):** Football Federation Australia says it has cancelled plans for its national teams to hold European training camps in November because of the “ongoing and evolving risks associated with COVID-19.” Plans had been in the advanced stages for two international friendlies in London in November but the FFA had to withdraw because countries in Europe are experiencing a resurgence of coronavirus infections after successfully slowing outbreaks during the middle of the year.

“Regrettably, the ongoing and worsening COVID-19 landscape across Europe has provided complexities and risks to assemble players from across Europe and Asia and, following the latest advice from medical professionals, FFA will not be proceeding with activities in Europe at this time,” FFA said in a statement on Thursday. The November break is the final international window of 2020, meaning the Socceroos who were last in action last November are set to go



without international football for the entire calendar year. The Matildas last played in March when they secured qualification for the Tokyo Olympics with a 2-1 win over Vietnam.

# Loss against RCB was morale-crushing, but destiny still in our hands: McCullum



**ABU DHABI, OCT 22 (PTI):** Disappointed with his team’s “timid approach” with the bat , Kolkata Knight Riders head coach Brendon McCullum has admitted that the crushing defeat against Royal Challengers Bangalore would definitely affect the morale of the side, but their destiny is still in their hands.

He believes KKR can go all the way to the final, despite just hanging on to the fourth spot in the eight-team competition with 10 points from as many games.

“This [loss] is going

to affect a little bit in terms of our confidence. We need to work hard on ensuring our morale doesn’t drop at the same time having those honest conversations around how we improve,” McCullum said after the eight-wicket loss to RCB in an IPL game here on Wednesday night.

“But I still firmly believe that we have a side which can be there later on in the tournament, come finals. We just need to improve slightly.

“We’re still fourth in the tournament, which is very fortunate for

us. Destiny is still very much in our hands. We have just got to tighten up some of those areas where we’re deficient tonight and make sure we improve on our performance,” he said.

McCullum admitted that they were not good enough and lacked intent in the lop-sided contest against RCB.

Electing to bat, KKR top-order crumbled against Mohammed Siraj’s (3/8) devastating new-ball show to register their second lowest total -- 84 for 8, a target which RCB chased down in in 13.3 overs with eight

wickets in hand.

McCullum said there was no demon in the pitch but their batsmen lacked intent against some quality RCB bowling.

“...I didn’t think there was a lot in the wicket. Siraj obviously bowled well and (Chris) Morris at times also. But if anything, we were just a little timid in our approach,” the former New Zealand captain said.

“That’s just a bit frustrating because we spoke at length before the game about trying to be positive and show some strong intent, so that’s something we’ll have to address in the next few days.”

Siraj became the first bowler in the history of IPL to bowl two maiden overs as he dismissed Rahul Tripathi (1), Nitish Rana (0) and Tom Banton (10) to virtually kill the contest in the first four overs.

“I just think we weren’t able to enter the game at any stage, none of our top-order batsmen were able to get anything

going,” McCullum said.

“Defending 85, you might just win one in 50 games. I think RCB were very good tonight. We’re very poor with bat in hand. You’re not going to win too many games from 40 for 6. But we’ve got to bounce back because we’ve got another game in a few days.

“With the conditions being slightly challenging at times, you’ve got to find a way to still pick yourself up and try and get a result in the next game,” he added.

McCullum said self belief is the need of the hour after such a disappointing performance.

“For us, it’s about maintaining belief. As long as our morale stays high, and our belief within the dressing room stays high, then we have the talent within our setup, the intelligence and quality of players, to be able to go deep in the tournament.”

KKR have four matches left to secure a play-off spot and next face Delhi Capitals here on Saturday.

# Man City rallies for 3-1 win over Porto in Champions League

**MANCHESTER, OCT 22 (AP):** Lacking its typical fluency going forward, Manchester City relied on moments of individual brilliance to get its Champions League campaign off to a winning start.

City recovered from conceding an early goal to beat Porto 3-1 in their Group C opener, with a curling free kick from Ilkay Gundogan and an impressive individual strike by substitute Ferran Torres completing the second-half comeback at an empty Etihad Stadium.

It is nice to win games suffering, City manager Pep Guardiola said.

With long-time playmaker David Silva now departed, star midfielder Kevin De Bruyne out injured and players like Gundogan and Sergio Aguero the scorer of the equalizer from the penalty spot feeling their way back to full fitness, it hasn’t been the fluid City of old since the start of the season.

A gritty 1-0 win over Arsenal on Saturday got City’s Premier League campaign back on track and the team

had to work just as hard against a Porto side, whose players’ perceived theatrics clearly frustrated Guardiola on the touchline.

Back in the Champions League after a one-year absence, Porto took the lead in the 14th minute when City defender Ruben Dias gave the ball away to Mateus Uribe, allowing Colombia winger Luis Diaz to drift into and across the area with the ball beating Rodri then Joao Cancelo with a couple of feints before shooting into the bottom corner.

City replied quickly, with Aguero converting a penalty six minutes later after Raheem Sterling was bundled over by Pepe for his first goal since March following something of a scramble in the area that included Gundogan hitting the post.

Kyle Walker produced an acrobatic goal-line clearance to stop Porto going back in front just before halftime, and City was getting nothing out of Porto’s five-man defense until Gundogan



was brought down outside the area in the 65th.

Guardiola was looking to bring off the Germany midfielder at that point Gundogan only recently returned to training after contracting the coronavirus but kept him on for the free kick.

It was a wise decision, Gundogan stepping up to curl a shot over the defensive wall and into the net.

Torres capped the win five minutes after coming on, exchanging passes with fellow substitute Phil Foden before entering the area,

dropping his shoulder to befuddle Pepe, and curling a shot high into the net in the 73rd minute for City’s third goal.

Aguero lasted 67 minutes as he continues to build up match fitness after four months out injured, while there was some good news in Guardiola’s post-match news conference as he said De Bruyne would be returning to training on Thursday.

H o w e v e r , Fernandinho sustained a leg injury after coming on as a second-half substitute and could

miss up to six weeks, according to Guardiola.

It is City’s 10th attempt to capture a first European crown. Next up is Marseille away next week.

The last 10, 15 minutes of the first half and the start of the second we played well,” Guardiola said Teams that set up with lots at the back, you have to wait for your moment. We adjusted a little something at the end of the first half. We spoke about being patient, we had to be patient and at the right moment attack them.

# New Clippers coach Tyronn Lue: ‘It feels good to be wanted’

**LOS ANGELES, OCT 22 (AP):** Tyronn Lue is stepping into his new job as coach of the Los Angeles Clippers fully aware of the pressure to bring the first NBA championship to the long-suffering franchise.

As if Lue needed a reminder, owner Steve Ballmer proclaimed, My personality is all about winning.

It’s been nearly two years since Lue worked as a head coach. He was fired in Cleveland after an 0-6 start to the 2018-19 season and used the down time to work on himself before joining Doc Rivers’ staff in Los Angeles this past season.

I lost 35 pounds, changed my diet. That was the main thing, focus on myself,” Lue said Wednesday via Zoom.

“After Cleveland, I had the whole season to reflect on what I could have done better. Now it’s Lue’s turn to try to take the Clippers where the franchise has never been before beyond the second round of the playoffs.

I’m big on pressure, he said. If you don’t have pressure that means you don’t have a chance to win a championship. I want to be one of the greatest coaches.

Ballmer said, Ty is my kind of guy. He wants to move, move, move, learn, absorb, think new thoughts, which I think is essential to keep pushing yourself.

Lue, 43, already has three NBA championships on his resume two as a player with the rival Lakers and one as coach of Cleveland when LeBron James played for the Cavaliers.

He also led the Cavs to the Finals in 2017 and ‘18, but both times they lost to Golden State. Lue went 128-83 in parts of four seasons with them.

The Clippers in the

first season of Kawhi Leonard and Paul George playing together went 49-23 this regular season, the fourth-best record in franchise history. Leonard and George can both opt out and become free agents after next season.

It’ll be up to Lue to balance the personalities of his two Leonard and George, who by nature are quiet and reserved. He’s dealt with superstars before, having coached James and been a teammate of the late Kobe Bryant.

Our two players, they lead by example. Practicing hard and working hard every day individually on their game, Lue said. You’re not going to have the best players be your leaders all the time. It’s going to be collective.

Lue believes keeping everyone healthy is the key for next season, whenever it starts. Leonard was on a load management program last season because of a left knee injury and only played in 57 games. George missed all of training camp and the first several games while recovering from offseason shoulder surgery.

Lue said he wasn’t sure about Leonard’s load management for next season without first talking to the team’s medical staff.

They’re going to have to adjust to my system and my program, but I’m also going to have to adjust, Lue said of Leonard and George.

It starts on the defensive end with those two guys setting the tone every night.

Rivers established a winning tradition, taking the Clippers to the playoffs in six of his seven seasons, by far the most successful stretch in franchise history.

Playing in the NBA bubble in Florida, the Clippers wasted a 3-1 lead over Denver and lost in the Western Conference semifinals in mid-September.

Two weeks later, Rivers was fired.

I definitely gave it time. It’s very important to me that we don’t do anything in the heat of the moment, Ballmer said. Doc and I needed to have some chats. After a few chats, we decided collectively that it was probably right to move in a different direction.

Rivers wasn’t out of a job for long, getting hired the same week to coach the Philadelphia 76ers.

Ballmer was quick to address Rivers’ departure, bringing it up even before mentioning Lue.

I really want to thank Doc Rivers. Doc was obviously a fantastic championship coach, Ballmer said, apparently referring to the 2008 NBA title Rivers won as coach of the Boston Celtics.

He’s been a mentor since I first purchased the Clippers six years ago. I’m so grateful to Doc. Doc is a very special human being. He’s been a great ambassador and a great person. I wish him well in Philadelphia, except for the two days a year when we play him.

Lue experienced a loss when Rivers was sent packing.

It’s been tough, he said. Doc has been my mentor since I’ve been in the league. Without Doc, I wouldn’t be in this position today.

Lue was a candidate for other head coaching jobs this offseason. Ballmer cited Lue’s accountability and his ability to connect with the players as factors that make the best of the best is Ty Lue. They chose me, Lue said. It feels good to be wanted.

# Mumbai City FC rope in Moroccan midfielder Ahmed Jahouh



**MUMBAI, OCT 22 (PTI):** Mumbai City FC on Thursday roped in Moroccan midfielder Ahmed Jahouh for the upcoming Indian Super League season, starting in November.

The 32-year-old Moroccan joins the club after signing a two-year contract. Jahouh started his career with Ittihad Khemisset before moving to Moghreb T touan in 2010.

Jahouh plied his trade at Moghreb for five seasons winning two league titles in the process, and featured in his last season at the club under then coach Sergio Lobera.

He then played for Raja Casablanca and FUS

Rabat, both in Morocco.

In 2017, Jahouh reunited with Lobera in India at FC Goa and became a key fixture for the Gaurs over the next three seasons, making 56 ISL appearances and winning the 2019/20 title as well as the Super Cup.

“I have spent three years in India and I believe that I have a lot left to achieve. When I spoke to the management at Mumbai City about the targets and the vision they have, I was convinced that this club is where I wanted to be,” Ahmed was quoted as saying in a media release.

“And of course, a chance to reunite once again with coach Lobera was too good to pass up,” he added.

Head coach Lobera on his part said that the Moroccan is someone “who can control the game.”

“He is an exceptional player and having worked with Ahmed before, I know he can make a difference.

“He has the experience to help us in the games and he can help bring the best out of those around him as well. Ahmed will fit in perfectly with the extremely talented squad we are building here,” Lobera signed off.



# Czechs enter 2nd lockdown to avoid health system collapse

**PRAGUE (AP):** Czechs had been assured it wouldn't happen again. But amid a record surge of coronavirus infections that's threatening the entire health system with collapse, the Czech Republic is adopting on Thursday exactly the same massive restrictions it slapped on citizens in the spring. Prime Minister Andrej Babis had repeatedly said these measures would never return.

"We have no time to wait," Babis explained Wednesday. "The surge is enormous."

Babis apologized for the huge impact the restrictions will have on everyday life but said if they were not taken "our health system would collapse between Nov 7-11."

"I apologize even for the fact that I ruled out this option in the past because I was not able to imagine it might happen," he added. "Unfortunately, it has happened and now, above all, we have to protect the lives of our citizens."

The measures include limits on free movement and the closure of many

stores, shopping malls and hotels. They will remain in place until at least Nov 3.

The Czech Republic had initially set an example with its effective and fast response when the pandemic first struck, but failed to learn from other countries' subsequent experiences and now faces the consequences.

As the pandemic struck slightly later than in western Europe, Czech authorities gained some breathing space. They used it to impose sweeping restrictions on daily life in March, and — unlike most other European countries — made mask-wearing obligatory in all public areas.

In April, the country was the first, with Austria, to start to ease restrictions and — again unlike most other European countries — almost completely abandoned them in the summer.

In June, thousands declared victory over the coronavirus at a big party on Prague's medieval Charles Bridge. Babis,



considered a populist leader, was jubilant and told an international conference in August that his country was the "best in COVID," despite already growing numbers of infected people.

The atmosphere at Wednesday's news conference, as Babis announced the new measures, was more sober.

"What happened was somehow predicted but nobody expected its scope," Babis said.

Some experts had called much earlier for strict steps.

"(Even) yesterday (would have been)

late, there's a danger at every corner," Jaroslav Flegr, a professor of evolutionary biology who predicted the surge a while ago, told Czech public television.

Many still remember when Babis' then health minister, Adam Vojtech, and his team proposed in August a mandatory return of masks in schools. Babis dismissed that option and fired the minister weeks later when the numbers of new infections started to grow rapidly in September.

They still are.

The daily figure for new confirmed cases was a record of almost

15,000 on Wednesday. That was almost 3,000 more than the previous record, set on Tuesday.

Since the start of the pandemic, the Czech Republic has registered 208,915 confirmed infections, about one third of them in the past seven days, and 1,739 people have died — with a record 100 deaths registered Monday.

The seven-day rolling average of daily new cases has risen over the past two weeks from 32.81 new cases per 100,000 people on Oct. 7 to 92.88 new cases per 100,000 people on Wednesday.

# Mixed Philippine reaction on pope nod on gay civil unions



**MANILA, PHILIPPINES (AP):** Pope Francis' endorsement of same-sex civil unions drew mixed reactions Thursday in the Philippines, Asia's bastion of Catholicism, with a retired bishop saying he was scandalized by it while an LGBT group welcomed the pontiff's remarks with relief.

President Rodrigo Duterte's spokesman said the Philippine leader has long expressed support to same-sex civil unions but added it needed to pass through Congress.

Retired Sorsogon Bishop Arturo Bastes said he "had very serious doubts about the moral correctness" of the pontiff's position. He said it ran against long-standing church teachings, which explicitly permit only the union of man and woman whether in civil, legal or church sacramental unions.

"This is a shocking statement coming from the pope," Bastes told reporters in a cellphone message. "I am really scandalized by his defense of homosexual union, which surely leads to immoral acts."

At least three other bishops expressed disbelief, saying they would verify if it's the Vatican's official position and if the pontiff was accurately quoted in context in a documentary, where he made the remarks.

"It is just a documentary film so it is not official and should first be verified," Balanga Bishop Ruperto Santos said, adding there could have been editing alterations or the documentary was "just for propaganda so that it could be talked about or patronized."

The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, the largest

group of bishops in the predominantly Roman Catholic nation, has yet to issue any reaction.

LGBTQ group Bahaghari told ABS CBN News that the pontiff's position was a "huge thing" and should lead to changes in the Philippine family code to recognize such unions.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque said Duterte has long supported same-sex civil unions and the papal endorsement may finally convince legislators to give their approval. In the past, such proposals have been opposed or avoided by conservative legislators or those who feared earning the ire of influential church leaders.

"With no less than the pope supporting it, I think even the most conservative of all Catholics in Congress should no longer have a basis for objecting," Roque said.

# Thailand cancels emergency decree in bid to calm protests

**BANGKOK (AP):** Thailand's government on Thursday canceled a state of emergency it had declared last week for Bangkok in a gesture offered by the embattled prime minister to cool student-led protests seeking democracy reforms.

The decree had banned public gatherings of more than four people and allowed censorship of the media, among other provisions. It was challenged in court by an opposition party and a group of university students.

The revocation of the emergency decree, effective at noon Thursday, declared that the situation had been mitigated and could now be dealt with by existing laws.

Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha went on national television on Wednesday night to appeal to the protesters to reduce political tensions and promised to lift the emergency measure.

"I will make the first move to deescalate this situation," he said. "I am currently preparing to lift the state of severe emergency in Bangkok and will do so promptly

if there are no violent incidents."

As he was speaking, protesters marched near Government House, his office, to demand he step down. They also asked for the release of their colleagues who were arrested in connection with earlier protests.

They said that if their demands were not met, they would return in three days. Although the protesters pushed their way through police lines, neither side resorted to violence.

There were no large demonstrations on Thursday, as some protesters said they were taking a rest day. Wednesday had marked the eighth straight day of rallies.

The protesters are pressing for a more democratic constitution and reforms to the monarchy. The implicit criticism of the royal institution has stirred controversy because it traditionally has been treated as sacrosanct and a pillar of national identity.

On Wednesday, royalists held rallies in several cities, in many cases led by civil servants, in what they said was defense of the

monarchy. At a small rally in Bangkok, there were fights between anti-government protesters and palace supporters.

Friday could see the royalists turn out again, as it is Chulalongkorn Day, a public holiday honoring one of the country's most revered kings.

Prayuth, in the taped speech, pleaded with his countrymen to resolve their political differences through Parliament.

The government on Tuesday approved a request to recall Parliament to deal with the political crisis in a special session from next Monday to Wednesday.

The appeal for a solution in Parliament was unlikely to win over protesters, as some of their core complaints are that the constitution and the political structure it created are undemocratic, in part because it was written after a 2014 military coup. Prayuth himself led that coup, which toppled an elected government during political unrest that featured widespread street protests.

The cancellation of the state of emergency came as Bangkok Civil Court was preparing to rule

on motions to revoke the decree on the basis that it illegally abridged freedom of assembly.

The opposition Pheu Thai party had been one of the complainants, and the head of its team at the court said Thursday that he was not impressed that Prayuth had lifted the decree.

"He's really doing it to protect himself. Why? Because if he didn't lift the emergency decree today, and the court ordered the temporary protection of the protesters, it would mean all his orders and announcement relating to this were illegal," said lawmaker Cholanan Srikaew.

Separately, the official committee supervising the fight against the coronavirus said the government is renewing for the seventh time a national state of emergency that had been imposed in March to contain the disease. It gives provincial governors powers to restrict gatherings, movement and media reports.

Authorities on Wednesday suffered a legal setback when a judge barred them from implementing orders

banning several media outlets because they failed to follow proper procedures.

Police sought to impose censorship on media reporting of the protests, citing what they called "distorted information" that could cause unrest and confusion.

In Geneva, the U.N.'s human rights office issued a statement saying that its experts urged Thailand's government to honor the rights of peaceful assembly and free speech.

"The Thai people should be allowed to freely speak their mind and share their political views, both online and offline, without prosecution," it said.

# S Korea cases jump week after restrictions eased

**SEOUL, OCT 22 (AP):** South Korea has 121 new confirmed cases of the coronavirus, its first triple-digit daily jump in a week amid concerns about the country easing social distancing restrictions just last week to cope with a weak economy.

Agency said Thursday that South Korea's caseload is now at 25,543 for the pandemic, including 453 deaths.

Hundreds of recent infections have been tied to hospitals in major cities such as Seoul and Busan.

Officials are testing 130,000 workers at hospitals, nursing homes

and senior facilities in the Seoul metropolitan area hoping to reduce outbreaks.

South Korea has enforced its lowest level of social distancing measures since October 13, allowing high-risk businesses and karaoke bars to reopen and fans to return to professional sports.

# Coca-Cola recovery continues as it grows leaner in pandemic

Coca-Cola measured gradual improvement in the third quarter as it focused on emerging leaner from the global pandemic.

Revenue fell 9% to \$8.7 billion, edging out Wall Street expectations of \$8.4 billion, according to analysts polled by FactSet. It was far better than the 28% drop in revenue in the second quarter.

Net income was \$1.7 billion. Earnings, adjusted for one-time items, fell 2% to 55 cents per share. That also outpaced analyst forecasts of 46 cents.

Coke has been decimated with the closure of arenas, restaurants, theaters and other public places where it books about half of its revenue.

It has been making up for some of that damage as people buy more beverages, like orange juice, at home. Sales of sparkling soft drinks fell 1% in the July-September period; sales of trademark Coca-Cola grew 1% for the quarter. But other beverages struggled. Sales of enhanced water and sports drinks dropped 11%

and tea and coffee sales were down 15%, hurt by closures of Costa retail stores.

So far this month, sales based on unit cases are seeing single-digit declines compared to last year; in April, those sales were down 25%.

Chairman and CEO James Quincey said the company has accelerated a planned reorganization that will put more emphasis on fast-growing brands.

In August, the company began offering voluntary buyouts to around 4,000 people, which

it hopes will reduce the number of people it eventually lays off. Coke is reducing the number of individual business segments from 17 to nine.

Coca-Cola Co. also announced last week that it was retiring several products this year, including Tab, Zico coconut water, Diet Coke Fiesty Cherry and regional offerings like Northern Neck Ginger Ale. The company had announced in July summer that it was retiring Odwalla juices.

Coke plans to reduce its brands by half, to 200.

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**SummitTIMES**





**COOLING DOWN!** Model Kaia Gerber leaned against a car after a workout in West Hollywood.

## Daisy Edgar-Jones to star in 'Where the Crawdads Sing'



**LOS ANGELES, OCT 22 (PTI):** "Normal People" breakout Daisy Edgar-Jones will headline the upcoming drama movie "Where the Crawdads Sing".

Based on author Delia Owens' 2018 novel of the same name, the film hails from Reese Witherspoon's production company Hello Sunshine.

The story takes place in the mid-20th century South and centres on Kya, a young woman who is abandoned by her family and has to raise herself all alone in the marshes outside of her small town. However, when her former boyfriend is found dead, Kya is thrust into the spotlight, instantly branded by the local townspeople and law enforcement as the prime suspect for his murder.

According to Variety, Olivia Newman

will direct the feature from a script by Academy Award-nominated writer Lucy Alibar.

Reese Witherspoon and Lauren Neustadter are producing for Hello Sunshine with Elizabeth Gabler, Erin Siminoff and Aislinn Dunster are overseeing the project for 3000 Pictures.

Earlier this year, Edgar-Jones and actor Paul Mescal earned praise from the critics for their performances in Hulu and BBC Three's "Normal People".

The show, an adaptation of author Sally Rooney's critically acclaimed and bestselling novel of the same name, follows the tender but complicated relationship between Marianne and Connell from the end of their school days in a small town west of Ireland to their undergraduate years at Trinity College.

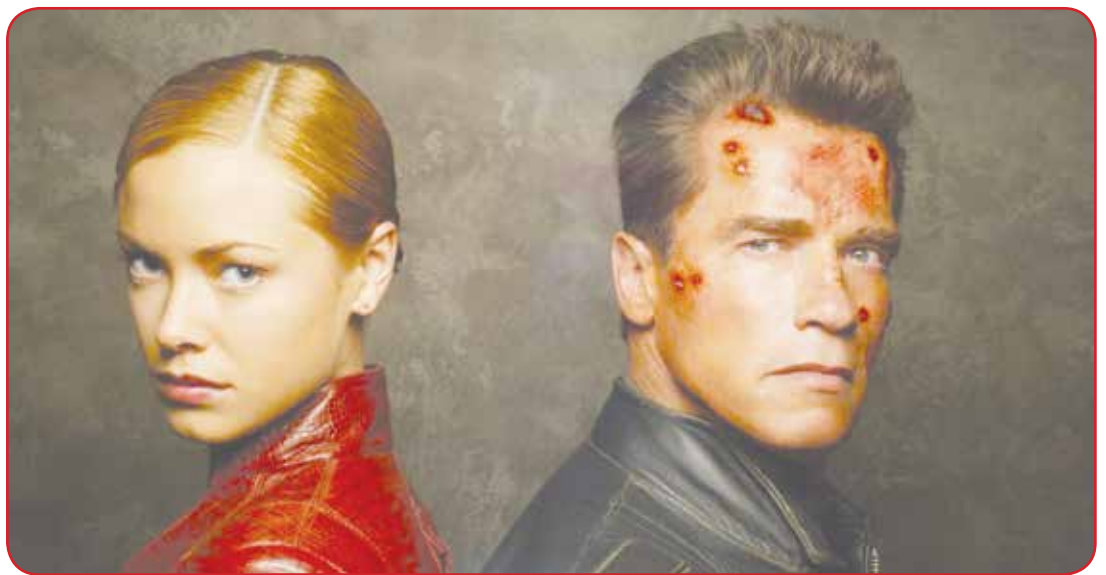
## 'Terminator 3' director Jonathan Mostow to helm refugee thriller

**LOS ANGELES, OCT 22 (PTI):** Filmmaker Jonathan Mostow, best known for helming action spectacles like "Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines" and "Breakdown", is set to direct a refugee thriller based on a true story.

According to Variety, Mostow will also open the feature film based on American businessman Chris Catrambone, founder of the Migrant Offshore Aid Station, a global search and rescue charity.

The director said he is "honoured" to be a part of the project.

"Chris Catrambone is living proof of how one person's passion can save lives. When he saw the world standing idle as scores of refugees drowned in the Mediterranean, he took it upon himself to do something. I'm honoured to be able to



tell his story," Mostow said.

Scott Gardenhour, the name behind titles like "Armageddon", "Coyote Ugly", and "Pearl Harbor", is attached to produce.

The yet-to-be-titled project is expected to start production late next year.

## 'Fast and Furious' series to end with two back-to-back sequels

**LOS ANGELES, OCT 22 (PTI):** Universal Pictures will wraps its long-running action franchise "Fast and Furious" with two back-to-back instalments, to be directed by Justin Lin.

The franchise, led by Vin Diesel, has so far produced nine films since the debut of the first "Fast and Furious" movie in 2001.

According to Variety, Diesel will return for the new movies along with the core cast of Michelle Rodriguez, Tyrese Gibson, Chris 'Ludacris' Bridges, Jordana Brewster, Nathalie Emmanuel and Sung Kang.

Lin has so far directed four films in the series -- "The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift" (2006), "Fast Five" (2011), "Fast & Furious 6" (2013) and upcoming "F9".

The "Fast and Furious" franchise, which also includes Dwayne Johnson and Jason Statham-led spinoff "Hobbs & Shaw", has made USD 5.89 billion globally.

The latest film "F9" is currently in post-production, with the release having been pushed back by Universal to May 2021 from a 2020 release due to the coronavirus pandemic.



## Banksy artwork sells for almost \$10 million at auction



**LONDON (AP):** Banksy's playful take on a famous Impressionist painting has sold at auction for 7.6 million pounds (\$9.8 million), the second-highest price ever paid for a work by the British street artist.

"Show Me the Monet" sold to an unidentified bidder at Sotheby's in London on Wednesday evening, surpassing its upper pre-sale estimate of 5 million pounds.

In the 2005 work, Banksy added abandoned shopping carts and an orange traffic cone to Claude Monet's image of water lilies in his garden at Giverny.

Alex Branczik, Sotheby's European head of contemporary art, said the work was one of the "strongest and most iconic" Banksy works to appear at auction.

Banksy, whose real name has never been officially confirmed, began his career spray-painting buildings in Bristol, England, and has become one of the world's best-known artists.

Another Banksy work, "Devolved Parliament," sold last year at Sotheby's in London for 9.9 million pounds. Earlier this month, his graffiti-style piece "Forgive Us Our Trespassing" sold for \$8.3 million at Sotheby's in Hong Kong.

## Bad Bunny, Daddy Yankee top Billboard Latin Music Awards



**SUNRISE, FLA. (AP):** Bad Bunny and Daddy Yankee triumphed at the Billboard Latin Music Awards Wednesday, claiming seven trophies apiece at the pandemic-delayed show.

Bad Bunny won artist of the year, the night's top honor, as well as top Latin album for "X 100PRE" and songwriter of the year. He did not attend the ceremony.

Daddy Yankee won six of his awards for his hit "Con Calma," which featured the 1990s artist Snow. His honors included the hot Latin song award, and song of the year honors for streaming and airplay and digital platforms.

The reggaeton star dedicated the first of his awards to those who had lost loved ones due to COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus. "Music remains medicine," he said.

Actress Gaby Espino hosted the ceremony, which aired live on Telemundo from the BB&T Center in Sunrise, Florida. The event had a red carpet, but no audience.

Mexican romance singer-songwriter Armando Manzanero received a Lifetime Achievement Award during the ceremony.

Luis Fonsi and Daddy Yankee were also recognized for "Despacito," which was named song of the decade.

### ARIES:

Service is coming up as a big theme for you right now, and requires a certain amount of selflessness. That does not mean you have to change the course of your life or give up on what you have created. It simply means that you're being called to expand your work in a way that includes and uplifts other people. PS: You're ready to inspire a big change in the collective consciousness.

### TAURUS:

You've spent way too many years playing the role of people-pleaser and following the rules that were set by other people. However, this didn't bring you anything more than momentary pleasure. What it did is make you lose that connection with your most authentic self. The next chapter of your life is about reclaiming the power that you have so easily given away to others and live a life that brings joy and satisfaction to yourself. Let go of the guilt associated with following your own path and purpose.

### GEMINI:

You save everyone, but who's going to save you, Gemini? The cards are pointing towards your unhealthy obsession with trying to 'heal' or 'fix' everything around you. Just because you have a bird's eye view of what they're going through, doesn't mean you necessarily have the means to prevent them from walking into the lap of doom. Besides, everybody journeys to the earthly realm with a predetermined script. Just for today, redirect your gaze towards yourself. Take care of the microcosm, and the

macrocosm will take care of itself.

### CANCER:

They call you when they need something, pretend to be close to you when it serves their fancy, and disappear as soon as you call upon them for help. This friendship had the word 'toxic' written all over it from the get-go. The cards are urging you to stop playing Miss/Mister Nice and protect your space fiercely. Not everybody is worth your time and energy, Cancer. Remembering this will help you prioritise the main person in your life, aka you, you, you!

### LEO:

Once again, the cards are talking about selling your soul to Lucifer on your own terms. Some of you could even find yourself playing out the 'black widow' narrative. How much is too much, though? It's all fun and games until you get carried away by power or fame. On the upside, the realm of art and beauty also has your attention. In true Leo style, you could feel inspired to give both your space and your wardrobe a regal makeover over the next few days.

### VIRGO:

We all possess a direct hotline with the divine and are perfectly capable of receiving guidance from Spirit. You're no exception to this rule, Virgo. Today, the cards are urging you to believe in the magic that surrounds you, and trust the messages that are coming through from the unseen realms. Letting go of the limitations created by your logical mind is a way to look beyond the veil. The cards are also urging you to get serious about playfulness. Clichéd as it is, laughter is known to be the best medicine.

### LIBRA:

Libra, you may feel like you've lived a 100 years over the past six months, and that you have unknowingly signed up for a master class in soul lessons. Here's the thing about awakening to your truth, though: your life will never be the same. The next chapter sees you letting go of what remains of the outmoded identity, and transforming into the butterfly you were meant to be. Your time to shine your light onto the world has come, and it requires you to be your most authentic self unapologetically.

### SCORPIO:

You're feeling all kinds of positive today, which in turn is inspiring you to follow your passion with a newfound fervor. If doing something \*this\* different makes you the black sheep of the crew, so be it. Following the herd has never been your style anyway. Given that the path you have chosen is a less trodden one, it is likely to make those who are disconnected from the stream of creative consciousness uncomfortable. But, you are not here to please everybody. You are certainly not responsible for healing their traumas, which could potentially resurface. Continue to face your true North and know that you are a source of inspiration.

### SAGITTARIUS:

The cards are pointing towards your consumption patterns—shopping as a form of cardio being one of them. Who doesn't like pretty stuff, right? However, could you be giving into the lure of the material world in order to escape the void within? A few ways to up the style game without burning a hole in your pocket: stitch your own clothes with existing fabrics, upcycle what you own, shop second hand, or

curate a capsule collection. PS: You're way more creative than you give yourself credit for!

### CAPRICORN:

Rejection does strange things to us. The next thing we know, we are five years old again, crying our eyes out in the playground because some kid refused to let us play catch-and-cook with them. A good question to ask yourself when you're triggered: Am I hurt because my pride is hurt, or because I really care about the given person or situation? PS: It's time to address the wounds that are coming in the way of building healthy relationships.

### AQUARIUS:

Your sacral chakra is calling for your attention, Aquarius—the energy centre that rules creativity and helps us stay connected with the cosmic currents. When it's out of balance, we shy away from tapping into our inherent playfulness and carry guilt around the idea of pleasure. To facilitate change, you're being encouraged to make small, simple changes. To bring lightness into your life by embracing the idea of laughter and joy.

### PISCES:

But, what about \*you\*? Pisces? You've been taking care of everybody but yourself. Today, the cards are urging you to find a balance between the energy you give to yourself, and the energy you give to others. Do at least one thing that brings a smile to your face, no matter how silly it sounds on paper. While you're at it, skip the conspiracy theories and political dramas. Indulge in something fun and lighthearted. PS: Dance and movement will also help you bring your lost mojo back.Â