

Saturday, December 1, 2012 | Vol II, issue 47

Kuensel

Weekend Magazine



Catching up with first five

*A year after the event, K2 talks to the brave Bhutanese,
who'd gone public about their condition*

Ensure GENERATION Free of **HIV**

Save your child from HIV infection. You can save your unborn child, even if you are HIV infected. Get tested for HIV from your nearest health center.



Testing facilities are available in all the Hospitals and the Health Information & Service Center (HISC) in Thimphu, Phuntsholing, Gelephu and Samdrupjongkhar.

Dear Reader

It was a bold decision, when four men and a woman living with HIV came out in the open, especially when the infection and people living with it were stigmatised. This happened a year back.

It was a selfless act. Their intentions were clear and worthy of commendation. They took on the responsibility towards society to educate others about the disease, and to pass on a bigger message that people living with HIV were like people living with any other disease.

But how much has this impacted on society?

The reactions five of them received have varied - from people coming up and praising them for their action, to people refusing to sit next to them, or even travel in the same vehicle.

The virtue of the act is that the ice has been broken, paving a path for better understanding and acceptance among people.

Happy Reading!
Kinley Wangmo

Write to us at kinley_w@kuensel.com.bt.
Send birthday greetings, contribute for the last page or send your feedback.

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HAPPENINGS

This Week



World AIDS day

A number of activities are organised at the clock tower square in Thimphu **today**, to create awareness and observe World AIDS Day.

One can join a walk around town starting from the square at 8am.

Organised by Lhaksam in collaboration with health ministry and RENEW, the event will feature skits and performances on various HIV-AIDS issues and its prevention.

Drumming tradition

A cultural festival on drumming tradition in SAARC countries starts **today** in Thimphu.

The festival kicks off with a concert at the clock tower, followed by a photo exhibition at Nehru Wangchuck Culture Centre. A symposium on socio-cultural significance of drumming tradition in the region will also be held.

The festival ends on December 4.

Contemporary art

An art exhibition by contemporary Japanese artist Atsuko Takai starts **today** at the Voluntary Artists Studio of Thimphu (VAST), Tarayana centre.

The artist's work "offers a fresh perspective on daily familiar things which are generally taken for granted, and which are through the eyes of an artist given a different hue and meaning".

Her works use a variety of materials like stones, newspapers, tableware among others which are transmogrified into art.

The exhibition, which is open from 10am to 5pm every day, ends on December 9.

Anything happening?

Let us know at kinley_w@kuensel.com.bt

or call us at 322483. You can also find us (K2 Kuensel) on Facebook.

Send in information at the earliest since K2 goes to the printing press every Tuesday.

zakar
WHAT THE STARS
ARE SAYING

2012

1 Dec– 7 Dec

December 1, Saturday (18th day of tenth Bhutanese month)

Good day to perform daily rituals only.
Bad day for job promotion, to consecrate, shift house, enter into new house, marry, celebrate and start any work.

December 2, Sunday (19th day of tenth Bhutanese month)

Good day for job promotion, to consecrate, learn astrology, shift house, enter into new house, make decision, marry, celebrate, sow seed, plant trees and flowers.
Bad day to roof house, hoist player flag and till land.

December 3, Monday (20th day of tenth Bhutanese month)

Good day to appoint army officer, celebration, shift house, enter into new house, marry, hand and take over office, make decision, start new business.
Bad day to venture on a long journey.

December 4, Tuesday (21st day of seventh Bhutanese month)

Good day to perform daily rituals only.
Bad day for job promotion, to marry, appoint army officer, celebrate, shift house, start new business, hand and take over office, enter into new house, roof house, and venture on a long journey.

December 5, Wednesday (22nd day of tenth Bhutanese month)

Good day to perform daily rituals only.
Bad day to consecrate, marry, hand and take over new office, roof house, start new business, venture on a long journey and sell property.

December 6, Thursday (23rd day of tenth Bhutanese month)

Good day to perform daily rituals only.
Bad day for job promotion, to shift house, enter into new house, start new business, marry and make good decision.

December 7, Friday (24th day of seventh Bhutanese month)

Good day to perform daily rituals only.
Bad day to consecrate, appoint new army officer, hand and take over new office, marry, start new business, celebrate, roof house, shift house and sell properties.

Positive agents of change

K² Sonam Pelden

Having lived, died and weathered the fear, mockery and whispered condemnations for years, five Bhutanese broke the silence last year and gave HIV/AIDS a face. For them, the fight was not only against the virus that thrives on the most vulnerable aspects of human life, but also against bigotry, denial and ignorance.

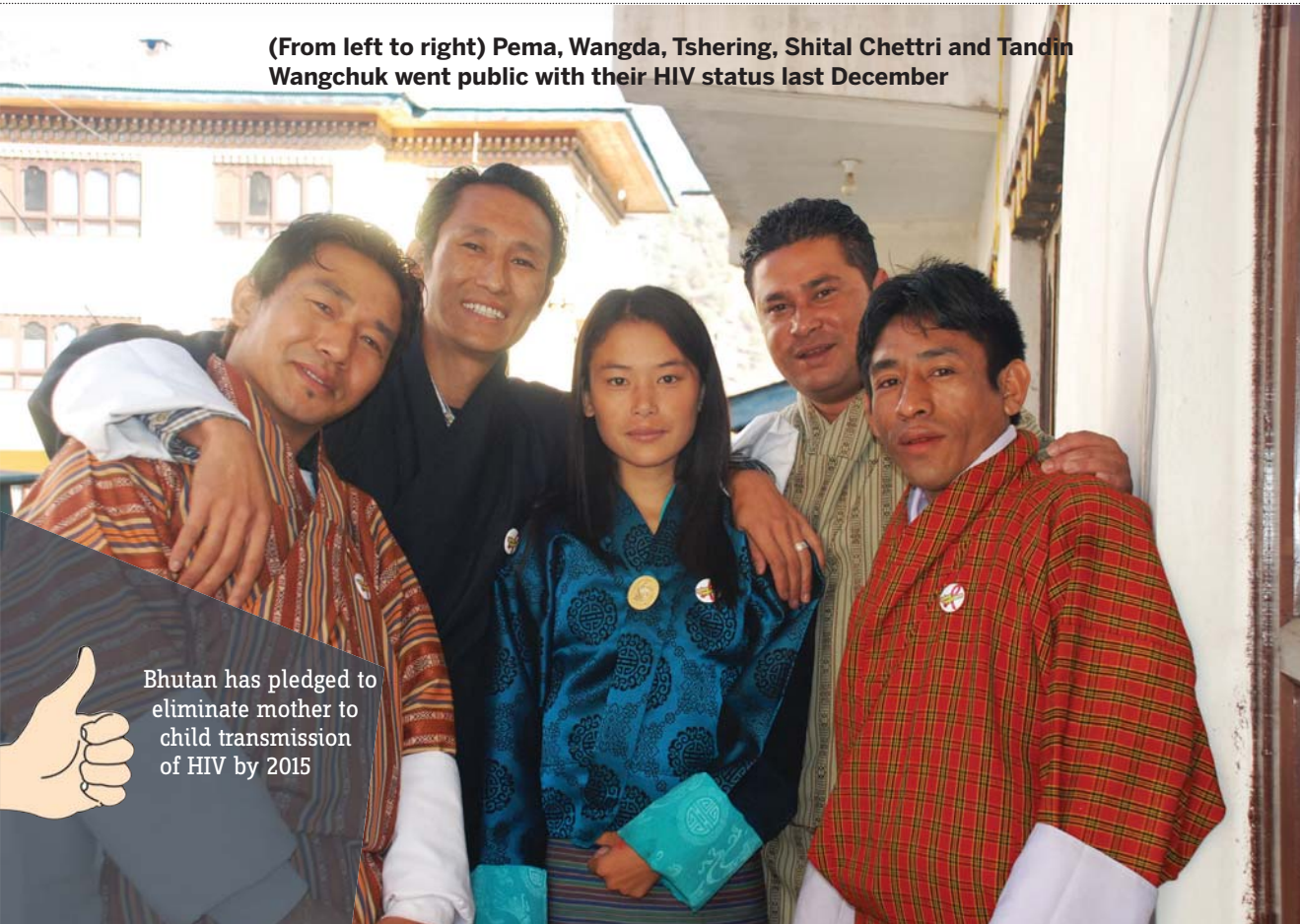
They share their stories a year after they came out one cold December evening in Thimphu.

A day after Wangda went public with his HIV status, he was at the hospital to be treated for a boil. Since he was thirsty, while waiting in the queue, Wangda asked his wife to buy him a bottle of water.

"But she wasn't feeling comfortable, so I went to buy water and decided to have a cup of hot coffee," Wangda said. "Suddenly, a boy of about 8-9 years was looking at me from the railing above; I saw him sigh."

The boy ran off, said Wangda, yelling out to his friend by name Tashi... Tashi...

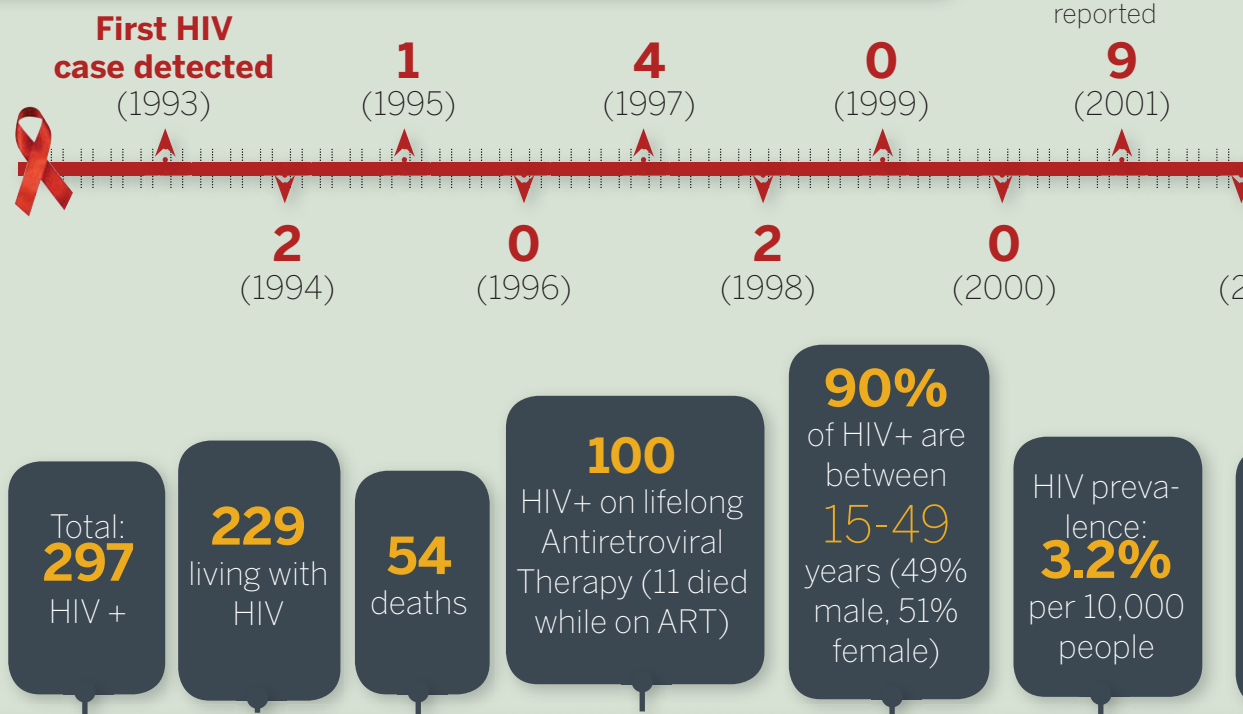
(From left to right) Pema, Wangda, Tshering, Shital Chettri and Tandin Wangchuk went public with their HIV status last December



Bhutan has pledged to eliminate mother to child transmission of HIV by 2015

HIV cases detected in the past 19 years

First mother-to-child transmission reported



He returned a few minutes later, looked at Wangda, and then again fled. "I was psyched and was trying to finish my coffee soon," he said. "After few seconds, he came back with some of his friends with running noses."

Wangda returned to the queue at the hospital, somewhat happy that children now knew of a few Bhutanese living with HIV. What they made of that was another issue.

After that encounter, Wangda and his friends, who went public with their HIV status met many, who recognised them and talked to them. They also met a few, who ignored or taunted them.

"Some courageous people come to us, say hello and tell us how they appreciate the bold step we'd taken," Wangda said. "Even when we're at the airport, the crew shakes hands with us, and tell us that, even though they're educated, they are still scared to test for HIV."

"... I learnt that being educated and holding high positions aren't enough (to dispel ignorance)"

■ Pema, Driver

Many said they had themselves tested for HIV after they came out, while a group of women from Limbukha in Punakha called to say they were taking the village women for HIV test in Punakha hospital.

"Some students tell us what heroes we were to come out," he said. "I feel we've given HIV a human face."

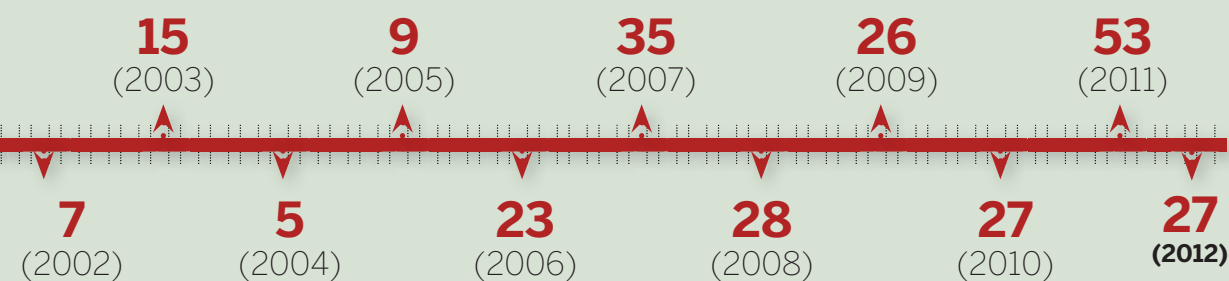
But the yearlong journey was not always smooth. Their decision to give HIV a face also made them face the realities of a society that's not always kind.

Just a few months after the schools reopened, Wangda's eight-year-old daughter wanted to change school. She was embarrassed when her friends asked her about her parents.

They became the talk of the town every time they visited a district for advocacy programs, while some people in Phuentsholing commented that the five came out as if they did something great!

Among police personnel in Phuentsholing, whenever they came across someone weak, it has become a joke to say it was time for them to come on TV.

But the five and their friends took all these reactions sportingly, because, reacting to it, they knew, would do as much harm as the virus they were living with.



First case of HIV infection acquired through intravenous drug use reported

71
HIV+ are unemployed

Most HIV+ cases in **western** Bhutan, followed by **eastern**

People living with HIV detected in **19** districts

More than half of total HIV+ detected in **Thimphu & P/ling**

No of ART drugs: **445,781**
worth Nu 2,316,996 (2012)

Male condoms received from UNFPA: **24,000** (2012)



There was, however, one time when they felt very stigmatised. After they came out last year, the five were called to one of the organisations, where they were promised that the office would help them with land, where a convention centre was to be built. Proceeds from there was to go into helping Lhak Sam, the network of Bhutanese people living with HIV.

"A few weeks later, I was sent to follow up on their proposal and the dasho there asked me, if we were taking advantage of coming out in the media," Pema, who works as a driver, said. "I didn't know how to react, whether to be ashamed or angry or sad." But it changed my perception about the educated and those holding high positions."

Pema's friends said he cried after returning from the office. They never followed up on the proposal, but that comment discouraged Pema from registering his son's census. It made his HIV positive wife not want to come out, because using their HIV status to their advantage, they said, was the last thing they wanted.

« Wangda and Tshering with His Majesty

"... now I'm used to the stares and, since people choose to stand, getting a seat in the bus is easy for me"

■ Tshering

The only woman to go public

"Actually, it's not HIV virus that affects us, but the stress from it that kills you," Pema said.

While Pema and his friends may never forget the way "higher officials" treated them, they take joy in the small things that happen to them everyday.

Pema, for one, has taken up biking to stay healthy and fight the virus in his body. He stood 30th out of 196 who participated in a biking race to Paro. "My body is sick, not my mind," the father of four said.

Before Pema gave HIV a face, his children, who were studying in Samdrupjongkhar, had been kept separately in their classrooms, and teachers didn't allow them to share pencils. "But things have changed now."

After going public, Tandin Wangchuk, 30, is today living in Samdrupjongkhar. He said his family was upset that he didn't tell them about his HIV status before going public.

"My four sisters scolded me, because they said I might have needed their support when I was detected," he said.

People stared at him after he returned to Samdrupjongkhar, while some changed their directions when they saw him. "I feel nothing's wrong in people running away, because it means

19 years ago ...

Bhutan's first HIV positive couple was from Tsirang. He was 35, a graduate, and probably infected while studying outside the country.

He came to the hospital himself, the doctor, who saw him, recalls. It was 1993 and Bhutan had detected its first HIV positive case.

But by the time he disclosed his HIV status, he had already married a 16-year-old, and passed on the infection to his wife. That time, anti retroviral therapy was also not good, the doctor said. "They cried when they learnt about their HIV status, and we advised them not to spread it," he said.

Their families were told that they had hepatitis, because the stigma for HIV then was "just too much." The husband was also on treatment for TB, and later got malaria while travelling. He then returned to Tsirang.

"I took his blood and, that time, we couldn't do the tests in Tsirang," the doctor recalled. But he died before the test result came out. That was sometime in 1995/1996. The doctor said, test results showed that he was suffering from cerebral malaria.

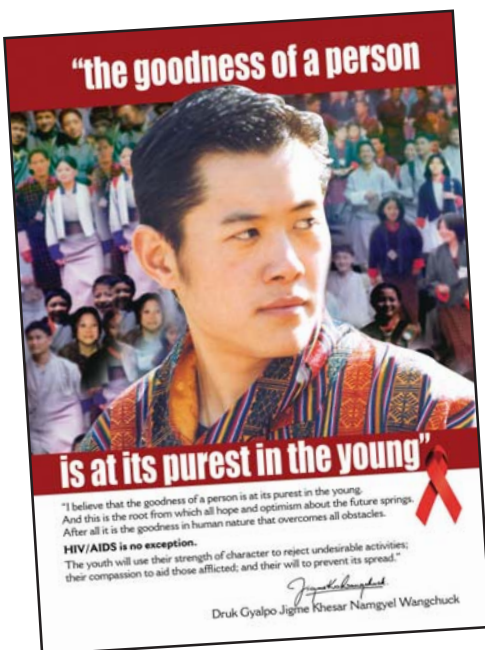
His young wife moved to Gelephu to start a new life with another man, and requested health officials to not disclose her HIV status to him. It's a "scientific miracle that he didn't get HIV," the doctor said. "They wanted to have children, we advised against it."

She died in 2001/2002 in Thimphu referral hospital. With her case, came up the rule that HIV positives have to disclose their status to their sexual partners within two weeks after detection. Otherwise, health officials would.

they'll be cautious," he said. "But what also happened was that my daughter one day came home crying, because she was insulted and stigmatised in her school by her classmates."

Tandin Wangchuk's 27-year-old wife Tashi, is also HIV positive, but their two children, aged nine and five, are negative. "Children are innocent and shouldn't be avoided and criticised," Tashi said. "We've now overcome the daily stress and inferior feeling that we felt before."

Shital Chettri, who is usually on the road with his taxi, is one of the familiar faces travellers see. Some



take a ride in his taxi. Some choose another cab. “Those, who don’t understand, still refuse to sit where we sit, but those, who do, talk to us,” the 38-year-old said.

He said, he tells everyone that he is HIV positive and that he still provides for his family and makes a living. Shital remembers driving a woman passenger in his Bolero taxi to Samtse. “She wasn’t married, and we talked about settling down,” he said. “I told her that she needed to know something first and said I have HIV.”

The woman looked at him with wide eyes, and insisted that she would sit outside, with the luggage. He, however, convinced her that sitting together doesn’t pass the infection.

Shital’s and Wangda’s families also had to move to another house after they went public with their HIV status. “But I’ve support from my family and friends and that’s enough,” Shital said. “I don’t have to control my diet like my diabetic friends, and a lot of people understand HIV better today than last year.”

The only woman to go public with her HIV status, Tshering, a mother of four and Wangda’s wife, said she doesn’t hide while taking medicines any more. When she boarded the city bus once, passengers choose to stand, instead of sitting next to her, while students, who were on the bus, stared at her.

“But now I’m used to the stares and, since

people choose to stand, getting a seat in the bus is easy for me,” she said.

A year on and, despite some not-so-good experiences, the five said they are glad they came out. “We feel we got HIV for a reason, and coming out about it has given our lives a purpose,” Wangda said.

When a man sat down with Kuensel in October 1997, it was for the first time that a personalised experience of a HIV positive was going to be published in Bhutan. At that time, HIV was still the dreaded illness and that interview was not to create a hero of him, who said, “I regret it but it’s past... what can I do? If it was going to happen tomorrow, I could say something... But it was yesterday...”

The man had wanted to talk to Kuensel again and share his story with the youth. He wanted to describe the pain to help others avoid it. But by the time Kuensel wanted to talk to him again as Bhutan observed World Aids Day, it was too late. He died a week before December 1 that year.

**Additional reporting Nirmala Pokhrel
in Samdrupjongkhar
Photos by Lhak Sam**



**A Lhak Sam member talks
to students in Samtse**



PERCEPTION

Just another disease? **not yet**

K² Sonam Pelden

While Bhutan's response to the pandemic started long before it's first HIV positive case was detected, the perception of the disease still remains mixed today.

The national HIV/AIDs and STIs control program was started in 1988.

From being feared, mocked, discriminated, empathized to being understood, the disease has been seen through various societal lens in the last 19 years, when Bhutan detected its first case.

While 297 cases have been detected so far and the disease now has given a face, the perception of HIV is as varied as the country itself.

Health officials said the "thinking and understanding" of HIV is better among rural populace today even though it has infected both the educated and the illiterate, young and old and men and women.

"Before people were ignorant and a movie that was made on HIV said it was dangerous," former public health director Dr Ugen Dophu said. "So fear tactics was used before to create awareness about HIV."

Those fear tactics are evident in old stories Kuensel wrote on the infection. One headline in 1992 said, "The AIDS time bomb is ticking in Bhutan" while stories used words like "the dreaded disease" and "scourge" and cartoons of sad man saying "I have AIDS."

A lot of stories covered on the infection are however also on awareness programmes that the government was taking to prevent it from spreading.

Program manager for the last six years with the national HIV/AIDS control program Namgay Tshering agrees that the government initially created awareness by making the disease fearful.

"Countries al over the world advocated with fearful messages and

people thought that once you get HIV/AIDS, you are finished,” he said.

In 1999, Kuensel quoted the former program manager Dr Tenzin Penjore, saying that the “hype about HIV/AIDS and death sent a clear message that you should avoid the infected person. We realise that technique has done more harm than good.”

The Royal Decree on HIV and AIDS issued by His Majesty the Fourth King on May 24, 2004 serves as the guiding principle in the fight against HIV and AIDS. The Royal Decree calls for all members of the society to help prevent HIV and AIDS and provide care and compassion to those infected.

But even after shifting the technique to “compassionate care and support,” today, the infection is still perceived as it was once portrayed.

Namgay Tshering said that while many refer to it as a chronic manageable disease, some section of the society still sees it as a killer disease. “Health workers see it as any other chronic manageable disease except that it has no absolute cure,” he said. “But, if you are comply and take your medicines on time, you can live like any healthy person.”

Health officials said the qualified ones who are HIV positive still have some stigma towards HIV, which is why they aren’t out helping those who are now out. “So they are not educated, even if they are qualified,” a health official said.

Stigma may exist in Bhutan in the form of jokes and teasing, but not in schooling or job opportunities or even by family, health officials pointed out. They feel it’s more about self-stigma that’s keeping the understanding of the infection from reaching out.

That majority of HIV positives today are still in hiding indicates how the infection is still perceived. No other persons living with HIV are coming out today like last year even though they are as active as them in advocacy and networking programs.

HIV positives said it’s because of their family that they cannot come out because their decisions have an impact on the lives of their family members.

While UNAIDS estimated Bhutan to have at least 500 HIV positives by 2009, about 297 have been detected so far also shows that HIV to be accepted as any other chronic disease might take some time in the country.

That the person’s consent is required to test him or her for HIV makes it a “unique” infection unlike other sexually transmitted infections like gonorrhea and syphilis said Dr Ugen Dophu.

In the interest of the public, tests were done without the consent of the person infected with gonorrhea and syphilis, in the case of HIV, it was the individual’s interest that was given priority over public good, the former public health director explained.

“That’s why in 1981, all HIV positives in US didn’t allow the rapid test kits to be introduced by the FDA because with not so good treatment then they argued it was no use getting tested,” he said.

Health officials said the perception of HIV should change because voluntary counseling tests are available in all district hospitals and HISC and soon in BHUs, treatment is available and if compliance is good, having HIV would be like suffering from hypertension and diabetes.



Did you know?

The facts about AIDS

AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

The immune system of a person with AIDS has weakened to the point that medical intervention may be necessary to prevent or treat serious illness.

A blood test can determine if a person is infected with HIV, but if a person tests positive for HIV, it does not exactly mean that the person has AIDS.

Having HIV does not mean that you will get AIDS

AIDS is produced from sexual contact.

AIDS can be transmitted by breast milk.

AIDS is not likely to be transmitted by hugging unless there are open sores with blood and puss.

Most people nowadays get infected between the age of 13 and 20.

Some treatment does not work on some people and symptoms occur that normally don't take place with most people.

People who have been infected by AIDS they normally get sick easily because their immune system has been infected.

HIV and AIDS killed over 3,000,000 , and every year the deaths get higher.

AIDS and HIV infects 8,200 people per day.

Air kills the virus.

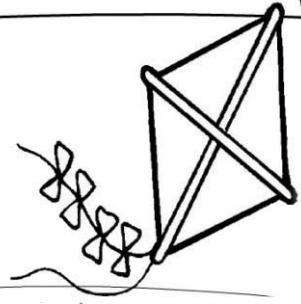
A drop of infected blood in the air can kill the virus in less then 45 seconds.

Word search

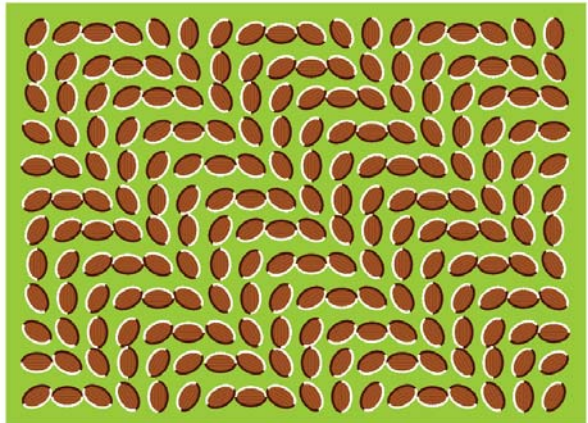
K	R	N	S	R	W	F	T	M	A
X	F	F	J	U	K	R	M	N	Q
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V	R	T	B	L	O	C	K	S	F
U	B	A	L	L	C	R	S	G	F

ball
bear
blocks
boat
car

doll
kite
plane
train



Optical Illusions



November 28

Dear Tshoki

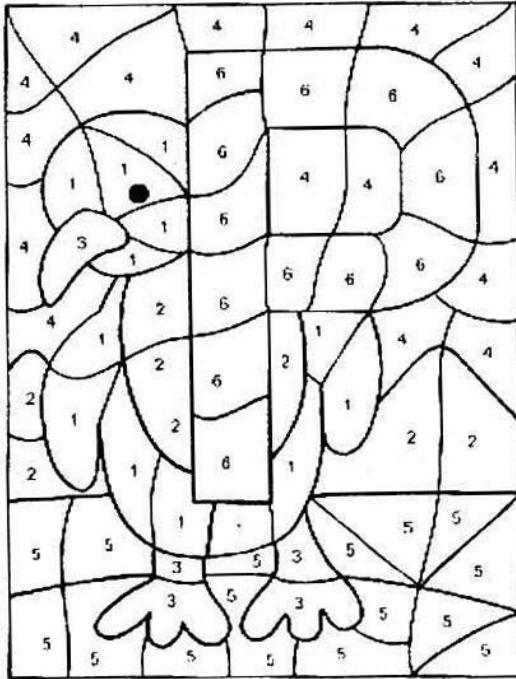
Nothing in this world could ever be as wonderful as the love you've given me. Your love makes my days so very bright, just knowing you're my darling hubby.

May the anniversary mark the beginning of another year of love and joy. Here's hoping that the bond you share remains as strong as ever.

Happy anniversary Dechen

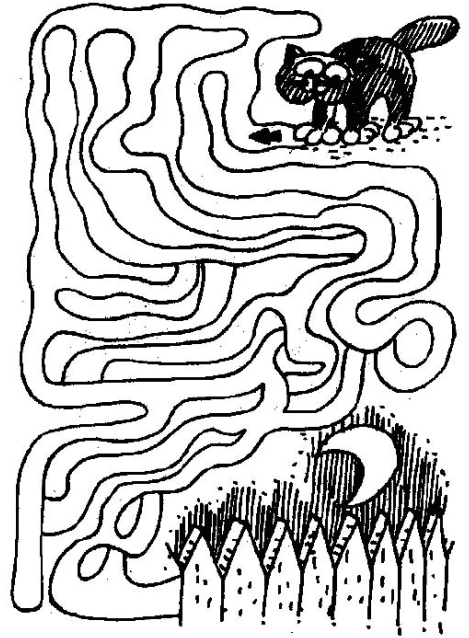


Colour by number



1-purple 2-White 3-orange 4-pink
5-blue 6-red

Maze



Sudoku

9	6		3			1
8	2			7		3
3			9	5		2
1		3	6		9	4
			7	4		
	4	7		1	2	8
4			6	2		1
	7		4			8 5
5			7		4	2

Spot the difference



Hey Kezang
May your Birthday convert all the hatred into love, all the failure into success, all the punishments into blessings and all the obstacles into opportunities. Wishing you a very Happy Birthday.



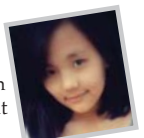
Love
Dolma, Jimmy, Muku

November 27
Kinley Choing Choden
Happy Birthday! May always jovial energy and merriment fill your life and happiness sit always at the conch of your heart. We all love you.



Appa, Mummy and Acho Tob

December 7
Dear Kelsey
We wish you a very happy b'day. May you be blessed with happiness and love throughout your life. Have fun!



Lots of love
Mommy, Papa & Chimmi Lhazin Dorji

WHAT CAN I BECOME?



for Karate Instructor

Interested in self defence techniques of karate? More so, because it empowers the practitioner and teaches him or her life skills through mental and physical trainings? If you have the passion for karate, and would like to impart values that everyone should be armed with, become a karate instructor.



Thinley Zangmo

Who can become a karate instructor?

- Someone, who has good mastery over karate skills
- Someone with a black belt to prove one has mastered the art, which can take from three to six years of dedicated practice
- Someone who is punctual, self disciplined and patient
- Someone who can teach and keep track of progress made by a student

Where to study?

- No academic education required
- Certification from various tournaments, seminars, trainings or workshops are a bonus
- Private club members have to avail their own training or workshops, since there's no full fledged federation under Bhutan Olympic Committee yet, nor do they receive any financial support from youth and sports department

The market

- The few existing karate instructors work on a part time basis with the private karate clubs across the

country

- Despite the limited support from the government for this sport, there are opportunities for upcoming instructors, once it is well rooted like other sports in the country
- Most children are interested in karate these days. If one is well trained in karate, there is a potential to make teaching karate a career

Challenges

- Lack of proper practice centre and facilities, where an instructor working with a club usually ends up buying equipment and things needed for practice for the members
- Budget constraints faced by instructors since it is expensive to conduct trainings and tournaments
- Lack of commitment by some participants, who drop lessons mid-way
- Physically challenging
- Maintaining balance diet can prove difficult



Nothing but passion for **the sport**

Sitting with a group of students, who were leaving for a karate tournament in India, was Ugyen Wangchuk, 26, instructing them, for once, on something other than combat lessons.

"Being mentally prepared before any match is very important," Ugyen

Wangchuk instructed the students, who were to take part in a competition at Shito Ryu karate school in India. "Since it's probably the longest train travel for you all, remember to behave well and take care of each other."

To that, the students echoed 'Yes Sir' before dispersing to the practice centre that was leased to them by the department of youth and sports in Thimphu.

Dressed in comfortable trousers and shirt, Ugyen Wangchuk said he was the head of the family for the kids, who are members of the Bhutan karate kids club, which he opened in 2009.

"I'm worried but quite confident that they're going to play well in the tournament," he said.

Being passionate about the sport, which has taught him life skills like time management, anger management, patience and self-discipline, other than confidence, balance and concentration, he chose to start the club.



"One has to prove everything one has learnt during the three-minute tournament, where one can either win or lose," he said. "The game can bring immense happiness as well as sadness. Therefore, it prepares one when life throws unexpected challenges."

Outside his life as a karate instructor, Ugyen Wangchuk works as a relationship manager with the Bank of Bhutan.

"It's difficult to just survive as a karate instructor right now," he said. "I paid for the present trip, because, if I don't do that, there's no other way for kids to learn new things."

For now, Ugyen Wangchuk has no regrets for the decisions he made and he aspires to take karate to a different level, where it would be supported like any other sports in the country.



Treatment as prevention

K² Sonam Pelden

Bhutan introduced anti-retroviral (ART) drugs for people living with HIV in 2004 to prolong the life span of HIV positives, as well as encourage them to seek testing and counseling.

By then, there were already 41 HIV positive cases detected in the country.

However, single dose therapy was started in 2000 to prevent mother to child transmission, said officials with the HIV/AIDS and STIs control program. The following year, the first case of mother to child infection was reported in the country.

The national guidelines for treatment were introduced in 2006 and, since then, Bhutan has been providing some of the best drugs to help extend the life of people living with HIV.

When it started, ART drugs were given to those whose CD4 count, a marker of disease progression was 200 and below. Today, the same drugs are started at CD4 count of 350 and below. Out of the 297 detected so far, 100 are on life-long ART now. The CD4 count of a HIV negative person is between 500 to 1,300.

Bhutan provides a triple dose

combination, one of which is now being replaced, following the world health organisation (WHO) advice, with a drug that's more expensive but for which the chances of adverse reactions are minimal.

Records with the drugs, vaccine and equipment division show that the total value of ART drugs purchased for the 2012-2013 year is Nu 2,316,996.

ART drugs for HIV positives today comprise Zidovudine, Lamivudine and Nevirpine, the preferred regimen, said HIV/AIDS program manager, Namgay Tshering.

However, with clinical advances in HIV/AIDS, WHO is now recommending countries to go for the "treatment as a prevention approach," especially for pregnant HIV positive women and serodiscordant couples. Serodiscordant couples are those, where one of the spouses is HIV positive, while the other is not.

This means, explained Namgay Tshering, that, irrespective of their CD4 count, they should be put on ART treatment, so that the earlier they start treatment, the lesser the chances of transmission.

But Bhutan would not use Truvada, at least for now, the first drug that the US Food and Drug Ad-

ministration approved in July this year to prevent HIV. Truvada is a combination of two anti-retroviral drugs, tenofovir and emtricitabine, which are available in Bhutan, but taken as two separate drugs.

But, HIV by itself is not a disease, said health officials. What it does is it suppresses the body's immune system, making it vulnerable to any kind of diseases.

"Unlike Hepatitis B and C, which affect the liver, HIV affects the white blood cells, the body's defense mechanism," former public health director Dr Ugen Dophu said.

When the HIV virus enters the body, it takes between three weeks to three months to test positive for HIV. This is called the window period, but now there are tests available that can detect it as early as 10 days post infection, said health officials.

HIV positives are therefore more susceptible to TB, cancer, skin infections and pneumonia. Most of the 54 HIV positive cases died because of co-infections, not AIDS. "AIDS doesn't kill, it's the diseases that you catch which make it fatal," Namgay Tshering said.



STIGMA

Why others won't come out?

K²

Sonam Pelden

“

We have to live with it but subjecting them to things that come with it is not fair,” says a 32-year-old woman on why people living with HIV aren't going public

with their HIV status.

A couple of months ago, some of them had decided to follow the footsteps of the first five and go public. For one, it would help their friends in creating awareness at various parts of the country at the same time.

But they decided against it after what some of their friends went through. Almost

80 percent of the 107 Lhak Sam

members have not disclosed to their family and none of them are today ready to tell them.

“We can't think about us alone because our decision affects their lives,” the 32 year old said.

They are however aware that people now know that HIV is not only transmitted sexually but also through needles and mother to child. “So, now they at least ask us the mode of transmission and not judge our character,” she said.

For 21-year-old mother of one, it was her husband's

experience that made her decide not to come out. “I know people are still scared and talk behind the back,” she said. “We can help with networking but I don't think I would want to come out, at least now.”

She said they never thought that educated people would stigmatise them, at least the officials in 'big' offices. “I don't know when I can be ready to get my child registered in the census,” she said.

While her family knows that she has HIV, it's her father who does not allow the 26 year-old mother of one to come out. “My father almost beat me when he learnt that I was there when the first five came out on TV last year,” she said.

She said she would come out only when her family allows. “I owe them that much,” she said.

People living with HIV also shared that some health officials who know them were pointing in the audience on TV and telling others who's positive when the first five came on air last year. They feel their test results are not kept confidential.

With behavioural change yet to happen and self-stigma still there, many said that the main challenge today is to encourage people to get tested and in improving compliance of those on ART treatment. “We have to live with the stigma but it might affect them and we don't want that,” one said.



TOPIC OF THE WEEK

Has HIV positive people coming out in the open helped remove stigma?



Hari Maya 19
Student

Seeing others with the disease or hearing about them makes me realise how we should be careful not to get infected. But at the same time we should not discriminate them.



Tshering Pelmo 20
Class XII graduate

The four men and a woman declaring that they are HIV positive was a brave act. They stood as examples and this move has educated many on the disease and its prevention.



Sangay Tenzin 28
Tourism Council of Bhutan

The notion towards the disease and those living with it is changing for the better. I feel we should support them and talk to them to be brave and live as equals in society.

Movies in town

English

1. Lawless
2. Batman Dark Knight Rises
3. Paranorman
4. End of Watch
5. The Sweeney

Hindi

1. Jab Tak Hai Jaan
2. Son of Sardar
3. Ajab Gazabb
4. Rush
5. Student of the Year

Korean(TV drama)

1. I do I do
2. Scandal
3. Queen's Men
4. King 2 Heart
5. Love Rain



Review

Lawless



The true story of the infamous Bondurant Brothers: bootlegging siblings who made a run for the American Dream in Prohibition-era Virginia. Inspired by true-life tales of author Matt Bondurant's family in his novel "The Wettest County In The World," the loyalty of three brothers is put to the test against the backdrop of the nation's most notorious crime wave.

Genres: Crime, Drama, Adaptation
Run Time: 1 hour 55 minutes

Movie Courtesy: www.yahoomovies.com

Cryptic clues:

Across: 1 Quiet during day without a lot of noise (6)
 4 Defective hearing results in error (8) 9 Hired assassin?
 Good show, old boy! (3,3) 10 Santa's animals, needing
 control, rush the wrong way (8) 12 Monster known for its
 bull-headedness (8) 13 Dare he twist or stick? (6) 15 Sound
 rule for bad weather (4) 16 Appeals with an attempt to
 produce jocularly (10) 19 Not mistaken concerning an
 order (5,5) 20 Means of transport sometimes sprung (4)
 23 Country girl on the vessel (6) 25 Gave notice (8) 27 The
 courtesy of the townsman (8) 28 Refuse to acknowledge
 down is out (6) 29 Rate modified by undoubted wealth
 (8) 30 A break gives us a hit (6)

Down: 1 He plans to no good purpose (7) 2
 Contemplating dining out about ten (9) 3 Famine
 for a large number on this planet (6) 5 One to be
 crossed with a goat (4) 6 One fated sadly to be
 unappreciative of music (4-4) 7 Their enemies
 include a girl (5) 8 Taking offence (7) 11 A noted
 soporific (7) 14 Showed rank subservience? (7) 17
 Rejects tutors who spell badly (6,3) 18 Apprentices
 the boss sent sprawling (8) 19 Tell of dramatic
 happening at polling station (7) 21 They're out of
 step and over-fussy (7) 22 Pacific island in which a
 girl may sunbathe (6) 24 Count old money (5) 26
 Highlight of the Cresta Run (4)

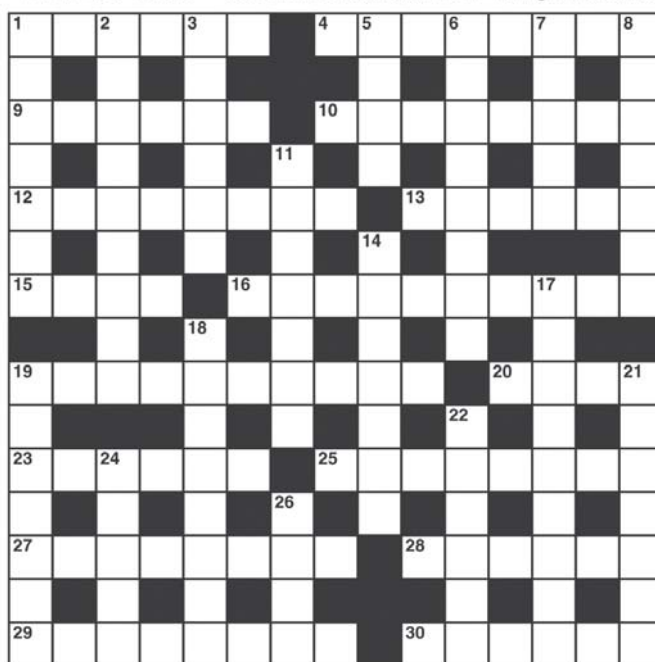
Quick clues:

Across: 1 Alloy of tin and lead (4) 4 State of panic
 (4,4) 9 Enjoy (6) 10 Decorous (8) 12 Large retail store (8)
 13 Fount of information (6) 15 Depressed (4) 16 After
 much delay (2,4,4) 19 Premiere of play (5,5) 20 Hidden
 drawback (4) 23 Innumerable (6) 25 Feeling of joy (8)
 27 Arriving on time (8) 28 A run (6) 29 Break in a
 journey (8) 30 Religious discourse (6)

Down: 1 Presage (7) 2 Strength of mind (9) 3 Make
 certain (6) 5 Onion genus vegetable (4) 6 Absolute (8)
 7 Earlier (5) 8 Lack of due attention (7) 11 Central European
 republic (7) 14 Slight footing (7) 17 To a sickening extent
 (2,7) 18 Narrow-bladed dagger (8) 19 Tactless mistake (4,3)
 21 Small pickling cucumber (7) 22 Disconcert (6) 24 South
 American dance (5) 26 Confront (4)

Puzzle 1913

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Solution to last week's puzzle



Cryptic answers



Quick answers



Data recovery from external drive



My 1TB external disk got spoiled. I have thousands of photographs stored in it and now I am unable to retrieve those pictures. I don't have any idea how I can get those pictures. I did take consult with IT vendors in town but they said it would not be possible. Can you please suggest if it is possible to retrieve the photographs, and if yes, how?

—Kinley Tshering, Thimphu



I have an external drive of 500GB capacity, almost fully occupied with files. The last time I unplugged it from a computer, I pulled it out directly, and now it won't read on any computer, though there is the power bulb still on and machinery sound when I bring it near my ears. I tried it on a lot of computers, but it's still not working. Please help me. I have a whole lot of files and contents there.

—Namgay Rinchen, Thimphu

Dear Kinley and Namgay,

Losing important data can be very stressful. So first, the good news: Recovering data from failed disks is often possible. Now, for the not-so-good news: no computer vendor in Bhutan currently offers professional data recovery services.

If you are lucky, your external drive has a simple hardware issue that is relatively easy to fix by a technician - for example, a crooked USB connector or a failed disk enclosure (the box that holds the actual disk), or perhaps a software

issue that can be corrected by a disk recovery utility such as TestDisk (goo.gl/dL6CW).

If the issue is more complicated than that, well, your disk will need to be handled by a professional. My recommendation: Keep the drive, and seek the services of a data recovery professional when you (or a friend) are outside of Bhutan. Note that depending on the specific issue, recovery can range from expensive to very expensive.

The inconvenient truth is that all hard disks eventually fail,

often within a few years. Experts recommend replacing hard disks every 3-5 years, but even that is not a guarantee against failure. Prevention is better than cure, so back up your files. And please don't wait - do it today!



Readers are encouraged to submit technology-related questions to boaz@thimphutech.com



A pile of failed disks at a Google data centre

Time for DiskVival?

With more and more of our personal and business information stored on disks, memory cards, and smartphones, a data recovery lab represents an interesting business opportunity in Bhutan.



Boaz Shmueli is a faculty member at the Rigsum Institute of IT & Management. He blogs at ThimphuTech.com

What is article 33 of the Constitution about? Emergency

As you may know the word emergency generally refers to a situation or unexpected occurrence that demands immediate action.

Say, for example a fire breaks out in your school while classes or annual examinations are on. The school faces an emergency situation because the lives of the students and teachers are in danger and something needs to be done immediately to deal with the situation.

Likewise, the Constitution provides for situations where the State, which means the country, may declare an emergency.

Proclaiming an emergency

According to Article 33 the Druk Gyalpo may, on the written advice of the prime minister, proclaim an emergency if the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of Bhutan or any part thereof is threatened by an act of external aggression or armed rebellion.

The Druk Gyalpo may also proclaim that a public emergency or calamity exists like during a major natural disaster in which case the government may take measures to the extent strictly required by the situation.

21 days

The emergency will remain in force for not more than 21 days from the date of proclamation unless Parliament in a joint sitting resolves by not less than two thirds of the total members to extend the period.

Disapprove a proclamation

To disapprove a proclamation of an emergency or of one already in force, one fourth of the total number of members of the National Assembly should move such a resolution in writing to the Druk Gyalpo if the Assembly is not in session and to Speaker if the House is in session.

Joint sitting

A joint session should be held at the earliest within 21 days from the day on which the motion is received failing which the proclamation of emergency will lapse.

Suspension of rights

Rights guaranteed by the Constitution under section 2,3,5,12 and 19 of Article 7 may be suspended during an emergency.

Financial emergency

The Druk Gyalpo may, on the written advice of the prime minister, proclaim a financial emergency if His Majesty is satisfied that a situation has arisen whereby the financial stability or credit of Bhutan is threatened.

Such a proclamation will be laid before each house of Parliament within 21 days after such a proclamation is made.

■ Meanings

Proclaim – Announce, declare

Rebellion – revolt, uprising

Suspended – interrupted, deferred



Q What is Article 7 of the Constitution about?

Write to us as at
kinley_w@kuensel.com.bt

Answer to previous question: There are 25 members including the chairperson in Upper House and 47 members including the Speaker in Lower House. The total number is 72.
Winner: Drupchen Lepcha Email: rongdupchen@gmail.com

A brother **speaks**

It was a September 2007 afternoon. Wangda and I were walking home, when he told me that he had to share a secret with me. I said we could talk at home, but he said it was the best place, and made me sit on the ground. He said he got a report from the hospital, which said that he had tested, positive for HIV.

I was quiet. Disturbed. Shocked. Sad. I had never expected him to make mistakes, and told him that the test might have been a mistake. He said no. Then I asked him if he would tell me how he got infected. He said it's not from his wife or from casual sex, but while injecting drugs, and that he had passed on to his wife.

For someone, who made fun of HIV/AIDS, and who thought it was a killer disease, as everyone thought it to be, my perspective about the disease changed from that day.

I had to be strong for him because, out of the six siblings in our family, he chose me to keep his secret. I am the second eldest and he is the second youngest. We were not together in schools, but met only during holidays and yet grew close. He said, he felt more comfortable with me.

It's fate, I said, destined to happen. But what he can do was to take the doctor's advice and take medication. We talked about disclosing it to our family, but Wangda said it was too early. I decided to not demoralise him, and told him that we all had to die one day.

Wangda discussed with me before coming out last year. I told him I can't encourage or discourage him, and that it was his decision to take. As a brother, I'm helpless. Before he came out, our two brothers knew his HIV status.

But my parents and sister knew about it only when he came out in the media. The next day, I received a call from our father, saying he heard some disturbing news from his neighbours. There is no TV in their house. Being a farmer in the village, and not understanding the disease, he said we should take Wangda for a hot spring bath to cure him of his disease.

However, our sister, the youngest in the family, was upset that she had to hear it from someone outside the family.

Our family has come a long way today, and nothing has changed with his HIV status. Our friends and relatives appreciate Wangda's bold decision for the sake of those infected and the uninfected. He is still my brother, even though deep down I know that he has a disease, and might collapse any moment.

My suggestion to family members of people living with the disease is to understand them, their health and to accept them as they are. I wish people didn't speak negatively, and stigma and discrimination be absolutely abolished!

As told to Sonam Pelden



Dorji Tshering does freelance accounting and is a voluntary accounting mentor for Lhaksam





HIV IS PREVENTABLE.

Be Responsible to your family & friends. **Get Tested!**



Testing facilities are available in all the District Hospitals
and Health Information & Service Centers in Phuntsholing,
Thimphu, Gelephu and Samdrupjongkhar.