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STAY WITH SELENA GOMEZ**  
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# Agriculture Minister and Power Minister meet Daramdin farmers

**GYALSHING, 22 JUN (IPR):**

A special interactive session with the farmers and distribution of farming inputs and tools, held at Lower Okhrey, an adopted village by the Chief Minister of Sikkim, West Sikkim, today.

The Minister Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services LokNath Sharma graced the occasion as the Chief Guest in special presence of the Minister-cum-Area MLA of Daramdin Constituency M. N. Sherpa. The programme was also attended by the Chairman State Bank of Sikkim, D. B. Gurung; Additional Director Horticulture, P. L. Basnett; Additional Director Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services (W) Dr. NaradCintury; Joint Director Horticulture (W) Karma Sherpa; Joint Director Agriculture (W) T. N. Bhutia; Officials, field functionaries, Panchayats, farmers and others.

The dignitaries jointly handedover various Horticultural tools and inputs including Power Tiller, Green House, Polypipe, Flexi Tanks, Flexi Pipes, Green House, Agro-Net, Walking Tunnel, Mulching Plastics, Bamboo Plantation to the farmers of adopted village, Lower Okhrey. The beneficiaries also



received Community Vermicompost, HDPE and Power Spray Machine under Agriculture Department and Chaff Cutter, Backyard Poultry under Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services Department, Government of Sikkim.

Minister Sharma, in his address, urged all beneficiaries to make optimum utilisation of the farming inputs and agricultural tools to multiply productions and income to be self reliant

for sustainable growth and development of the locality.

He encouraged participants to Vocalize the Local produce including all cash crops and vegetables, so that the farmers become self reliant and socially & economically upgraded.

Minister Sharma informed that the Chief Minister of Sikkim has given special priority for uplifting the deprived farmers,

pragmatically, after formation of the state government.

Elucidating the tremendous supporting initiatives taken up in dairy farming, Minister Sharma stated that the government, under the leadership of the Chief Minister, P.S. Tamang, has given financial incentives of Rupees eight per litre of milk, after increasing its minimum price to Rs 32, thereby increasing price per litre of Milk to Rupees Forty. He also urged farmers to be associated with Sikkim Milk Union as a member and elaborated benefits of taking membership. He also informed that the state government will establish a Mini Processing Unit at Dodak West Sikkim and a Mini plant at Nesa/Tashiding.

Highlighting the historic achievement of Farmers Producers Organization (FPOs), Minister Sharma informed that the state government has successfully handedover the much awaited equity grant to all twenty eight FPOs of the state and encouraged farmers to take membership of their respective FPOs.

Minister Sharma articulated on the overview of the newly formulated strategic planning of the State Government with the bankers and drew lights on the provisions of subsidised loan to be

availed to the aspiring and progressive farmers in the state. Further, he urged the youths to take benefits of KCC loan of Rupees One Lakh Sixty Thousand and upto credit loan of Rupees Ten Lakhs for Self Help Groups without collateral to begin a new venture in lucrative profession of farming. He reiterated on the imperative need for utilisation of uncultivated barren land to meet up increasing demands of agricultural produce. Minister Sharma, in his concluding remarks, underlined the transparency and accountability maintained by the state government.

Addressing the gathering, Minister Sherpa, expressed gratitude to the Chief Minister for adopting village in his constituency and spoke on the purpose of the interactive and token distribution programme. He anticipated that the most deprived society of Lower Okhrey shall witness notable progress and reformation in near future and subsequently, the other Gram Panchayat Units in the constituency will also be given priority in developmental process, he added. Minister Sherpa also informed on the departmental activities, field inspection, planning and its state of progress in brief.

## Forest Dept provides support to RSWA



**SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 22 JUN:**

A small programme was convened under Environment & Soil Conservation, East Division, in association with Rorathang Social Welfare Association (RSWA) at Rorathang Bazaar today, a press release informs.

The meeting was

chaired by DFO, SB Subba as chief guest in the presence of ACF, PT Lepcha, ACF, E&SC, Pakyong, BK Dhamala, RO, Rongli, Arjun Tamang, RO, E&SC, Santosh Bagdas, Panchayat, Anju Gajmer, President, RSWA, Kishore Thapa, OP incharge, Dawa Singh Tamang, Jigmi Bhutia (CEC).

The main objective of the programme was to distribute and handover utensils and other materials to the Rorathang Samaj RSWA. The RSWA had extended their gratitude to DFO, ACF and especially to RO, Arjun Tamang & RO, Santosh Bagdas, E&SC, East Division for their support and cooperation.

## Assam pollution board sets aside OIL well closure notice

**GUWAHATI, JUN 22 (PTI):** Three days after slapping a 'closure notice' on Oil India Ltd (OIL), the Pollution Control Board, Assam on Monday withdrew its order asking the company to shut down all operations in the Baghjan oil field, where a gas well caught fire earlier this month after a weeks-long blowout.

This comes a day after Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal expressed displeasure over the PCBA order and said authorities need to be "more sensible".

OIL had on Sunday said it will approach the Gauhati High Court on Monday against the PCBA if the order to shut its Baghjan oil field is not withdrawn.

Revoking its order, the PCBA, in a letter to OIL, set five conditions for the PSU.

It asked OIL to "submit a detailed time-bound environmental management plan within 15 days... for environmental mitigation and extinguishing of fire at the Baghjan oil field and act accordingly".

The second condition requires OIL to apply for Consent to Operate (CTO) under Section 25 of the Water (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 and Section of the Air (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 separately for each drilling, production and other installations along with environmental management plan and requisite documents within one month.

"They have to submit all the details of hazardous waste generated, disposed and treatment facilities as per the Hazardous & Other Waste (Management & Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016," the PCBA letter, signed by its member secretary, stated.

The PSU will also have to apply for authorisation under E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2016 and take necessary action for proper disposal of the e-waste, the pollution control watchdog added.

The letter stated, "They have to submit the return as per Batteries (Management & Handling) Rules, 2001 framed under

the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 within July 31, 2020."

Citing a number of violations by the PSU, the PCBA had issued the "closure notice" on June 19 alleging that the company did not obtain required permissions for the Baghjan oil field. OIL had categorically denied the charge and claimed it had the "PCBA's consent" for its all operations in the state.

Earlier in the day, the company said in a statement that the PCBA chairman spoke to OIL chairman and MD on Monday and "the Closure Notice is in the process of being lifted".

The Baghjan oil field has a total of 22 producing wells -- 18 crude and four gas. The oil field has been in operation since 2003.

Well number 5 at Baghjan in Tinsukia district of Assam has been spewing gas uncontrollably for the last 27 days and it caught fire on June 9, killing two of OIL's firefighters at the site.

Following the accident, the PCBA sent a show cause notice to the energy major on June 10 seeking details of its operations in Baghjan in the last 15 years, within one week.

On the ongoing process to douse the blaze at the gas well, OIL said a crucial packing element for the casing hanger will be airlifted from Singapore on Monday.

The consignments being mobilised from

outside Assam were stuck at Dalkhota, West Bengal due to a very long waiting queue for COVID testing, it said in the statement.

"Vehicles carrying second load of equipment from ONGC, Rajahmundry, three vehicles carrying materials and bulldozer from ONGC-Vadodara are in transit," it added.

The company informed that various works at the well site have been hampered due to inclement weather and soft ground condition.

"In order to mitigate the delay and make access of vehicles and placement equipment at the site, actions (have been) initiated for mobilising heavy-duty composite porta deck mats from Kolkata and Guwahati. Materials are expected to be loaded today," it said.

On the loss of production due to agitation by locals, OIL said there was an output drop of 149 metric tonnes (MT) of crude oil and 0.16 million metric standard cubic metres (MMSCM) of natural gas on Sunday due to disruptions in 22 oil wells and one gas well.

"Cumulative production loss since May 27, 2020 due to bandhs and blockades: 8,162 MT crude oil, 10.4 MMSCM of natural gas," it said.

OIL also said various assessments and impact studies of the blowout, as well as the blaze, in villages and nearby forest areas, are being conducted by multiple agencies such as ERM India, TERI, CSIR-NEIST and Assam Agricultural University.

### Army commanders deliberate..

the violent hand-to-hand clashes with Chinese troops in Galwan Valley on June 15, in the biggest ever confrontation between the two sides after a gap of 45 years.

Following the incident, the government has given the armed forces "full freedom" to give a "befitting" response to any Chinese misadventure along the 3,500-km de-facto border.

The Army has sent thousands of additional troops to forward locations along the border in the last one week. The IAF has also moved a sizeable number of its frontline Sukhoi 30 MKI, Jaguar, Mirage 2000 aircraft and Apache attack helicopters to several key air bases including Leh and Srinagar following the clashes.

The two armies were engaged in a standoff in Galwan and several other areas of eastern Ladakh since May 5 when their troops clashed on the banks of the Pangong Tso.

The situation in eastern Ladakh deteriorated after around 250 Chinese and Indian soldiers were engaged in a violent face-off on May 5 and 6. The incident in Pangong Tso was followed by a similar incident in north Sikkim on May 9.

Prior to the clashes, both sides had been asserting that pending the final resolution of the boundary issue, it was necessary to maintain peace and tranquillity in the border areas.

## Petrol nears Rs 80 mark, diesel at new high after 16th price hike in a row

**NEW DELHI, JUN 22 (PTI):** Petrol price on Monday was hiked by 33 paise per litre and diesel by 58 paise to take retail rates to record high as the oil companies increased prices for the 16th day in a row.

In 16 days, petrol price has been hiked by Rs 8.3 per litre and diesel by Rs 9.46 - a record increase in rates of the fuel in any fortnight since pricing was deregulated in April 2002.

Petrol price in Delhi was hiked to Rs 79.56 per litre from Rs 79.23 while diesel rates were increased to Rs 78.55 a litre from Rs 78.27, according to a price notification of state oil marketing companies.

Rates have been increased across the country and vary from state to state depending

on the incidence of local sales tax or value added tax (VAT).

The increase in rates since June 7 is the highest in any fortnight. When petrol and diesel pricing was deregulated in April 2002, oil companies revised rates every fortnight in line with the cost. They switched to daily price revision in May 2017 to allow cost to reflect instantaneously in retail rates.

According to pricing data, the maximum rates have increased in any fortnight was Rs 4-5 per litre.

The 16th daily increase in rates, since oil companies on June 7 restarted revising prices in line with costs after ending an 82-day hiatus in rate revision, has taken diesel prices to fresh highs. Petrol price

too is at a two-year high.

Prior to the current rally, the peak diesel rates had touched was on October 16, 2018, when prices had climbed to Rs 75.69 per litre in Delhi. The highest-ever petrol price was on October 4, 2018, when rates soared to Rs 84 a litre in Delhi.

When rates had peaked in October 2018, the government had cut excise duty on petrol and diesel by Rs 1.50 per litre each. State-owned oil companies were asked to absorb another Rs 1 a litre to help cut retail rates by Rs 2.50 a litre.

Oil companies had quickly recouped the Re 1 and the government in July 2019 raised excise duty by Rs 2 a litre.

Taxes make up for nearly two-third of the retail selling price.

As much as Rs 50.69 per litre, or 64 per cent, in petrol price is due to taxes - Rs 32.98 is the central excise duty and Rs 17.71 is local sales tax or VAT.

Over 63 per cent of the retail selling price of diesel is taxes. Out of the total tax incidence of Rs 49.43 per litre, Rs 31.83 is by way of central excise and Rs 17.60 is VAT.

In Mumbai, petrol price has gone up from Rs Rs 86.04 per litre to Rs 86.36 on Monday. Diesel rates have increased to Rs 77.24 a litre from Rs 76.69 a litre, according to the price notification.

The 82-day freeze in rates this year was imposed in mid-March soon after the government hiked excise duty on petrol and diesel to shore up additional finances.

The government on March 14 hiked excise duty on petrol and diesel by Rs 3 per litre each and then again on May 5 by a record Rs 10 per litre in case of petrol and Rs 13 on diesel. The two hikes gave the government Rs 2 lakh crore in additional tax revenues.

Oil PSUs Indian Oil Corp (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corp Ltd (HPCL), instead of passing on the excise duty hikes to customers, adjusted them against the fall in the retail rates that was warranted because of fall in international oil prices to two decade low.

International oil prices have since rebounded and oil firms are now adjusting retail rates in line with them.

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### LAND FOR SALE

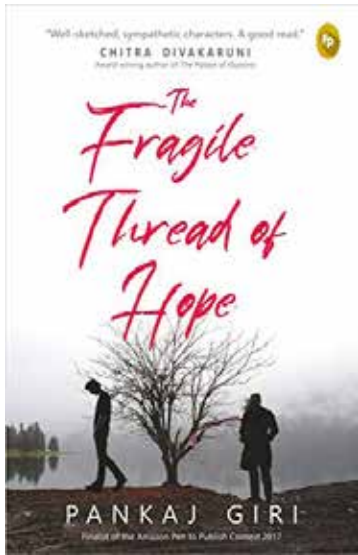
An area measuring 1 acre at Sadam South Sikkim near Loretto Convent School at Gupti road. Price negotiable any one interested can contact: 78640-04501, 62970-03235, 98320-48410



## BOOKREVIEW

## An emotional rollercoaster worth the time

LOCHANA MAINALI



**The Fragile Thread of Home**  
By PankajGiri  
Fingerprint Passion  
Rs 199

The words are woven in such a way that one is forced to feel what the characters feel and the way the story flows keeps the reader wanting more.

The first thing that hit me real hard as I moved towards the end of the Novel is the uncertainty of “Life” itself. No matter how hard we try, we really can do nothing about it. The story brought out the truth of how a story never ends with the person who dies but continues with the ones who survives. Of how we remember every little detail about them for a certain time only to realize that one day our mind could only give us a blur image when we hear their names. We cannot control this either, no matter how much we loved them. Our mind slowly fails us. Death of a loved one is always painful and the void never tends to be filled but Love is so stronger than the pain for it gives a mother a reason to live for her child when her husband leaves for heaven. Just like the pain we have when we think that a particular person will stay but Life has other plans and they leave, this tends to push one into their own deep pit of insecurities and Love is the only way out. We see how Soham and Fiona dealt with their own demons and their own pain but unknown

to them both Life played a role and Love helped them move beyond. Joseph was a pure soul, for it isn't easy to fill someone else. He filled Fiona so she could find Soham later. Every end is a beginning to something. Sometimes we need to trust the plan of the Universe.

I also know how we tend to fall for familiarities be it person, place or patterns. We feel safe with familiarities. Fiona going back and looking for Joseph's picture after his death, one can see how Soham was unfamiliar to her and she went back to what the reality was. This is very normal when it comes to instances in real life as well.

This novel does act like a mirror to all the readers how we tend to take things that matters the most to us for granted. Our Parents; just because they tend to stay even after all the pain we give them, we just expect that they will never leave. But Life always has a cruel way of teaching us lessons. For Fiona did get a second chance after she realised her mistake and repair the bond with her mother at the same time she wasn't lucky enough to say goodbye to someone who she loved her the most, Joseph which takes me to my next thought of how we take our moments that we share with someone for granted too, we never know when will it be our last yet we hope forever exists for us.

This book does bring out how we all have built a wall in order to prevent from getting hurt all over again. We all have our insecurities, our own demons that we fight with but a little hope always stays that love will creep in the cracks of the broken heart and dismantle the wall. For it is love that will not look what one lacks but tries to strengthen the other and oneself with what they have.

The conversion of religion or the marriage that takes place between two different religion in the story does brings out the essence of religion that it is supposed to make you feel like

you belong and make you calm. Talking about the marriage, we see how Sharon raises her child alone after the death of her husband, one could tell that the journey wasn't a smooth one.

On the other hand we see the marriage between Soham and Fiona, where acceptance of past, being able to be who they really were, and not having to compromise on the faith they had on their religion is very beautiful to read. Also talking on the same context I would like to highlight how Joseph not just took care of Fiona but Sharon's as well, he staying with his wife's family definitely didn't make him less of a man but more of it because he could take care of two family as one. This does break the idea of how a woman has to leave her house after her marriage, which leads to her being a guest at her own home and in her new home she never is a daughter.

The taboo of marrying a widow here somewhere gets overshadowed by the idea of Soham and Fiona belonging to different religions but the idea that Soham was aware of all the differences and yet decided to take the step is quite appreciable. It takes a Man to make the choice and stick to it and its outcomes.

We shouldn't forget the role played by Joseph's parents. They also only had one child and letting him stay with his wife's family was a very genuine step because Sharon was a widow and if Fiona was to leave she would have been all alone and somewhere the loss of her husband and not having anyone by her side would eventually lead her to being sad and hurt.

Joseph's mother tries to run away from seeing Fiona after her son's death because the living and the death aren't different in many ways. For the living does remind people of the one who died. But eventually she accepts that life isn't fair but we can make it a little easier for the one who survived. For sometimes

they are just breathing and not living after the loss they had to face.

Joseph's parents also blessed her when she was moving on with life. We can look at this a little sarcasm the writer has implemented for we know what reality is like and this could be seen as a hope we can keep for the future too. They did understand that Fiona wasn't going to stop loving Joseph as one cannot unlove( if that is even a word to say) somebody. We may love again but just not the same way. The idea of a husband's family being your own family is brought out in a beautiful manner because Joseph's family accepted Fiona when she was their daughter in law and even when she chose to move ahead.

The story gives a lot of hope, even if it is just a fragile one but it does give us hope. Life maybe full of pain but we do find someone who will walk by you through the rain. It won't be hard to tell that we eventually meet who we are supposed to, even if for a short period of time. People are like the paths our soul had to take to reach where it is now.

I could relate to this in personal level in many instances leading to which I did take a break after the death of the first few characters, yes I have never been able to deal with separations and death quite well. But there was something that kept calling me back. I really wanted to know what would happen to the other characters and I couldn't be more happy that I did take the chance because everyone has their own demons to fight with so did I and how beautifully everything falls in place at the end. Despite knowing that it is just a story and could be manipulated I did give me a hope that I, myself am a story and stories always end beautifully.

Definitely recommending it. It was a heck of a roller coaster ride for my emotions and I am glad I choose the path.

## Workshops on cyber crime for Judicial Officers

## SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 22 JUN:

Sikkim Judicial Academy conducted two workshops via video conferencing facility for Judicial Officers on 19 and 20 Jun, 2020, a press release informs.

The workshops were on “Information Technology Act, 2000, Section 65B Indian Evidence Act, 1872, Cyber Law/Cyber Crimes, Appreciation of Electronic Evidence, Discussion on the landmark judgments of Supreme Court of India and High Court of Sikkim including other High Courts”. The Resource Person was President of Cyber Security Corporation and CEO of Intelligent Quotient Security System, Dr Harold D'costa.

During the workshop, the resource person gave a brief background on the evolution of Cyber Crimes. He said that the security aspect on cyber transactions is very low in India. He said that India does not have its own route server. In the world at present, United States of America has 10 route servers while Sweden, Netherlands and Japan have one each. It was informed that in India there are 7 duplicate servers.

The resource person



discussed the various types of cyber crimes such as cyber stalking, cyber contraband, cyber trespassing, cyber laundering, cyber vandalism, cyber slander, cyber theft, cyber porn, cyber terrorism and cyber fraud.

While discussing cyber laundering and cyber fraud, the resource person emphasised the need to have a “block chain technology” to fight against such crimes. This block chain technology must be used by Banks to minimise the fraudulent

transactions.

The resource person also discussed the procedure to be adopted during collection of Cyber Evidence. Section 65B, Indian Evidence Act, 1872, was discussed in great detail giving analogies.

The resource person laid emphasis that the Investigating Officer tackling Cyber Crimes must have technically sound knowledge. He also discussed the landmark judgments of the Supreme Court as well as High Court of Sikkim and some other High Courts.

## PM must be mindful of implications of his words: Manmohan Singh on Ladakh face-off

**NEW DELHI, JUN 22 (PTI):** In his first remarks on the Ladakh face-off, former prime minister Manmohan Singh on Monday said PM Narendra Modi must be mindful of the implications of his words and cannot allow China to use them as a vindication of its position.

Noting that disinformation is no substitute for diplomacy or decisive leadership, Singh called upon the prime minister to ensure justice for soldiers who died defending India's territorial integrity.

“To do any less would be a historic betrayal of people's faith,” he said in a statement.

The Congress has been attacking the government on Prime Minister Modi's remarks at an all-party meeting that no one has entered Indian territory or captured any military post while referring to the eastern Ladakh standoff.

The government has, however, said that attempts are being made to give a “mischievous

interpretation” to the prime minister's remarks.

Singh said this is a moment where we must stand together as a nation and be united in our response to this brazen threat.

Twenty Indian soldiers, including a colonel, were killed in the violent face-off with Chinese troops on the night of June 15/16 in eastern Ladakh's Galwan Valley.

Noting that the country is standing at the historic cross-roads, Singh said the government's decisions and actions will have serious bearings on how the future generations perceive us.

“Those who lead us bear the weight of a solemn duty. And in our democracy that responsibility rests with the office of the prime minister,” he said.

“The prime minister must always be mindful of the implications of his words and declarations on our nation's security as also strategic and territorial interests,” he

said.

The Congress veteran said China is “brazenly and illegally” seeking to claim parts of Indian territory such as the Galwan Valley and the Pangong Tso Lake by committing multiple incursions from April 2020 till date.

“We cannot and will not be cowed down by threats and intimidation nor permit a compromise with our territorial integrity.”

“The Prime Minister cannot allow them to use his words as a vindication of their position and must ensure that all organs of the Government work together to tackle this crisis and prevent it from escalating further,” he said.

“We remind the Government that disinformation is no substitute for diplomacy or decisive leadership. The truth cannot be suppressed by having pliant allies spout comforting but false statements,” he said.

Singh also said that the sacrifice of soldiers cannot be allowed to go in vain.

## Striking tributes and Conte's lexicon: Serie A is back in a different world

NICKY BANDINI

**ROME, 22 JUN [THEGUARDIAN]:** The first goal of the Serie A restart belonged to Nicolas Nkoulou. And his first thought was to honour the memory of George Floyd. After beating Parma's goalkeeper, Luigi Sepe, with a near-post header, the Torino defender wheeled away with a finger pointed at the sky. His teammates engulfed him, but Nkoulou quickly disengaged, sank to one knee and raised a clenched fist. “When I scored, I immediately thought of my brother Floyd, who is important to me,” Nkoulou said at full-time. A day later, Romelu Lukaku would repeat the kneeling gesture after scoring the opening goal in Inter's win over Sampdoria.

The world has changed in the 103 days that Serie A was away. Anti-racism protests have sprung up across Italy just as they have all over the globe. Whether they can have a lasting impact on a nation's football culture is impossible to know, at a time when stadiums are still closed to supporters. It was only last September that a group of Inter's own ultras penned an open letter to Lukaku, insisting he should not interpret monkey chants from rival fans as racist.

Regardless, it was striking to see Serie A recommence with tributes to Floyd, as well as to the tens of thousands of Italians who have lost their lives to Covid-19. Moments of silence were held to remember the latter before kick-off in Turin, Verona and Milan.

In Bergamo, the city worst hit by the pandemic, players from Atalanta and Sassuolo were invited to stand and reflect while “Rinascero, Rinascerei” (I will be reborn, you will be reborn) was played over the PA system.

Penned by the Roby Facchinetti, a renowned local musician and composer, in March, the song became an instant hit, with proceeds going to the city's Papa Giovanni XXIII hospital.

Not everyone supported this weekend's return to action. As Facchinetti's song ended, chanting could be heard from a group of Atalanta Ultras who had gathered outside the Gewiss Stadium to protest. “Football without fans is not football,” read a banner hung nearby.

Watching the games certainly feels different. With no crowd noise to drown them out, the exhortations of managers are now picked up loud and clear on the pitch-side microphones. Some TV executives may be regretting that fact after an evening with Antonio Conte. “Porca troia!” bellowed the Inter manager late on Sunday – a phrase that literally translates to “pig whore!”, but serves as an Italian equivalent to “fucking hell!” “This is life!” he continued. “This is life!”

At least the footballing narratives were reassuringly familiar. Torino, despite taking the lead through Nkoulou, only wound up drawing at home to Parma. You could call that a step forward for a team that lost six straight before the season was interrupted, yet old frustrations came rushing back as Andrea Belotti missed a penalty that would have put them back in front. Torino's top scorer has not found the net in 10 appearances.

Verona were next up on Saturday evening, beating Cagliari to continue their improbable push for a European place. On Sunday, Atalanta took us right back where we were with a 4-1 rout of Sassuolo. Four goals, just like they had scored in each leg of their Champions League last-

16 defeat of Valencia. The same number they put past Sassuolo when they met for the first time this season, all the way back in September.

Any question of whether the break could disrupt Atalanta's free-flowing football had been dispelled by the 37th minute, by which point they were 3-0 up, having also hit the crossbar and had two goals disallowed. This without top scorer, Josip Ilicic, who injured an ankle in training.

They have now scored four or more goals in eight matches across all competitions. Their average of 2.85 per game is the highest across Europe's top five leagues and, if maintained to the end of the season, would represent Serie A's best return in 70 years.

Victory restored Atalanta's six-point advantage over Roma in fourth. This weekend's four games were catching up Serie A's 25th round, interrupted by the coronavirus outbreak (confusingly, the 26th round did subsequently get completed), meaning all teams have now played the same.

No team was under more pressure to win than Inter, beaten by Lazio and Juventus in consecutive league games before the pause. They began the weekend trailing the first-placed Bianconeri by nine points. Victory over Sampdoria was imperative to bring them back into the title race.

They started beautifully. Christian Eriksen had the ball in the net after two minutes and though that was disallowed, Inter only had to wait another eight to make their breakthrough. A truly sumptuous team move concluded with Lautaro Martínez playing a backheel for Lukaku, who

exchanged a one-two with Eriksen before slipping the ball under the goalkeeper Emil Audero.

Lautaro made it 2-0 in the 33rd minute. Inter ought to have been home and dry. But then early in the second half, Eriksen ran on to a through-pass on the corner of the six-yard box and played the ball back for Lukaku to finish into an empty goal. The Belgian screwed his finish horribly wide. Moments later, Morten Thorsby scored for Samp from a corner.

Inter's performance became a synopsis of their season. Scintillating in the first half, a combination of tiredness and nerves seemed now to take hold, leaving them vulnerable to the counter-punch. The visitors were granted more than one opportunity to equalise in a game that should have long been over.

In the end, the Nerazzurri did cling on. There was still plenty to encourage the belief that they can challenge for the title. Conte has used the break to integrate Eriksen fully into his side, reshaping Inter's formation to a 3-4-1-2 with the Dane behind the attack – a role in which he appears to be thriving. As the team that covered the most distance per game in Serie A before the break, no one may benefit more than Inter from a midseason rest.

With a six-point gap still to bridge, however, they cannot afford to repeat the second-half slumps that have cost them crucial points already against Lazio, Atalanta and Cagliari (not to mention in the Champions League against Barcelona and Dortmund). Lukaku's characterisation of every game as a matter of “life and death” in a post-match interview was a little clumsy, in the wider context, but his meaning was well understood.

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## Pending Issues

*Difficult Delhi or poor follow-up?*

Any time the Chief Minister or other leaders, whether from the government or outside of it, visit Delhi and call on Union Ministers and Central leaders, they submit memorandums which reiterate a substantial list of “pending issues” with the Centre. Social distancing has made personal calls difficult and video-conferencing does not lend itself too well to such submissions, but they will change the medium of submissions and reminders. The list of demands, however, will remain unchanged for a while, and this not because Sikkim is unimaginative, but because the demands have remained pending and hence continue to be petitioned for. Delhi has acquiesced to Sikkim’s demands/ requests in too piecemeal a fashion – IT exemption for the Sikkimese and ST status for Limboos and Tamangs – are the only major demands that have been granted in a long while now, and these too after too many years of dithering and delaying and both, in their own ways, incompletely see through. The list of demands and its follow-up has been so static that one does not even need to await an official communiqué any more before putting out a report on what Delhi was reminded about and received a patient hearing against.

That is how routine the pending nature of Sikkim’s demands has become!

One understands that the wheels turn slow in Delhi, and now that the current dispensation in office there is trying to reinvent the wheel itself, Sikkim will need to learn afresh how to get things moving in the Capital. But even as Sikkim and its representatives try and find their way around the new Delhi, a question that still needs to be asked is why Sikkim needs to keep returning to Delhi with “pending issues”. At one level, the reason is simple - because Delhi needs to be constantly reminded about them since concerns of a State that sends only one MP each to the two Houses of Parliament are rarely priority. There is nothing that Sikkim can do about that “tyranny” of slim representation. But there must be more reasons behind Delhi’s easy amnesia on Sikkim’s pending issues, for one the possible fact that Sikkim still does not have officers diligent enough to follow up on proposals which have even the PMO’s backing. Once the politicians raise a demand with Central leaders and the same gets forwarded to the respective ministries, the bureaucracy comes into play and the files start moving. Files don’t however move if there is no one pursuing them, and experience bears out that Sikkim officials rarely do so. What is worse, sometimes, they don’t even respond to queries from the Centre. There have been enough instances even in the recent past when recalcitrance has defined follow-up from Sikkim’s departments.

Sikkim should have figured out by now that Delhi lacks the capacity and the time to figure out Sikkim’s “issues”. Most of the pending issues, however, need to be resolved by Delhi which lobs the ball back into Sikkim’s court and expects a neatly packed and formatted solution to be recommended by Sikkim for enforcement by Delhi. In complicated matters, the State also needs to provide the supporting arguments and watertight justifications and a ready reckoner on Sikkim’s special status and the leeway it allows. For more routine issues, sometimes it is as simple as placing the right proposal on the right table. Since this is clearly not happening as fluidly and as professionally as is required for new demands to be framed (since too many of the old have not yet been granted), what else can the elected representatives do but keep trooping down to Delhi to raise issues that are still pending even after everyone has cleared them in principle? Sikkim needs a bureaucratic machinery at home to troop through the doors that its leaders open in Delhi. Till that happens, an annual Delhi pilgrimage with a dusty list of pending demands will remain and constant feature.

# The UN Security Council isn’t working. Will it ever be completely reformed?

JEAN-FRANÇOIS THIBAUT  
THECONVERSATION.COM

Canada has a lesson to learn from the results of the balloting for one of two available seats on the United Nations Security Council. After years of lobbying — although not as many as the victors — it came in third in a three-way contest with Norway and Ireland.

The message should be clear: Canada could and should do more. But beyond this disappointment for one country, the entire collective security system probably needs to be rethought, starting with the Security Council.

Created 75 years ago on Oct. 24, 1945, in the aftermath of the Second World War, the UN’s primary purpose is to maintain international peace and security. In order to ensure “prompt and effective action,” the signatory states of its Charter established a central body, the Security Council, with primary responsibility in this regard.

The Security Council was originally conceived on a basis of responsibility and capacity, rather than on a principle of representation. It was composed of five permanent members — the victors of the Second World War (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States) — and six non-permanent members elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms.

Seventy-five years later, is the Security Council still relevant in its current form? How can we fundamentally transform it so that it can truly fulfil its role?

As an observer of the United Nations, and as someone who studies international governance and security issues, I am not optimistic. My work on the enlightened realism that animated former Canadian prime minister Lester B. Pearson’s diplomatic efforts reinforces the sense that the world has changed profoundly and that the Security Council is becoming less and less responsive in crisis after crisis.

ENSURING BETTER REPRESENTATION

While the number of member nations in the UN increased from 51 in 1945 to 99 in 1960, it took lengthy negotiations to finally make it possible to raise the number of non-permanent members of the Security Council from six to 10 and distribute these members according to a geographical logic. But the tone



had already been set: although the resolution was adopted in the General Assembly by 96 votes in favour, several countries were against it, in particular France and the Soviet Union, or abstained, as in the case of the United States and the United Kingdom.

The UN now has 193 member states and the evolution of the international system clearly highlights the need for better representation. The five permanent members accounted for more than 50 per cent of the world’s population in 1945, but today they constitute 26 per cent of the globe’s population, with more than two-thirds in China alone. Without China, the other four permanent member states account for just 7.8 per cent of the world’s population.

Moreover, the geographical distribution adopted in the early 1960s today gives 47 per cent of the seats to the 52 member states of groups comprising Western and Eastern Europe (plus Australia, Canada, Israel, New Zealand, Turkey and the United States), while they account for about 17.1 per cent of the world’s population. The 53 countries in the Asia-Pacific Group, which represent 58.6 per cent of the global population, have 20 per cent of the seats. As well, the 54 states from the African Group, which represent 15.8 per cent of the planet’s population, hold 20 per cent of the seats and the 33 states from the Latin American and Caribbean

Group, which represent 8.5 per cent of the world’s population, have 13 per cent of the seats.

This question of greater representation is, not surprisingly, at the heart of the debates that have taken place since the reform of the Security Council. It was on the occasion of another important increase in the number of UN members, to 159 in 1990 and 184 in 1993, that these debates were restarted. Thirty years later, consensus on a model for reform is still not in sight.

PROPOSALS FOR REFORM

Several proposals are on the table. The most significant is that put forward by the Group of Four (Brazil, Germany, India and Japan). The members of that group wish to enlarge the membership of the Council so that they, together with two states from the African Group including South Africa, can have a permanent seat with the same privileges as the current members. The number of non-permanent seats would also be increased to 14 for a Council of 25 members.

In a counter-proposal, members of the Uniting For Consensus Group (created in the mid-1990s and formerly known as the Coffee Club), favours a simple increase in the number of seats occupied by non-permanent members from 10 to 20. The members of this group — which now includes Canada, Italy, Argentina, Pakistan, Mexico,

New Zealand, Spain, Sweden and others — are also juggling the idea of creating a new category of semi-permanent members and limiting the veto power of permanent members on a case-by-case basis.

In 2004, the Secretary-General’s High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change presented two options for reforming the Security Council’s membership.

The first proposed the creation of six permanent seats without veto power and three new non-permanent seats with a two-year term. These would be distributed among the regions so that each area would have six seats on the Council, including two for Africa, three for Asia and the Pacific (including China), four for Europe (including France, the United Kingdom and Russia) and two for the Americas (including the United States).

The second proposal would see the creation of a new category of non-permanent members, this time for a renewable term of four years. Two seats would thus be allocated to each of the four regions and a new non-permanent seat with a two-year term would also be created. Each of the four regions would have six votes in a Council composed of 24 members.

Finally, anticipating an enlargement of the Council and calling for “full representation,” there was the joint African proposal based on “The Ezulwini Consensus” adopted by the African Union in 2005. It calls for “at least two permanent seats with veto power (at least, “for as long as it exists”) and five non-permanent seats.

FAR FROM UNANIMITY

All these proposals suggest that there is a consensus among member states on the need for Security Council reform. However, because of the debates and resistance they raise, there is no consensus on the nature of such reform and, above all, on the form it could take in more concrete terms.

None of the proposals has the unanimous support of the permanent members and would not be able to garner the support of two-thirds of member states.

In the meantime, the impasse contributes to weaken the authority, legitimacy and effectiveness of the Security Council.

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# Four potential consequences of wearing face masks we need to be wary of

OLGA PERSKI & DAVID SIMONS  
THECONVERSATION.COM

If healthcare workers wear surgical masks, there is good evidence that it limits the spread of respiratory viral infections in hospitals. But there is no clear evidence that surgical masks protect members of the public from getting or passing on these sorts of infections – most likely because of incorrect use. For cloth masks worn by the public, the picture is even murkier.

Surgical masks are made up of several layers of non-woven plastic and can effectively filter very small particles, such as droplets of SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19). The masks typically contain an external waterproof layer and an internal absorbent layer.

Although masks made from scarves, T-shirts or other fabrics can’t provide the same level of protection and durability as surgical masks, they can block some of the large droplets exhaled by the wearer, hence protecting others from viral exposure. But their ability to filter droplets depends on their construction. Multi-layered cloth masks are better at filtering but harder to breathe through. And they become wetter quicker than single-layer masks.

The question we need to ask is not so much whether cloth masks offer as good a protection as surgical masks (we know that they don’t, and perhaps that’s fine), but whether there are serious unintended consequences of recommending their widespread use by members of the public.

When deciding if a safety measure is worth introducing at scale, it’s important to balance any benefits against potential harms. Here are four potential consequences that, unless mitigated against, could make things worse. Forewarned is forearmed.

THE BIG FOUR

First, what’s become known as the Peltzman

effect suggests that introducing one safety measure, such as car seatbelts, may lead to other, compensatory risk behaviours, such as speeding. (If you perceive that your car is safer than usual, you might compensate for this by driving faster.) In the context of COVID-19, it has been argued that the wearing of a mask may make people feel safer, and hence minimise other protective behaviours which we know to be effective, such as social distancing and regular hand washing.

Although we don’t have clear evidence that this is happening during the pandemic, a few studies conducted before the outbreak found



that people did indeed have worse hand hygiene when wearing a mask.

Second, to offer any protection, masks need to be worn correctly and consistently when in contact with other people. Most studies conducted so far – none of which were conducted during the current pandemic – didn’t explicitly look at the level of adherence to mask-wearing. Those that did reported variable adherence, ranging from “good” to “poor”.

It’s important to note, though, that the more severe a disease seems and the more susceptible people feel, the more likely they are to protect

themselves during a pandemic. Given the high number of global infections and deaths, people may display greater than typical levels of adherence to mask-wearing during the pandemic.

Third, masks may act as an extra transmission route or prompt other behaviour that transmits the virus, such as regular face touching. To stop masks being turned into alternative transmission routes, they need to be safely put on and taken off.

People touch their faces 15-23 times per hour on average – an itchy or poorly fitted mask may mean that people touch their eyes, nose and mouth even more regularly. After touching your mask, there’s a risk that your hands become contaminated, with the risk that you will then spread the virus to other surfaces, such as door handles, railings or tables.

Fourth, UK researchers have calculated that if the entire UK population started using disposable masks daily, it would create a significant environmental hazard, namely 42,000 tonnes of potentially contaminated and unrecyclable plastic waste per year.

Also, most people will have noticed the increased littering of masks in community spaces, which may act as environmental and infection hazards. Reusable rather than disposable masks are therefore preferable.

National and international public health bodies now recommend that members of the public use masks in places where it’s difficult to maintain social distancing, such as on public transport. We strongly urge readers to carry on with good hand hygiene and social distancing, not touching their face and using reusable (rather than disposable) face coverings – and safely disposing of them at the end of their useful life.

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## Arunachal Pradesh's COVID-19 tally rises to 139

**PASIGHAT, JUN 22 (PTI):** Four more persons were found to be positive for COVID-19 in Arunachal Pradesh, taking the total number of cases in the Northeastern state to 139, officials said on Monday.

There are 118 active cases in the state at present, they said.

Total 21 people have recovered from the disease so far, they added.

Most of the active cases are in Changlang district where 68

people are undergoing treatment, followed by Capital Complex (20), West Kameng (12), East Siang (five), Lohit and Lower Dibang Valley (three each), Namsai and Tirap (two each), West Siang, Tawang and Lower Siang (one each).

Four persons, including two frontline workers, were discharged from the COVID hospital in Pasighat on Sunday after they recovered. The state has not reported any death due to COVID-19.

## Elephant dies of mouth injury caused by twig in TN



**COIMBATORE, JUN 22 (PTI):** A 12-year old wild elephant died on Monday after battling an injury caused by a twig that got stuck in its mouth a week ago and made it to virtually starve despite undergoing treatment in a forest area in this district in Tamil Nadu.

On receiving information about the injury to the male elephant in the Periyanaickenpalayam forest range, Forest department officials and a veterinarian started treating it, by giving medicine, including antibiotics and

painkillers placed in soft fruits like bananas.

It was said to be recovering near Jambukandi village on the outskirts.

However, the pachyderm died around 5.30 AM today, Forest department sources said.

The incident comes closes on the heels of the death of two elephants in Kerala after they sustained severe wounds after allegedly chewed fruits stuffed with explosives. However, unlike the Kerala incident which was alleged to be a man-animal conflict, this was an accidental injury.

## One fresh COVID-19 case in Mizoram, count rises to 142



**AIZAWL, JUN 22 (PTI):** One more person has tested positive for COVID-19 in Mizoram, taking the state's tally to 142, a health official said on Monday.

The new patient, who hails from Siaha district, had recently returned to the state from Delhi, he said.

On the other hand, three more persons -- two from Aizawl district and one from Mamit -- have recovered from COVID-19 and were discharged from state-run Zoram Medical College during the day, the official said.

Of the 142 cases,

130 are active while 12 people have recovered, he said.

Meanwhile, churches in the state organised special prayers on Sunday night for the recovery of COVID-19 patients.

People offered their prayers from their houses in response to a call by the Mizoram Kohhran Hruaitute Committee (MKHC), a conglomerate of 15 major churches in the state.

Similar prayers were organised twice in March.

Congregations in churches in the state have been suspended in view of the COVID-19 outbreak.

## Will Smith opens up about the 'weight of parenting' and how he became a better father to Willow

**CNN:** Will Smith is reflecting on his failures and struggles as a father of three. Appearing on the Father's Day edition of his wife Jada Pinkett Smith's Facebook Watch series "Red Table Talk," the Hollywood actor spoke candidly about "the real weight of parenting."

According to the "Bad Boys" star, who has Jaden, 21, and Willow, 19, with Pinkett Smith as

well as Trey, 27, from his first marriage to Sheree Fletcher, his "fatherhood instincts" kicked in when he was just a child.

"From the time I was six years old, I wanted to be a father," the 51-year-old said. "I loved how my family was, but there were massive critical deficiencies in my father's parenting that I wanted to correct. By the time I was 10 years old, I remember looking at my father

# Man in home quarantine found dead in Assam

**DHUBRI (ASSAM), JUN 22 (PTI):** A 40-year old man was on Monday found hanging from the ventilator window of his room in a lodge where he was undergoing home quarantine, in Assam's Dhubri town, police said. The man was under home isolation in the lodge since June 19 after he had completed the mandatory seven-day institutional quarantine at a facility in Chagalia in Dhubri district following his entry to Assam from neighbouring West Bengal, they said.

In Assam, people who are unable to undergo home quarantine in their residences can stay at designated lodges and



hotels and complete their isolation period.

The deceased's swab samples collected at the Chagalia quarantine centre on June 14 had tested negative for COVID-19, Dhubri Circle

Officer, Joy Shankar Sharma, said.

The man was a goldsmith by profession and his wife and two children reside in West Bengal. His other

relatives stay in Dhubri town, a police officer said. His body has been sent to the Dhubri Civil Hospital for post-mortem examination and an investigation into the case is underway, he said.

## HM Amit Shah speaks to Mizoram CM after earthquake

**NEW DELHI, JUN 21 (PTI):** Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday spoke to Mizoram Chief Minister Zoramthanga and took stock of the situation in the northeastern state after it was jolted by an earthquake.

The home minister also assured the chief minister of all possible help from the central government to deal with the situation.

"I have spoken to Shri @ZoramthangaCM ji, Chief Minister of Mizoram, to review the situation after the



earthquake tremors in the state. I assured him all possible support from

the central government. Praying for everyone's safety and well-being,"

Shah tweeted.

The earthquake occurred at 4.10 am and the epicentre was at Zokhawthar in Champhai district on the India-Myanmar border.

The tremors were felt in several parts of the state, including state capital Aizawl, a state official said.

Several houses and buildings in Champhai district have been partly damaged due to the quake, he said.

The quake also caused cracks on highways and roads at several places.

## Obstacles to Puri Rath Jatra should be removed: VHP

**BHUBANESWAR, JUN 21 (PTI):** The Vishwa Hindu Parishad's (VHP) Central Secretary-General Milind Parande on Sunday demanded that appropriate steps be taken to ensure that the annual Rath Jatra festival of Lord Jagannath in Puri is celebrated observing all health protocols in view of the COVID-19 outbreak.

In a statement, he said the festival has been conducted uninterruptedly for hundreds of years and a way must be found out to hold the festival this year too.

The VHP leader



requested the Supreme Court to review its stay order on holding of the Rath Jatra this year in view of the COVID-19 crisis, saying, in today's circumstances, it is hardly expected that lakhs of devotees would

gather for the festival.

Parande said it is the responsibility of the Odisha government to take steps to ensure that the Rath Jatra is not stopped.

The state government has completely failed in

fulfilling its duty in this respect. The Government of Odisha could not properly place and articulate all the facts, figures and aspects in this matter before the Hon'ble Supreme Court, he said. Meanwhile, the Bangladesh chapter of the World Hindu Federation also urged the Supreme Court and the Union Government to take measures allowing the Rath Jatra this year by maintaining social distance.

## Odisha reports one more COVID-19 fatality, 143 new cases

**BHUBANESWAR, JUN 22 (PTI):** A 46-year-old man from Ganjam district became the latest COVID-19 victim in Odisha, raising the death toll due to the contagion in the state to 15, a health department official said on Monday.

Odisha also recorded 143 new cases of the respiratory ailment, taking the state's coronavirus tally to 5,303, of which 1,562 cases are active, he said.

"Regret to report that a 46-year-old Covid positive male of Ganjam

district passed away while under treatment in hospital for Covid pneumonia," a statement issued by the Health and Family Welfare Department said.

Meanwhile, a 60-year-old COVID-19 patient of Mayurbhanj district, who was suffering from cancer of the oesophagus, also died. "But the reason of his death was post-operative complications following cancer surgery," the official said.

Of the fresh cases, 137 are from different

quarantine centres where returnees are lodged for preliminary observation, he said, adding that two National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) personnel have also tested positive for the disease.

Contact-tracing and follow-up action are underway, the department said.

Ganjam topped the list of new infections with 32 cases, followed by Cuttack at 20, it added.

A total of 3,720 patients have so far recovered from the disease in the state.

## Pune: Sex workers seek to resume work with caution, SOPs

**PUNE, JUN 22 (PTI):** With the lockdown being eased, some sex workers in Pune's red light area want to get back to business by taking all precautions and following the standard operating procedures to stay protected against COVID-19.

The livelihood of nearly 3,000 sex workers in the Budhwar Peth area here in Maharashtra has been affected by the COVID-19 outbreak and the subsequent lockdown, following which several of them moved back to their hometowns, according to an NGO working for their welfare.

Now, with the lockdown being relaxed, some of them are gearing up to resume work and are even ready to explore options of services like "phone sex", Tejasvi Sevekari, executive director of city-based NGO Saheli Sangh, told PTI.

She said the NGO, which is a collective of sex workers, has chalked out some standard operating procedures (SOPs) for them and is training them on how to take extra precautions while soliciting customers.

All these SOPs and guidelines are for sex workers across the country who are connected through the National Network of Sex Workers, she said.

"As no COVID-19 case was reported from the red light area here, the containment zone tag and barricading have been removed. While majority of the sex workers are still not ready to start their work, a handful of them have resumed business as they are facing financial crunch due to the long lockdown," said Sevekari.

The NGO has started imparting training through audio and video clips to the sex workers on what precautions they need to take during customer

visits.

"Since there will be physical contact with customers, we have chalked out SOPs and guidelines. While condoms are mandatory, now masks and gloves are also a must during sexual activity. They have been asked to use hand sanitisers and disinfectants," Sevekari said.

Some of the sex workers have bought thermal scanners and foot-operated sanitiser dispensers and placed them outside their premises, she said.

"It has been advised to ask the customer to take a shower before the activity and not to entertain any customer having cough or fever," she added.

The NGO is also encouraging them to explore the 'phone sex' option and asking those who are already into virtual sex business to teach others, Sevekari said.

"Phone sex is quite normal in high-end call girls, but it is a new thing for sex workers here. There are some sex workers who are already using the medium and they are sharing their experiences with others," she said.

The objective is to allow them to earn their livelihood without being exposed to any physical contact with customers, thus keeping the risk of COVID-19 at bay, she said.

Inspector Jagannath Kalaskar from Faraskhana police station, which has jurisdiction over the Budhwar Peth red light area, said they had a meeting with NGOs working in the area and asked them to ensure all precautions are taken.

"Sex workers have been told not to stand or sit outside their rooms, and those are ill or infected with HIV have been asked to stay away," Kalaskar said.

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# Atalanta wins 4-1 to bring joy to hard-hit Bergamo

**MILAN, JUN 22 (AP):** Soccer resumed in one of the Italian cities hit hardest by the coronavirus pandemic with a poignant Serie A match as Atalanta gave a much-needed boost to the residents of Bergamo. Atalanta beat Sassuolo 4-1 in its first Serie A match in 112 days and the first in Bergamo since Feb. 15.

“There’s a lot going on in the world and Bergamo has been hit hard. This win was for the city, the people, the club. The worst days are behind us, change is coming,” Atalanta midfielder Marten de Roon wrote in a post on Twitter after the match.

More than 16,000 people have died from the virus in the Lombardy region containing Bergamo, and the small city was one of the epicenters of the outbreak.

Images of a convoy of military trucks driving coffins out of the city because the crematorium couldn’t keep up were beamed around the world.

Atalanta coach Gian Piero Gasperini who revealed last month that he acquired COVID-19 had vowed before the match to help make the people of Bergamo smile



again.

“A first smile. It’s nice to say that we’re back and we have restarted from where we were stopped,” Gasperini said. “It’s obvious that some things will never be deleted. But soccer which is entertainment and an incredible passion can help people rejoice again. “Our biggest satisfaction will be when fans can return to the stadium because playing in these conditions is really a shame. A win like today with fans would have been a completely different thing.”

The minute’s silence before kickoff in tribute to those who have died with the coronavirus was accompanied by a video of the city during

the crisis, along with the song “Rinascero, rinascerei” (I will be born again, you will be born again).

Serie A has resumed this weekend with four catchup matches. There were two on Saturday and title-chasing Inter Milan beat Sampdoria 2-1 in Sunday’s late match.

All matches are being played in empty stadiums. Some fans were outside Atalanta’s Gweiss Stadium and they could be heard chanting against the league’s governing body.

The match was all but over by halftime following strikes from Berat Djimsiti and Duv n Zapata and an own-goal

by Sassuolo midfielder Mehdi Bourabia.

Atalanta had also hit the crossbar and had a goal ruled out for handball.

Zapata added a second after the break and Atalanta also had penalty appeals waved away on a tight decision by the video assistant referee. Gasperini was so incensed by the decision that he was sent off for dissent.

Bourabia made up for his own-goal by scoring at the right end in stoppage time.

Atalanta remained fourth but moved six points above Roma in the fight for the final Champions League spot.

Atalanta is playing in its first season in

Europe’s premier club competition. Many experts have pointed to the round of 16 match between Atalanta and Valencia on Feb. 19 in Milan as one of the biggest reasons why the virus was so deadly in Bergamo. The match has been dubbed “Game Zero” by the local media.

A N T I - R A C I S M STANCE

Romelu Lukaku marked his goal by taking a knee.

Lukaku, who is Black, showed his support for the Black Lives Matter movement after scoring Inter’s opener in the 10th minute finishing off an impressive team move.

Lautaro Mart nez doubled Inter’s lead before Morten Thorsby pulled one back for Samp eight minutes into the second half.

Third-place Inter moved six points behind leader Juventus and five below second-place Lazio. Sampdoria remained a point above the relegation zone.

Sampdoria was one of the teams which announced the highest number of cases of COVID-19, including at least seven players, with the team doctor hospitalized.

Inter’s team doctor was also hospitalized with the virus.

## Dimitrov positive for COVID-19, exhibition event canceled

**WASHINGTON, JUN 22 (AP):** Grigor Dimitrov has tested positive for COVID-19, leading to the cancellation of an exhibition event in Croatia where top-ranked Novak Djokovic was due to play in the final.

Dimitrov, ranked No. 19 and a three-time Grand Slam semifinalist, is the highest-profile current player to say he has the virus.

His announcement Sunday on his Instagram page comes at the end of a week when the U.S. Open said it would go forward.

The professional tennis tours have been suspended since March and are planning to resume in August.

Goran Ivanisevic, one of Djokovic’s coaches, said the news from Dimitrov was “shocking” and that “now everyone will have to be tested.”

Dimitrov said he was making his condition public because he wanted to “make sure anyone who has been in contact with me during these past days gets tested.”

“I am so sorry for any harm I might have caused,” he wrote.

The Bulgarian featured last week in the Serbia leg of the Adria Tour exhibition event organized by Djokovic.

There was criticism that there was no

social distancing at the exhibition, which took place before packed stands in Belgrade, the Serbian capital.

The Serbian government lifted most virus restrictions last month despite dozens of new cases being registered.

Dimitrov also played a match against Borna Coric in Croatia, at the Adriatic resort of Zadar, on Saturday in the second leg of the exhibition series. After the match, he complained about fatigue. He said in his post that he was tested in Monaco.

Organizers said Sunday the exhibition has now been canceled. Djokovic had been scheduled to play Russia’s Andrey Rublev in the final.

Besides Djokovic, other leading players participated in the events, including Dominic Thiem in Belgrade and Alexander Zverev in both tournaments.

“We are really sorry, we tried our best to respect all measures, and we did respect all measures imposed by the governments of Serbia and Croatia,” said event director Djordje Djokovic, the younger brother of Novak Djokovic.

“From our side, we did all we could but Grigor is unfortunately

positive. At this moment we are organizing all medical services to check all people who have been in contact with Grigor, they will all be tested. I already contacted all players of the Adria Tour, and their families, all of the volunteers, all people involved in organization absolutely none of them have any symptoms.”

He added: “Before he came to Zadar, Grigor was in his home country (Bulgaria), we don’t know if he got the virus there. All of the people who had close contact with him here will be tested.”

Novak Djokovic has initially struck a skeptical tone if he would play at the U.S. Open at Flushing Meadows from Aug. 31 to Sept. 13.

Some of the sport’s top names, including defending men’s champion Rafael Nadal along with top-ranked Ash Barty have expressed reservations about heading somewhere that was a hot spot for the COVID-19 outbreak. Others expressed an eagerness to return to action.

The U.S. Open normally is the fourth and final Grand Slam tournament of each season but would be the second major of 2020, following the Australian Open, which concluded in early February.

Sociedad had a goal disallowed for offside just before Benzema’s goal. Mikel Merino eventually pulled the hosts closer in the 83rd with a shot that struck the crossbar before going in, but Sociedad was not able to get the equalizer. It was the third straight setback for Sociedad since the league resumed, dropping the Basque Country club to seventh place. It had returned from the break in fourth place, the final Champions League spot.

## Madrid beats Real Sociedad 2-1 to retake Spanish league lead

**MADRID, JUN 22 (AP):** Sergio Ramos and Karim Benzema scored second-half goals as Real Madrid beat Real Sociedad 2-1 to take the lead from Barcelona for the first time since the Spanish league resumed.

Ramos converted a 50th-minute penalty kick and Benzema added to the lead in the 70th to move Madrid ahead of the Catalan club, which on Friday was held by fourth-place Sevilla to a 0-0 draw.

Madrid and Barcelona are level on 65 points, but Madrid has a better goal difference and a better head-to-head record against its rival. Madrid had led five of the last seven rounds before the break, but Barcelona went in front just before the league was suspended due to the coronavirus pandemic more than three months ago. Barcelona had stayed ahead after two straight victories since the league restarted. The defending champions have eight rounds left to try to retake the lead.

Madrid kept its perfect record on its return despite a lackluster first half at Sociedad. Ramos broke the deadlock from the penalty spot after Vin cius J nior was fouled, and Benzema sealed the victory from inside the area for his third goal after the break.

The French striker who had a double in the team’s 3-0 win over Valencia on Thursday reached 17th league goals, four behind scoring leader Lionel Messi.

# US sports are embracing social justice. The WNBA was doing it before it was cool

ANDREW LAWRENCE

**LONDON, 19 JUN [THEGUARDIAN]:**

An unarmed black man is killed by a cop in the Twin Cities. Sometime thereafter, professional basketball is played. Before one game, the reigning league champions take the court for warmups in T-shirts that read ‘Change Starts with Us’. Before two others, a trio of former league MVPs across three teams lead similar rallies clad in ‘Black Lives Matter’ tees; when those three teams and their players draw fines for violating the league’s dress code, two of those MVPs agree to hold their team’s post-game news conferences jointly and tell the media: “We’re only talking about Black Lives Matter”. Across the league, players post pictures of themselves in protest shirts on their social media feeds with messages underneath crying out for justice and reform. By the end of the month, the fines are rescinded.

The preceding description isn’t some fever vision of the conflicts to come if indeed the NBA does come back from its coronavirus-imposed hibernation this summer. It’s flashback to a line in the sand that was drawn some four years ago, following the murder of Minneapolis’s Philando Castile, by the players of the WNBA – old hands when it comes to leveraging their platform for the bigger topics of the day. The ‘Change Starts with Us’ tees? Those came from the Minnesota Lynx, whose passive support for Castile and Alton Sterling (killed by Baton Rouge cops a day prior to Castile’s death) prompted four off-duty cops who work Lynx games to desert their security posts. Never mind that the empathy the women also expressed at that press conference for the five police officers who



were gunned down at a protest in Dallas after Castile’s death.

The MVPs in those Black Lives Matter tees? Why, they were none other than Phoenix Mercury combo goddess Diana Taurasi, the bruising New York Liberty pivot Tina Charles and the unrelenting Indiana Fever slasher Tamika Catchings – the last two of whom organized that joint presser when their teams met at Madison Square Garden, the Mecca of basketball. And while there’s an argument to be made that tees-and-tweet protests were a burgeoning fad at that time – with LeBron James and Cleveland Browns receiver Andrew Hawkins leading early trendsetters – only in the WNBA does the spirit of civic engagement suffuse the sport itself.

The deaths of Castile and Sterling were hardly the last case studies to trigger pointed

reactions from the league. As Colin Kaepernick was taking arrows for genuflecting during the national anthem in 2016, players from the Fever and the Mercury locked arms and took a knee on court before their game in solidarity. A year later, when the president dismissed NFL protesters as sons of bitches and called on team owners to fire any one of them who dlsReSpEcTeD the FIAG, the Lynx knelt and linked arms during the anthem again while their opponent, the Los Angeles Sparks, walked off the court entirely. The kicker: this was before Game 1 of the WNBA finals.

Two years ago, when downtown Washington DC became the site for a sequel to the white supremacist rally in Charlottesville that had culminated in the hit-and-run death of resister Heather Heyer, the Washington Mystics,

playing host to the Sparks just a few blocks away, refused to let the moment pass without a formal rebuke. (“We feel shock at the state of this country and believe that hate should never be granted this platform,” All-Star guard Kristi Toliver said over the PA system before the anthem ceremony.) Early last year, Lynx forward Maya Moore – a league MVP, two-time Olympic gold medalist and four-time champion on the fast track to GOAT status – announced an extended leave from basketball to focus on criminal justice reform. As modern-day sacrifices for the greater good come in sport, only Kaepernick’s ranks higher. “You never want to see anyone disrespect anything that stands for honor,” Moore told ESPN in response to Drew Brees’s initially tone-deaf critique of flag protests, “but the other half is (...) this symbol of bravery and freedom in American means that for a portion of the population there are so many, namely black and brown bodies, in America who have experienced a different America.”

It isn’t just WNBA players who take a stand. Four years after issuing fines to dress code rebels, the league now bakes activism into its ticket sales, encouraging buyers to direct a segment of their outlay to breast cancer vigilance, sexual assault prevention and educational support for LGBTQ+ youth. The Seattle Storm fundraises for Planned Parenthood unabashedly.

Even now as corporations and governments hop on the bandwagon to make this Friday an official holiday for Juneteenth (the declarative moment meant to finish the job the Emancipation Proclamation started), as the president gears up for a comeback rally at the

site of one of the worst acts of racial terrorism in this country’s too-appalling history, the Liberty already had their own Juneteenth observance planned for Friday afternoon. Their event, a virtual town hall, tips off at 3pm ET and will be moderated by Breakfast Club host Angela Yee and include Liberty guard Layshia Clarendon, Brooklyn Nets swingman Garrett Temple, activist Topeka K Sam and the Grammy-nominated emcee Rapsody as panelists. To hear team COO Keia Clarke tell it, the Liberty’s celebration – inspired by the annual Juneteenth festival held at the team’s adopted home in White Plains, New York – was too important to wait for the WNBA’s tentative July return, at which point it’ll be sharing its somewhat exclusive summer spotlight with all the sports Covid wiped out in the spring. “It’s a much-needed conversation at this time,” she says.

How does an entire basketball league come to share this sense of urgency around social issues? Well, it could be that women’s sports itself remains somewhat of an act of protest, even after the passing of Title IX. The WNBA has been fighting for respect from its inception almost a quarter century ago. The intrinsic economic biases against the sport means that players wind up staying in college all four years and playing internationally during the WNBA offseason to supplement their professional incomes. Altogether, it makes for an educated and worldly group of athletes who are far less insulated from systemic inequities than their exponentially higher earning male counterparts.

So it figures that when these women weren’t reckoning with gay rights or police brutality or other weighty obstacles of the day,

über-talented Aussie center Liz Cambage and other league stars were openly challenging their employers to raise their wages so they don’t have to dribble for cash overseas during the WNBA offseason. Earlier this year, they won a new CBA that – in addition to pay hikes, modest though they were – yields important ground on maternity leave and mental healthcare. What’s more, racial inequality never becomes core to the league’s activist mission if Catchings, Las Vegas’ Tanisha Wright and other black players don’t point out the hypocrisy of the league fining them for wearing Black Lives Matter tees while encouraging on-court shows of support for victims of 2016 nightclub shooting in Orlando.

In the last few weeks, the NBA’s seemingly inexorable march toward an end-of-July return in the Magic Kingdom has run into surprise headwinds from Kyrie Irving, Dwight Howard and a minority of star players who wonder if a resumption of play might distract from the more important social work that’s happening around the world. Rather than concede the spotlight, especially without making a single demand, they’d be wise to take a page from the women of the WNBA playbook, now campaigning to have Black Lives Matter branded onto the court. Not only have they shown that the fraught journey to institutional transformation has many paths, they’ve proven that success on this quest only comes through using their dizzyingly lofty basketball platform as an unrelenting bully pulpit to speak truth to power and inspire the activist who might be on the fence about whether to tuck into some hoops or hit the streets.







## Justin Bieber denies 2014 sexual assault allegation, shows receipts of Airbnb stay with Selena Gomez

The pop singer called the woman's accusations "factually impossible." Justin Bieber is refuting a woman's claim that he assaulted her in 2014, taking to Twitter on Sunday to defend himself with receipts. The singer also said he will be taking "legal action" in response to the accusation.

"I don't normally address things as I have dealt with random accusations my entire career but after talking with my wife and team I have decided to speak up on an issue tonight," Bieber began a series of tweets. "Rumors are rumors but sexual abuse is something I don't take lightly. I wanted to speak out right away but out of respect to so many victims who deal with these issues daily I wanted to make sure I gathered the facts before I made any statement."

Bieber's response comes after a woman going by Danielle claimed in widely-circulated but now-deleted tweets that she was sexually assaulted by the singer on March 9, 2014, when she was 21 and he was 20. She alleged that they met following Bieber's surprise performance at SXSW in Austin, Tex., after which she said he invited her and her friends to the Four Seasons Hotel in Austin, Tex., before allegedly taking her to another room and assaulting her. No civil or criminal charges have been made, and EW has not been able to reach the unidentified woman or her friends for comment. As of now, she has provided no backup for her allegations outside her written claims on Twitter.

In a string of tweets defending himself, Bieber stated, "There is no truth to this story." The pop star said he and his then-girlfriend Selena Gomez were



together from March 9-10, including at the SXSW performance. He included an article from the time reporting that Gomez was in attendance that night.

He also denied staying at the Four Seasons Hotel, showing emails and receipts he said were from an Airbnb on March 9 and a Westin Hotel on the 10th. The Westin's receipt is under the name "Mike Lowery," which Bieber said was an alias he used to employ.

"On March 10th, Selena left for work and I stayed at the Westin as the receipts clearly showed with my friends Nick and John before I left town. Once again not at the Four Seasons. We booked it for a couple days to stay for the defam show but I bailed on the 11th to head back home," he wrote.

Bieber also addressed a woman who tweeted at the time that she saw him at the Four Seasons, saying he was seen "at the restaurant the following night, not

the hotel." The woman who spotted him there seemed to back this up, tweeting, "Hi I'm not sure what this all about and why I'm being tagged, but I was in the Four Season RESTAURANT"

"We have also confirmed with the Four Seasons regional manager that I was never on property on the 9th of March 2014 and never a guest on the 9th or the 10th and I welcome all press to inquire with them if needed or wanted," Bieber continued.

In his last post, the singer said his tweets weren't intended to undermine sexual abuse claims, but to clear his name.

"Every claim of sexual abuse should be taken very seriously and this is why my response was needed," he wrote. "However this story is factually impossible and that is why I will be working with twitter and authorities to take legal action."

## Marvel Rumored to Introduce Villain That Will Set Up Doctor Doom's MCU Debut

A new report suggests that Marvel Studios is laying the groundwork for Doctor Doom's Marvel Cinematic Universe debut. According to MCU Cosmic, another Marvel villain's role and the introduction of the nation of Latveria to the universe will presage Doom's arrival as a new threat. That villain is Lucia Von Bardas, the prime minister of Latveria. In the comics, Von Bardas deposes Doom and replaces him as ruler of the small nation. Doom later returned to reclaim his country. In the case of the Marvel Cinematic Universe, it seems likely that Von Bardas would be a servant of Doom, perhaps sent on a diplomatic mission outside of Latveria.

While there are no firm plans known to the public for the introduction of Doom and his rivals, the Fantastic Four, into the Marvel Cinematic Universe, Marvel Studios is now in possession of those characters after purchasing 20th Century Fox. Fox had hired Legion creator Noah Hawley to direct a Doctor Doom movie. Hawley has suggested that the script for the Doom film is complete, but he's received no contact from Disney or Marvel Studios. Regardless, his new job writing and directing a Star Trek movie may complicate the issue.

"The phone hasn't rung," Hawley said. "I love the script and what I did with it. Marvel seems to have a plan for everything. It would be great if I fell into that plan. And I haven't been chasing it, and with Star Trek, it complicates it. But if the



phone rings, I'm in." In another interview, he said, "I mean, where it stands is now that the movie is done and Legion is done, and I've taken a little time off because someone told me there was this word 'vacation,' which means you don't work, which sounded really interesting to me," Hawley explained last August. "But you know, I need to circle back to them and announce that I would love to make it and figure out if that's something that is possible. Whether or not they already have a plan in place for what to do with those characters or whether they're open to my kind of vision for what to do with those characters. But it's sort of on me right now to go push them, which I will do as soon as I come up for air."

## Kristin Thomas Scott 'still terrified of catching' coronavirus

**LONDON, JUN 22 (PTI):** Veteran actor Kristin Thomas Scott says she is "terrified" that one day she might contract the coronavirus as there are so many people she knows who have been infected with the disease.

The 60-year-old actor, who has been self-isolating at home since late March because of the pandemic, said as she falls under the vulnerable age group she tries to be extra cautious before stepping out.

"(I won't go to the shop) without looking like a total lunatic because I'm covered. I've got a mask on, I've got a headscarf on, I've got glasses on because I just don't want to get sick and I'm still terrified of catching it. Horror.

"And a friend of mine did get it and ended up in hospital, ICU, for 10 days or something. Terrible. I know so many people who have had it. And you know, because I'm, I'm getting towards the age

group of people who are more vulnerable myself... Slowly tiptoeing towards it," Scott told The Observer newspaper.

The "Fleabag" star said lockdown has proved "beneficial" for her, adding she was wary about these measures when they were announced almost three months ago.

Staying in one place was refreshing as she realised her travelling habits had gone "totally out of control", she added.



Stepping Out! Model, Amber Rose showed off her ink, and her curves, as she ran errands in LA.

## James Van Der Beek reveals wife Kimberly Brook had a fifth miscarriage

**LOS ANGELES, JUN 22 (PTI):** "Dawson's Creek" alum James Van Der Beek has revealed that his wife, business consultant Kimberly Brook recently suffered another miscarriage. The 43-year-old actor opened up about their experience in an Instagram post.

"After suffering a brutal, very public miscarriage last November, we were overjoyed to learn we were pregnant. This time, we kept the news to ourselves.

"But last weekend, once again, 17 weeks in... the soul we'd been excited to welcome into the world had lessons for our family that did not include joining us in a living physical body," Van Der Beek wrote on over the weekend.

They rushed Brook, 38, to the hospital by ambulance for "another harrowing night of blood transfusions", the actor said.

This is her fifth miscarriage in nine years.

Reflecting on their personal tragedy amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, the actor said there are "no words" to ease the pain the world is suffering right



now, but urged people to take care of one another. "The world is in pain right now. There's denial, shock, numbness, anger - all the old patterns we cling to when deep trauma is unearthed. And there are no words to ease that pain... to make the process hurt less or to solve it quickly.

"But the way out of it? Starts with an open, broken-hearted contemplation of this question: How can we take better care of each other?" Van Der Beek wondered.

The couple share five children, Olivia, nine, Joshua, eight, Annabel, six, Emilia, four, and Gwendolyn, who turned two earlier this month.

**ARIES:** Repeat after me, Aries: I am not a pushover. You may feel like your beliefs are being challenged. But you don't have to do anything you don't resonate with or succumb to somebody else's unrealistic demands. Call your power back to you and stand up for what you believe in. Trust that those who truly care for you will never weigh you down with unrealistic expectations.

**TAURUS:** You've never thought of yourself as the outdoorsy kind. I mean, why would you climb a hill in dirty trainers when you can lounge in the comfort of your home dressed in Insta-appropriate attire? But your time indoors has made you value Mother Nature's bounty so much more. This weekend, you're in the mood to stop and smell the rose (literally), walk barefoot on the grass, and feel the wind against your skin. The cards are encouraging you to embrace the tree-hugging even if your neighbours think you're completely crazy.

**GEMINI:** Logic is cool, but have you ever listened to your intuition? "And above all, watch with glittering eyes the whole world around you because the

greatest secrets are always hidden in the most unlikely places. Those who don't believe in magic will never find it." Casually dropping Roald Dahl's most celebrated quote as a reminder of the magic that surrounds you at this moment. Allow yourself to receive the loving guidance that's coming through from your angels and guides. The words of encouragement they're whispering will help reinstate your belief in yourself and the chosen path.

**CANCER:** There are times when we grab life by the horns and then there are times when we step into the role of the observer and put some distance between ourselves and our creations. Think of this as a review period. Actively disengage from the things you've been worrying about and trust that the answers you seek will come to you when you find stillness. The new moon in your sign (June 21, or the day of the summer solstice, to be precise) will prove to be a major reset for you on a deep level. So allow yourself to release what no longer serves you.

**LEO:** Sometimes, we become so obsessed with what we're trying to manifest, we believe there is only one way out

of the maze. Could your tunnel vision be the reason you're feeling limited? Something to think about, Leo. It may seem like things are falling apart, but the truth is, there's a lot being realigned for you behind the scenes. So embrace the qualities of trust and surrender. A beautiful affirmation by Louise Hay to get you through this period of uncertainty, "I feel safe in the rhythm and flow of ever-changing life."

**VIRGO:** While clairvoyance (the metaphysical ability to 'see') and clairaudience (the metaphysical ability to 'hear') get written and spoken about, clairsentience is often ignored. Have you ever walked into a room where everything is seemingly perfect and just felt the energy of discord hanging around or listened to a person say, "I'm fine, thanks" and known something is terribly wrong? That niggling feeling you feel in the pit of your stomach is exactly what we're talking about. T

**LIBRA:** Today you're being asked to tap into the power of empathy and hold space for your tribe in this time of uncertainty. Maybe you'll just hear them without any judgements or biases. Maybe you'll offer your two

cents. Maybe you'll share an anecdote from your own life when you were struggling with the same challenges.

**SCORPIO:** Love is not the same as longing, Scorpio. Instead of playing victim to your circumstances, take the power back in your hands. This is your script, after all! Coupled Plutonians could be going through a period of emotional turmoil. Release the need to be understood, and with it, the unrealistic expectations that have been weighing you down.

**SAGITTARIUS:** What do you want to be remembered for, Sagittarius? What is the legacy you want to leave behind? Now is not the time to play it safe or small. Reflect upon what it is that sets your soul on fire, and start working towards the given goal. It's easy to give into the illusion that following the path of passion won't put money in your bank.

**CAPRICORN:** It's a time for a quick body scan, Capricorn. Close your eyes and examine your physical vessel with the help of your internal gaze. Do you notice the presence of any blocks or is the energy flowing freely? What about the emotional landscape? Could the presence of anger, hate, resentment,

insecurity or jealousy be preventing the movement of good chi? It's time to breathe it all out. It's time to transmute the heavy energies.

**AQUARIUS:** What if our ideas are not random, Aquarius? What if we are being guided by a force larger than ourselves? Listen to the voice in your head that's telling you take a risk. Everything you need to know about 'the plan' will reveal itself once you commit to the path. Writing and communication may also be big themes for some of you. Forget about the rulebook as you allow yourself to express what's coming through. You're here to be a messenger of new and unique ideas, not pander to the expectations others have of you.

**PISCES:** Why are we so obsessed with to-do lists? Life is not a productivity test. Get off the treadmill and listen to what your body is telling you. Slowing down has been the collective message for some time now. Given that we are in retrograde season, you may find that you're feeling rather sensitive to the energies around you. Be mindful of who you are giving your energy to and what you are letting into your space. Self-care is more important than ever before.