The total number of active coronavirus cases in India rose to 6,565 as of today while the death toll has touched 239 as per data provided on the Union Health Ministry website.

With the novel coronavirus now racing across our neighbouring State of West Bengal and declaration of Kalimpong as one of the COVID-19 hotspots by the WB government, the frontline responders of Sikkim aided by the fundamental support of the State government have intensified their work with utmost dedication and bravery even during the nationwide 21-day lockdown to keep the statistics of COVID-19 cases in the State to a nil. They are the workforce that deserve so much more than just a round of applause.

Among the front line responders are the warriors in white coats, the doctors, battle-ready for any occurrence of a COVID-19 case in the State, backed up by a team of health care workers including nurses, paramedics, technicians, medical staff, administrators and sanitation service providers, who have time and again surfaced themselves as our most precious resource.

A visit to the most prominent hospital in the capital town of Gangtok, the STNM Hospital, Sochaygang, may give you a brief idea about the undeniable efforts of the health care workers in providing medical services to the public when the entire nation has been ordered to stay home during the lockdown period.

The various Wards in the hospital reflect the hustle of doctors and nurses engaged in interpreting X-Ray/CT films, blood reports and patient history while the medical attendants run to and fro from their respective Wards to other concerned departments for retrieving life saving consultations for the doctors to go about with the required treatment. The medical attendants also escort the IPD/OPD patients throughout the process of their treatment and provide basic patient care from changing their linens to their dressing and grooming duties.

Geared up in masks and gloves, the doctors in every department of STNM including the Flu Clinic along with the incontestable assistance of the nurses have been regularly attending to their patients regardless of the risks that they have been highly exposed to and are concurrently advising the day-to-day visitors on the COVID-19 pandemic and the importance of social distancing.

Likewise, the activities at the departments of Pathology, Micro Biology and Bio Chemistry remain unaltered even after the imposition of the...
lockdown wherein health care workers have been working with the same intensity as before to procure accurate reports and crucial diagnosis. Stepping in side-by-side during this unseen pandemic is the paramedical staff working tirelessly to provide the best care to the patients. From Ward Masters to Technicians, the nationwide lockdown has not kept them away from performing their duties to give essential services to the people of the State. Ambulance services have been kept intact with four to five active ambulances playing a critical role in the delivery of emergency services 24x7.

For early detection of any suspected COVID-19 case, screening of the ingoing visitors is being conducted by AYUSH doctors at the main entry point of the STNM Hospital. The fully equipped 166-bedded isolation facility at the hospital remains empty as of now with zero cases of COVID-19 in the entire State of Sikkim.

It is a known fact that for hospitals and medical facilities, sanitation plays a vital role and this is where the Safai Karmacharis steal the show for their consistent efforts in maintaining a clean and healthy environment in and outside the hospital premises. At the grassroot level, Safai Karmacharis are indeed the true frontline warriors.

A special mention needs to be given to the volunteers from all walks of life who have been extending their support and understanding by offering refreshments to the warriors on duty to some even offering free ambulance service during these times of difficulty.

This was just an overview of the contributions of the medical frontline responders at the new STNM Hospital under the leadership of a team of dedicated administrators. Similar wave of energy and dedication is spread across all other districts of the State including CHCs, PHCs and Sub Centres where doctors, nurses and health workers have held their ground in combating the COVID-19 pandemic, not to forget the commendable job of the medical staff posted at various check-posts in Sikkim as well as volunteers.

Amidst the current front-and-center issue of the pandemic, the State government has been doing its bit in acknowledging the frontline corona warriors by announcing incentives and insurance facilities for them, along with required logistics and equipment. As for us layman, let us all join hands in supporting them by following every protocol laid down for the lockdown because these warriors are staying at work for us. The least we can do for them is to stay home, stay safe.