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# SummitTIMES

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## CM provides cash relief to Passingdang flashflood victims

**WANGCHUK BHUTIA  
DZONGU, 29 JUN:**

Chief Minister, PS Tamang today took stock of damages in Passingdang, Dzongu, North Sikkim which was hit by a flashflood on Saturday night. He visited houses damaged by the flood and Passingdang School building.

A total of 13 families affected by the flashflood in Passingdang were provided relief amount of Rs. 1,01,900 from National Calamity Relief Fund. The Chief Minister also handed over the relief amount of Rs 2 lakh each from the CM's Relief Fund to 48 houses.

The CM directed the concerned department to conduct survey on damaged houses. Highlighting on the damages in Passingdang school, the CM sought the advice from people and the concerned engineers where it



was decided that the said school will run at Lingthem JHS for the time being.

The CM stated that he does not hold grudges and will work with the people for the development of Dzongu regardless of party affiliations. He also directed the Roads & Bridges Department to immediately

restore road connectivity.

Mentioning that the alternate road of Mantam lake has been approved, he directed the Area MLA to identify an able contractor for the work.

The Area MLA, Pintso Namgyal Lepcha highlighted the damages caused by the flashflood and incessant

rain in Dzongu.

The public of Passingdang have submitted the demand for relocation of the village to a safer location as they feel that the village is no longer safe for human habitation.

DM North, TT Kaleon underlined the relief and restoration measures.

The people of Dzongu and Passingdang thanked the Chief Minister for visiting the affected areas within 48 hours despite landslides and road blockage.

The CM was accompanied by cabinet ministers, Lok Sabha MP, Indra Hang Subba, head of the various departments and other officials.

## Govt bans 59 apps including TikTok, WeChat

**NEW DELHI, JUN 29 (PTI):**

The government on Monday banned 59 mobile apps, including China's TikTok, SHAREit and WeChat, terming them prejudicial to sovereignty, integrity and national security.

In an official statement, the IT Ministry said it has received many complaints from various sources, including several reports about misuse of some mobile apps available on Android and iOS platforms for "stealing and surreptitiously transmitting users' data in an unauthorised manner to

servers which have locations outside India".

"The compilation of these data, its mining and profiling by elements hostile to national security and defence of India, which ultimately impinges upon the sovereignty and integrity of India, is a matter of very deep and immediate concern which requires emergency measures," the statement said.

The Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre, Ministry of Home Affairs, has also sent an exhaustive recommendation for blocking these

malicious apps.

"On the basis of these and upon receiving of recent credible inputs that such Apps pose threat to sovereignty and integrity of India, the Government of India has decided to disallow the usage of certain Apps, used in both mobile and non-mobile Internet enabled devices," it said.

The statement added that this move will "safeguard the interests of crores of Indian mobile and internet users. This decision is a targeted move to ensure safety and sovereignty of Indian cyberspace".

## Two homes gutted at Upper Sapreynagi



**RUDRA KAUSHIK  
GYALSHING, 29 JUN:**

Two houses burned to the ground at Upper Sapreynagi under Siktam Tikpur GPU in West Sikkim on Monday following a suspected electrical short circuit.

The two-storeyed homes, belonging to Tshering Temba Sherpa

and Nim Doma Sherpa, brother and sister, were adjacent to each other and were completely damaged when the fire spread from one house to the other.

As per the locals, the fire broke out at the house of Tshering Temba Sherpa at around 11AM on Monday and flames

jumped to his sister's house rendering both families homeless.

The BDO and concerned panchayat members visited the affected families and took stock of the damages and assured them of all necessary governmental assistance after the required assessment.

## CM stops by landslide affected areas in Mangan



**WANGCHUK BHUTIA  
DZONGU, 29 JUN:**

The Chief Minister, PS Tamang today also visited the landslide affected areas in Lower Mangan Bazaar, old SNT complex and Mangan public ground while on his way back from Dzongu today. He visited the landslide affected areas at Lingdong in Upper Dzongu.

At Mangan, the CM directed the UDHD to divert water with proper drainage system, avoiding sinking areas. He also said that the protection work at Mangan will be done by the company which developed the Pakyong airport.

The CM also directed the BRO for early restoration of road connectivity.

## Plasma bank to be set up in Delhi for treatment of COVID-19 patients

**NEW DELHI, JUN 29 (PTI):** Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday announced setting up of a 'plasma bank' to save lives of serious COVID-19 patients in the national capital.

Addressing an online media briefing, the chief minister said the bank will start working in the next two days, adding that the AAP government will encourage

those who have recovered from COVID-19 to donate their plasma.

The chief minister said that a helpline will be set up by the government for queries related to donation of plasma.

Kejriwal said that his government has so far conducted clinical trial of plasma therapy on 29 COVID-19 patients and the result was "encouraging".

The chief minister also announced that a sum of Rs one crore will be given to the family of LNJP Dr Aseem Gupta, who died due to COVID-19.

The 52-year-old doctor served in the front line of the war against the pandemic at the government facility, and died of novel coronavirus infection in an ICU of a private hospital on Sunday.

## Asaar Pandra celebrated at Dung Dung village

**KHAMDONG, 29 JUN (IPR):** The traditional paddy (rice) trans-plantation festival of Asaar Pandra (15th day of the month of Asaar as per Nepali calendar), was held with much fervour and enthusiasm at Dung Dung village in Khamdong, East Sikkim, today.

The programme was graced by Minister for Agriculture, LN Sharma as the chief guest, along with Minister for Health Department, Dr MK Sharma, Minister for Transport, Sanjit Kharel, MLAs: Sonam Venchungpa, BK Sharma, Sunita Gazmer, Em Prasad Sharma, Secretary Agriculture Department, Rinzing Chewang Bhutia, Secretary Horticulture Department, MT Sherpa, Secretary IPR Department, Namrata Thapa, and senior officers of the Agriculture and Horticulture Departments, amidst enthusiastic presence of the people of Khamdong and surrounding areas.

At the outset, the dignitaries performed the bhoomi puja as a mark of reverence to the mother earth. It may be mentioned here that the paddy land belongs to local gentry Bhim Bahadur Pradhan, KN Pradhan and LP Pradhan.

Amidst traditional songs and music, popularly called 'Bethi', the dignitaries joined the local residents in transplanting new seedlings of rice in the field. Traditional sounds of the 'Nau-mati Baja' and traditional songs lent festivity to the occasion. The dignitaries and other guests were treated with the significant 'dahi chewra' or beaten rice with curd and bananas.

A brief introduction on the tradition



of Asaar Pandra and Bethi was made by a local resident and teacher by profession Hari Adhikari.

Secretary, Agriculture Department, Rinzing Chewang Bhutia in his address emphasized on the importance of the agricultural sector. He said that the people of Sikkim, especially the youth, are taking keen interest in agriculture and allied activities. He stated that the challenges posed by COVID-19 pandemic have tested the forbearance of the farmers. But the farmers have responded relatively well and have not let the circumstances affect them adversely. To add to the zeal of the farmers, the Agriculture and Horticulture

Departments, under the guidance of the Minister, have initiated schemes which are designed to uplift the farmers, he stated. He shared the Department's initiative to link the farmers with banks which will reap the desired results in days to come.

Minister for Health Department and also the Area MLA of Khamdong Singtam constituency, Dr MK Sharma reiterated the importance of farming as a sustainable professional and a way of life. He extended his warm greetings to the people of Khamdong and surrounding areas and dignitaries present on the occasion. He stated that post-Corona era will be an era of agri-

culture and sustainable development. He called for the need to integrate traditional farming with new and scientific farming methods for optimum production. He further stated that the State Government is laying highest priority to agriculture and allied activities and urged the people to make the most of the opportunities. He extended gratitude to the people who participated in today's festival with utmost zeal and enthusiasm, and wished them success in their endeavours.

The Chief Guest of the programme, Minister for Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Husbandry Departments, LN Sharma in his address stated that the purpose of organizing the festival in this manner

is to encourage the farming community to take pride in this profession. He emphasized on the importance of farming in our daily lives and the contribution of farmers who toil day in and out to provide variety of products to the entire population.

He added that the vision of the State Government is to make the farmers self reliant and economically sound. He also informed the incentive provided to dairy farmers in the State. He urged the dairy farmers to take membership of Sikkim Milk Union to avail of an upcoming incentive scheme.

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## Congress seeks white paper on fiscal condition of Goa

**PANAJI, JUNE 29 (PTI):** The Congress in Goa on Monday demanded that the BJP government comes out with a white paper detailing the exact financial condition of the state in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Congress Legislative Party (CLP) has also demanded a financial package for weaker sections of society who are worst-hit by the lockdown, said Leader of Opposition Digambar Kamat.

He also demanded that the tenure of the next month's Assembly session be extended from two weeks in view of a string of issues affecting the coastal state.

"The period of two weeks is far less to discuss the budget which would be passed during the session," he said.

With five MLAs, the Congress is the largest Opposition party in the 40-member House. The Goa Forward Party (GFP) has 3 MLAs while the MGP and the NCP each have one legislator.

Independent MLA Rohan Khaunte is also part of the opposition bloc.

## Haryana to recruit 1,000 Ayush assistants

**CHANDIGARH, JUN 29 (PTI):** Haryana's Health Minister Anil Vij on Monday said to popularise yoga in the state, 1,000 Ayush assistants will be recruited on contractual basis.

Besides, 22 Ayush coaches will be recruited on contract for various 'yogshalas' across the state.

Vij, who is also the state home minister, said the recruitment of the assistants for the 'yogshalas' being set up in the state will be done by district-level selection committees, headed by chief executive officers of district councils.

The district ayurvedic officer will be the member secretary of the panel. Besides, a representative of the deputy commissioner, chief medical officer or his representative and the district sports officer will be included in the committee.

During the selection process, preference will be given to the candidate from the village where the yogshala is situated or nearby village, Vij said in an official release here.

The minister said a monthly honorarium of Rs 11,000 will be given to the Ayush assistants, who should be between 18 and 35 years of age for recruitment.

Candidates must have passed Class 12 from the Haryana School Education Board or the CBSE or they must possess a diploma in yoga from any recognised university, he said.

He said these Ayush assistants will work as in-charges of 'yogshalas' and other work will also be assigned to them.

Vij informed that recruitment of 22 Ayush coaches will be done on a regular basis by the Haryana Staff Selection Commission. However, till the completion of the recruitment process by the commission.

# SKM forms CLC Rinchenpong, assures to work for constituency despite losing seat

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 29 JUNE:**

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha convened a constituency-level meeting for Rinchenpong at Mangbaria in West Sikkim on Monday.

The meeting, chaired by SBS Chairperson and SKM's West District in-charge, DB Gurung, was attended by party vice-president and CLC in-charge, Phurba Tshering Bhutia, along with senior leaders and party workers.

An SKM press release issued by secretary [press & publicity], Ranjana Pradhan, informs that a 30-member constituency-level committee was formed today for Rinchenpong with SB Subba, Jit Hang Subba and SL Sharma appointed advisors,



Bishal Gurung and Kamal Gurung as vice-presidents, Mani Kumar Rai as general secretary, Suryaman Subba as youth convener and Shivalchi Mangar as Nari convener.

In his address, Mr DB Gurung congratulated all the CLC office-bearers and urged them to work in the interest of the people of the constituency.

He also spoke about

the various achievements of the SKM government.

The CLC in-charge, pointed out that even though SKM lost from Rinchenpong in the last elections, the party will work

for the development of the area without any discrimination. The release adds that the meeting was also addressed by secretary [organization], Pavitra Manav.

## Cancel termination of Sanskrit teachers, Nawin Kiran demands



**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 29 JUN:**

Sikkim Subject Committee vice-convenor, Nawin Kiran Pradhan has demanded that the State Government withdraw its decision to dismiss services of 124 Sanskrit teachers. Their salaries should be paid from the State exchequer, he added.

Addressing a press conference here today, Mr Pradhan said that Sikkim Krantikari Morcha should remember its promise made to Sanskrit teachers before the election. Instead of fulfilling its promises to provide jobs to unemployed

youth, the ruling party has been taking away jobs, he alleged.

He mentioned that in 2007 the then government had appointed Music teachers in government schools under a scheme of the Centre but the Centre had closed the funding in 2017 but the State government continued their service by providing salaries from the State head and all these teachers were regularized last year by the present government. These teachers were regularized because some of them had close connections with SKM, he alleged.

Mr Pradhan claimed

that the response to an RTI query on the appointment of Rajendra Dhakal, son of TN Dhakal, shows that the application was strongly recommended by the Chief Minister. On the same, he said that such practice needs to be stopped immediately.

He stated that the SKM had promised to end the victimization of government employees and to end the practice of sending teachers on deputation. However, mass transfers are going on even in the present COVID-19 crisis and teachers are still being sent on deputation into administrative services.

## Govt must take action against fake Col holders: SIBLAC

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 29 JUN:**

SIBLAC convenor, Tseten Tashi Bhutia, has said that MLAs, Ministers and all political parties of Sikkim should not support people with fake Col/SSC just for vote bank politics.

"We are not against

outsiders or non local who are earning their living in Sikkim but the successive governments in the past, for their vested interests, have enrolled non locals in electoral roll based on fake documents just to create a

vote bank for them ignoring the laws of the land and the future of their own children," Mr Bhutia has alleged in a press release.

He has further alleged that no action has been taken against Government servants whose COIs were cancelled.

Demanding ILP for Sikkim, Mr Bhutia has said that because of influx "a big chunk of budget money meant for development of state is getting wasted catering to the benefits of this population."

## SDF condemns termination of Sanskrit teachers

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 29 JUNE:**

Sikkim Democratic Front today held up the dismissal of 124 Sanskrit Teachers by the State Government as yet another example of the Sikkim Krantikari Morcha government's failure to fulfill the hopes and aspirations of the people during its 13 months in office.

An SDF press release issued by its spokesperson, Krishna Kharel, while holding up Sanskrit

as the parent language of all languages, claims that the SDF has consistently worked for the preservation and development of languages, literature, culture and traditions during its tenure in government.

The party has maintained that the termination of Sanskrit teachers was a condemnable move of the SKM government, one which was tantamount to moving towards abolishing Sanskrit language learning from primary level.

## Elephant population in Uttarakhand rises to 2,026

**DEHRADUN, JUN 29 (PTI):** The elephant population in Uttarakhand has increased by over 10 per cent in three years, an official statement said on Monday.

There were 1,839 elephants in the state in 2017, and their number has now mounted to 2,026, it said.

An elephant census was carried out in the state for three days from June 6 to 8 this year.

The new population figure of elephants in the state was told during the 15th meeting of Uttarakhand State Wildlife Board chaired by Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat, according to the statement.

The meeting was also told results of a census of aquatic animals conducted in the state from February 22-24 this year, it said.

There are 451 crocodiles, 77 gharials (Gavialis Gangeticus) and 194 others in Uttarakhand, according to the statement.

A census of snow leopards will also be con-

ducted in the state from 2020 to 2022, it said.

During the meeting, the chief minister said decisions taken by the state wildlife board should be implemented within a given time frame. Rawat asked officials to work on the re-introduction of the hippopotamus at the Corbett and Rajaji tiger reserves in a time-bound manner; the statement said.

Pitching for development of Chaurasi Kutia within Rajaji tiger reserve, the CM said action plan of the project should incorporate different aspects like wildlife, spirituality and culture.

He also said the rehabilitation of the Gartang Gali trail road at Gangotri National Park should be carried out while preserving its originality.

The chief minister said construction of NH 72-A is a top priority for the state government and necessary clearances for the project should not be delayed, according to the statement.

## Asaar Pandra ...

The Minister explained the economic viability of agriculture as a profession. He said that Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Husbandry Departments have focused more on the fields rather than files. He added that all the officers are totally involved with the farming community and are eager to lend all required assistance.

The Minister informed of several agricultural schemes to ensure that agriculture will be the most viable profession. He also explained the concept of Green Economy. He informed of the Credit Subsidy Programme being launched from West Sikkim and subsequently in other districts. He explained about the details of the scheme and urged all the farmers to avail of the benefits. He also appealed to the farmers to inculcate a culture of timely repayment of the loans for long term benefits.

The Minister also urged the beneficiaries who received the agricultural inputs today to utilize them to the optimum.

The Minister also shared the special economic incentive package for the cultivation of Ginger, Cadamom, Turmeric, Orange and Buckwheat which was announced by the Chief Minister recently.

He also informed the Terrace Farming scheme for urban dwellers to keep them healthy and happy.

Earlier, it was also announced that the long pending aspiration of the people of Khamdong for the establishment of National Institute of Technology (NIT) in Khamdong has materialized, and the same has been sanctioned by the Government.

On the occasion, amount of land compensation were also presented to the following land owners namely, Ram Pradhan, Ganga Prasad Lamichaney, Sonam Thendup Bhutia and Hari Lal Dhakal for NIT campus in Khamdong.

Further, the Chief Guest handed over Agricultural inputs like chaff cutter, power tiller, poly pipe, spray machine under Agriculture Department.

Likewise, UV film, tubular Green House, gnap tank, micro irrigation pipes, and vermi compost were distributed under Horticulture Department.

Similarly, milch cow, backyard poultry, and chaff cutter were distributed under Animal Husbandry Department.

This was followed by Carp distribution under Intensive Fish Farming scheme from the Directorate of Fisheries.

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# Rs 46.61 cr sanctioned for Sikkim MSMEs as additional working capital loans

**SAGAR CHHETRI**  
**GANGTOK, 29 JUNE:**

The Guaranteed Emergency Credit Line [GECL] announced by the Government of India offers an additional 20% working capital on outstanding amount to help MSMEs augment their net working capital to meet operational liabilities and restart their businesses. Accordingly, an amount of Rs 46.41 crores has already been sanctioned to 2,389 borrowers so far from different banks in Sikkim under this scheme.

Regarding the same, the Commerce & Industries Department convened a special State level Bankers Committee meeting today chaired by the Secretary HK Sharma.

The Secretary instructed the banks to extend credit facility under GECL to BEs/ MSMEs wishing to avail the facility and urged all eligible



beneficiaries in the State to take full benefit of the scheme. This facility came into effect on 23 May and will remain available till 31 October.

Addressing a press conference here this afternoon, the Secretary mentioned that the MSME sector was one

of most affected by the COVID-91 crisis and detailed how this scheme could help them emerge from the pandemic.

Lead Bank Chief Manager, Gopal Lama made a presentation on GECL and informed that every eligible MSME or business enterprise gets a

pre-approved sanction limit of upto 20% of the loan outstanding as on 29 June in the form of additional working capital term loan facility.

"This is a special scheme to help small business battling the economic impact of COVID-19 and includes Prad-

han Mantri MUDRA Yojana borrowers," he said.

The rate of interest is 7.5% for public sector banks and to a maximum of 9.25% per annum for private sector banks, NBFCs cannot charge more than 14% as interest for the loans under this scheme.

## Lt Gen (Dr) MD Venkatesh completes tenure as SMU VC

**SUMMIT REPORT**  
**GANGTOK, 29 JUN:**

Sikkim Manipal University (SMU) Vice-Chancellor, Lt Gen (Dr) MD Venkatesh, has successfully completed his three years' term on 30 Jun, 2020, a press release informs.

Dr Venkatesh who joined as the Vice Chancellor of SMU on 01 Jul, 2017, has been appointed as the 7th Vice Chancellor of Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE), Manipal, Karnat-

taka with effect from 01 Jul, 2020.

During his tenure as the Vice-Chancellor, SMU, he contributed immensely to the development and improvements in infrastructure, academic processes and IT infrastructure of the University.

Director, Prof Dr Ashish Sharma, Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology (SMIT) will be officiating as Vice-Chancellor of SMU till the new VC is appointed, the release mentions.

## Indices turn lower as mounting COVID-19 cases weigh



**MUMBAI, JUNE 29 (PTI):** Benchmarks Sensex and Nifty ended lower after seesaw movements on Monday due to selloffs in financial and IT counters as surging coronavirus cases in India and around the world tempered economic recovery hopes.

After plunging 509 points during the day, the 30-share BSE Sensex pared some losses to end 209.75 points, or 0.60 per cent, down at 34,961.52.

Likewise, the NSE Nifty settled 70.60 points, or 0.68 per cent, lower at 10,312.40.

Asian stocks too closed with hefty losses, while European shares opened slightly lower.

On the Sensex chart, Axis Bank was the top loser, dropping around 5 per cent, followed by Tech Mahindra, SBI, L&T, IndusInd Bank, Infosys

and NTPC. On the other hand, HDFC Bank, HUL, Kotak Bank, Bharti Airtel and ITC were among the gainers.

Sectorally, BSE realty, metal, capital goods, industrials, power and oil and gas indices plunged up to 2.94 per cent.

In contrast, telecom and FMCG indices gained up to 1.38 per cent.

In the broader market, midcap and smallcap indices fell up to 1.39 per cent.

"Indian markets opened on a negative note tracking subdued trades in Asian markets as global coronavirus death toll crosses 500,000 as investors continued to monitor developments amid concerns that a surge in cases could impact the reopening of economies, said Narendra Solanki, Head - Equity Research (Fundamental), Anand

Rathi. Further, geopolitical tensions like India-China border issue and US-China trade tiff also kept participants on edge, market experts said.

Elsewhere, bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Japan and Seoul ended with significant losses.

Meanwhile, international oil benchmark Brent crude futures fell 0.34 per cent to USD 40.79 per barrel.

On the currency front, the rupee settled 7 paise higher at 75.58 against the US dollar.

The number of cases around the world linked to the disease has crossed 1 crore and the death toll has topped 5 lakh.

In India, the number of coronavirus infections rose to 5.48 lakh, while the death toll stood at 16,475, according to the health ministry.

## Sensex tumbles over 300 pts in early trade; Nifty below 10,300

**MUMBAI, JUN 29 (PTI):** Equity benchmark Sensex tumbled over 300 points in early trade on Monday dragged by losses in index-heavyweights HDFC twins, ICICI Bank and Infosys amid negative cues from global markets.

The 30-share index was trading 323.91 points, or 0.92 per cent, lower at 34,847.36, while the NSE Nifty fell 83.65 points, or 0.81 per cent, to 10,299.35.

Bajaj Finance was the top loser in the Sensex pack, dropping around 4 per cent, followed by Axis Bank, IndusInd Bank, ICICI Bank, SBI, HDFC duo and Infosys.

On the other hand, ITC, Sun Pharma, Nestle India and PowerGrid were among the gainers.

In the previous session, the BSE barometer closed 329.17 points, or 0.94 per cent, higher at 35,171.27, and the broader Nifty surged 94.10 points, or 0.90 per cent, to finish at 10,383.

Foreign institutional investors were net sellers on Friday, offloading equities worth Rs 753.18 crore, provisional exchange data showed.

According to traders, unabated rise in COVID-19 cases across the world weighed on investor sentiment.

Further, geopolitical

tensions like India-China border issue and US-China trade tiff also kept participants on edge, traders said. Bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Japan and Seoul were trading with significant losses.

The number of cases around the world linked to the disease has crossed 1 crore and the death toll has topped 5 lakh.

In India, the number of coronavirus infections rose to 5.48 lakh, while the death toll due stood at 16,475, according to the health ministry.

Meanwhile, international oil benchmark Brent crude futures fell 1.69 per cent to USD 40.24 per barrel.

## Axis Bank shares tank over 5 pc after S&P rating cut

**NEW DELHI, JUN 29 (PTI):** Shares of Axis Bank on Monday declined over 5 per cent after S&P Global Ratings lowered its ratings of the lender due to increased economic risks for banks operating in India.

The stock plunged 5.21 per cent to Rs 402.90 on BSE. On NSE, it tanked 5.29 per cent to Rs 402.35.

"We lowered our ratings on Axis to reflect our expectation that heightened economic risks facing India's banking system will affect the bank's asset quality and financial performance, S&P said on Friday.

While Axis Bank's asset quality is superior to the Indian banking sector average, its level of

non-performing assets will likely remain high compared to international peers, it noted.

The agency said economic conditions have turned adverse for Indian banks due to COVID-19 and drastic efforts to curtail the spread of the virus have resulted in a sharp economic contraction.

## Mumbai adds 1,247 new cases, 92 deaths

**MUMBAI, JUN 29 (PTI):** On the 100th day of the lockdown, the coronavirus tally in Mumbai increased to 76,294 on Monday with the addition of 1,247 new cases, while the death toll rose to 4,461 after 92 more patients succumbed to the infection, the city civic body said.

A Brihanmumbai

Municipal Corporation (BMC) release stated out of the 92 deaths, 21 occurred in the past 24 hours and the remaining 71 earlier, but they were added to the fatality count on Monday.

The civic body said the number of recovered COVID-19 patients increased to 43,545 with 391 patients discharged from

hospitals. According to the release, presently the city has 28,288 active cases, while 763 new suspected COVID-19 patients were admitted in hospitals.

Starting from the 'janata curfew' on March 22, the government authorities enforced lockdown in Maharashtra to stem the spread of coronavirus.

## No more demand for Shramik Special trains, says Railways

**NEW DELHI, JUN 29 (PTI):** There is no demand for Shramik Special trains from any state now, the Railways said Monday, but offered to run more if states request for them.

At a press conference, railway spokespersons said no Shramik Special ran on Sunday and none is scheduled for Tuesday either.

There was demand for just one train from Karnataka and that train is running today (Monday) from Bengaluru to Muzaffarpur. There is no demand for such trains tomorrow as well. We will run them if demand arises from states, one of the spokespersons for the national transporter said. He also said that so far 4,596 Shramik trains have operated since May 1.

Giving details, he said the demand for Shramik Special trains has been reducing significantly starting June. On May 31, the Railways operated only 69 Shramik trains while the next day it run just over 100.

Shramik Special trains are being operated primarily on the request of the states which want to send migrant workers stranded due to the coronavirus lockdown to their native places.

The spokespersons also said that the Railways' earnings from the 200 mail/express special trains, which started op-

erations from June 1, was Rs 20-22 crore per day.

They also said the occupancy in the 15 pairs of a/c trains running on Rajdhani routes from May 12 was 80 per cent.

They also said while the demand for migrant specials was reducing, the occupancy in trains going to big cities like Mumbai, Ahmedabad and Bengaluru from states such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal was almost 100 per cent, indicating beginning of economic revival.

These three states together accounted for 81 per cent of the 4,596 Shramik Special trains that have been operated so far.

The railways is running 100 pairs of mail/express trains from June 1, and 15 pairs of air-conditioned trains on the Rajdhani routes.

Giving an update on the Railways' COVID care coaches parked at stations in five states, they said that of the 59 patients admitted since June 20 in Uttar Pradesh's Mau, 56 have been discharged, while nine of the 32 admitted at Delhi's Shakurbasti station have been discharged so far.

They also said the Railways has decided to refund the full fare for passengers who have booked tickets on trains that have been cancelled now.

## 236 new cases of COVID-19 found in Ahmedabad; 9 more die

**AHMEDABAD, JUN 29 (PTI):** The number of coronavirus cases in Ahmedabad rose to 20,716 on Monday with the addition of 236 new cases, while nine more patients succumbed to the infection, the Gujarat health department said.

The COVID-19 death toll in the district, the worst hit by the virus in the state, increased to 1,432 with nine more fatalities, it said.

The district also reported recovery of 171 patients, taking the number of discharged people to 15,831, the department said.

Areas under the Ahmedabad Municipal

Corporation (the city) reported 222 new COVID-19 cases, while the remaining part of the district registered 14 infections. Out of the 14 cases reported from outside the corporation limit, four each were detected from Dholka and Sanand talukas, three from Daskroi, two from Viramgam, and one from Bavla, the department said.

With this, the number of cases in the district panchayat limit rose to 814, of which 656, or 80 per cent, patients have been discharged following recovery, it said.

The Ahmedabad corporation limit has reported recovery of 78 per

cent of the cases so far, while it has recorded a COVID-19 mortality rate of 7 per cent.

The city's west zone has reported 22 per cent of total active cases, followed by south zone at 15 per cent, north zone at 14.9 per cent and south west zone at 14.8 per cent, among others.

Meanwhile, the AMC has identified seven new micro containment areas in the city, taking the number of such areas to 44 with a little over 27,500 people residing in them.


The district accounted for 236 of the 626 coronavirus cases reported in the state on Monday.

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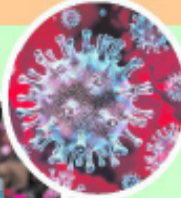
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**What is Novel Coronavirus - nCoV?**

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

<p><b>Symptoms of nCoV</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fever</li> <li>● Difficulty in breathing</li> <li>● Dry Cough</li> <li>● Severe acute respiratory syndrome</li> <li>● Pneumonia - like symptoms</li> </ul>	<p><b>Precautions to Prevent nCoV</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Wash your hands often with soap.</li> <li>● Use an alcohol based hand sanitizer</li> <li>● Observe good personal hygiene.</li> <li>● Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.</li> <li>● Avoid contact with people with possible symptoms.</li> <li>● Avoid contact with animals and consumption of undercooked meats.</li> <li>● Avoid travel to nCoV affected places.</li> <li>● Wear a mask if you have respiratory syndrome and cover your mouth while coughing or sneezing.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Treatment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Treatment is symptomatic and supportive, based on the patient's clinical condition</li> <li>● No vaccinations available as of now</li> <li>● Visit Doctor in case symptoms detected</li> </ul>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">    </div> <p>If you seek help, you may call :</p> <p>-Toll free no. 104</p> <p>District surveillance Officer</p> <p>EAST : 7028372100</p> <p>WEST : 9593297809</p> <p>NORTH : 9641957468</p> <p>SOUTH : 7407691463</p> <p>New STNM</p> <p>AMS : 9434711402</p>
<p><b>DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH &amp; FAMILY WELFARE</b></p> <p><b>GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM</b></p>	

## Environmental Concerns

*The real ones, not the ones that babus deem as important*

The US is grappling with the embarrassment of having a President who prefers pollution over protection (of the environment) and has torn up the fate of an international accord which would have scaled down emissions which have been harming the planet for far too long. An oil plant in Assam has been spewing natural gas for close to a month now, contaminating the environment and nearby water bodies and a toothless state pollution control board which had snarled for a brief while was scolded back into its office by its political masters. Meanwhile, the developing world wants the developed countries to clean up their act and reduce their unloading of greenhouse gases. What cannot be denied is that the developed countries remain predominant producers of these gases and therefore need to take the lead in reducing harmful emissions. The developing world, because this section also needs to provide for its people and has a lot of catching up to do, is also a major contributor now, although their per capita contribution to the ruining of Earth is comparatively much lower. But then again, most of the people on this planet reside in the developing segment so the quantum becomes too large to ignore. These are part of the global debate on the environment which has been going on for many years. The developed countries have been asking the poorer nations to desist from practices that harm the global environment while the developing countries have pointed the finger right back at the richer countries over the hothouse gas issue.

Blame game is not going to cool this planet down or stop it from overheating. While both sides make valid points, the unavoidable fact is that all of us, the rich and the poor, have to live together on spaceship Earth. We have to be collectively responsible for making the world environmentally sustainable.

While the developing countries need to ensure that their factories move up the technological ladder and adopt manufacturing methods that are safer, the richer countries must help with transfer of technology to the poorer countries so that they can become environmentally responsible. The developed countries cannot dictate terms in this regard and have to listen to the reasonable arguments of the poorer nations.

While the debate between the developed and the developing heats up further, it is time that we started another debate at the national level - one between the highlands and lowlands. In Sikkim, as must surely be the case with any other hill state, we suffer because of rules framed by policy-makers sitting in the air-conditioned confines of Shastri Bhavan posturing concern for glaciers like Zemu or Gangotri. They read somewhere that using wood for fuel puts undue pressure on the environment. While this might be true, they don't realise that a villager in Labdang in west Sikkim does not have as easy an access to even kerosene oil as the babu in Delhi has to LPG. He has no alternative, but to depend on the forest for his needs. Why the policy framers can't comprehend the fact that villagers don't exploit the forest resources, but only share it in sustainable models refined over centuries, defies all logic. Maybe it doesn't, because, sadly for the peripheral states like Sikkim, policies are framed with dry statistics in mind by even drier officials. Local concerns are ignored and the colonial hangover sees to it that the natives need to be told what to do. So even though Sikkim and Himachal lost a lot of their forests to provide timber for the railway berths which never even made the climb to towns in the two states, the locals are made to pay. All of a sudden someone realised that the forest cover was shrinking and the forests were made out of bounds for the locals who might have even protested earlier when the plains denuded their hills.

Since we sit on the lungs of the entire country, it is time that Sikkim and other states like it are given a greater say in the framing of environmental policies. And no, the Forest Rights Act, at least in the form it is understood and implemented is not the only way to go. The rest of the country, the section which ruined the environment, should listen to regions which have conserved well and lived responsibly.

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# History's crystal ball: What the past can tell us about COVID-19 and our future

ELLEN J AMSTER  
*theconversation.com*

During this pandemic, historians have been consulted like the Oracle of Delphi. Is COVID-19 like the Black Death? The 1918 flu? What lessons of history can be applied to today?

But can history show us what we want to know?

In some ways, yes. In others, no. And we need to broaden what we ask.

As a historian of medicine, North Africa and France, I find we are using some lessons but ignoring others. Pandemic histories are useful, but how they connect with race, public health, revolution, labour, gender and colonial histories will help us explain the present and predict the future.

LESSONS LEARNED: COVID-19 RESPONSES USING PANDEMIC HISTORY

Some history lessons have been put to use right away, like social distancing.

At University of Michigan, Dr. Howard Markel compared cities in the United States during the 1918-19 flu pandemic and showed the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention how early, strict social distancing measures worked to slow infection rates. Countries around the world now use his concept, "flattening the curve."

Not bad for the history of medicine, a field the Lancet declared "moribund" in 2014.

LESSONS IGNORED: POVERTY AND RACISM MAKE YOU SICK AND DEAD

Other pandemic lessons have been ignored, and they tragically unfold anew.

The poor, the vulnerable and workers die in greater numbers. Social reformer Dr. Rudolph Virchow wrote in 1848: "Medical statistics will be our standard of measurement; we will weigh life for life and see where the dead lie thicker, among the workers or among the privileged."

Poor neighbourhoods have the highest death tolls. Reformers' maps from the 1800s demonstrated this in the United Kingdom (Edwin Chadwick, 1834) and France (René Villermé, 1832). The same pattern has emerged in 2020 in New York (the Bronx) and Montréal (North Montréal).

A pandemic is not the great equalizer, contrary

to Madonna's "Reflections from the Bathtub."

Inequality of income, housing, work and opportunity are the inequities that made death "a social disease" for social reformers Chadwick, Villermé and Virchow. We now call these factors the "social determinants of health."

That is why structural racism can be a death sentence. Data show that pandemics have disproportionately affected African Americans and Indigenous Peoples. Virchow demanded social justice as the solution: full employment, higher wages and universal education.

Policy-makers had months to protect vulnerable populations from COVID-19. Why didn't they?

History explains that too.

CHOLERA: CHANGE HAPPENS WHEN PEOPLE RISE UP

If history shows one thing, it's that rich people and politicians do not want to pay for sewers, schools, hospitals, old age pensions or worker safety. The deaths of the poor themselves did not move politicians in France, Germany or Britain to big policy changes.

Like the 19th-century economist Thomas Malthus, some elites even argued that such deaths are "natural," or in Texas recently, beneficial to society.

So how does change come?

Change came because people rose up in a series of political revolutions across Europe in 1848. Workers rose in massive strikes and revolutionary action. The fear of Marxist revolution brought health care and the welfare state to the people in Bismarck's Germany.

And cholera pandemic also showed elites their vulnerability. If enough people are sick, if the air and water are contaminated, even rich people can die. Today you can tour the magnificent sewers of Paris and drink filtered water in Hamburg, because the rich realized they can get sick too.

Madonna was right on that one.

HEALTH AND RIGHTS ARE INSEPARABLE

If enough people get sick and hungry and angry, there will be revolution.

We wave flags for France on July 14, the anniversary of the storming of the Bastille in 1789 that launched the French revolution. But the day

before, "bread riots" broke out and people carried food away. The combination of tyranny and physical suffering started the revolution.

Health and human rights are inseparably tied together. A government that does not allow its citizens to survive, to eat, to breathe, to live, is illegitimate. By what right does it rule? The current protests in the U.S. demanding recognition of African American lives illustrates this fundamental nature of politics.

A contemporary example of revolution to demand health and rights was the Arab Spring in 2011. A young man, Mohamed Bouazizi, lit himself on fire and his fellow citizens saw themselves in his suffering: I also cannot eat, work, have shelter or raise a family in this country. Tunisia toppled its president and wrote a new constitution.

Authoritarianism is bad for health, because public health relies on good governance.

Democracy is good for health. In 1794, French revolutionaries created the first public health system, for the "citizen-as-patient."

LESSONS FROM COVID-19 TO GLOBAL HEALTH HISTORY

COVID-19 is also teaching history new lessons.

For one, pandemics were widely considered a thing of the past.

The "developed" world expected that modern sanitation and medicine would eliminate infectious disease as a primary cause of death, known also as the "epidemiologic transition thesis."

But "re-emerging infectious diseases" challenge this story. They are produced by modern economic and social practices.

Environmental destruction opens pathways for viruses to jump from animals to humans; COVID-19, SARS, AIDS, H1N1 and the 1918 flu are all such "zoonotic" diseases.

Modern injustices like labour exploitation, inhumane incarceration and overcrowded refugee camps directly contribute to disease spread by creating unsafe living and working conditions.

COVID-19 is helping societies rethink their histories, and how we should write history itself.

*[the writer is Associate Professor, Hannah Chair in the History of Medicine, McMaster University]*



## It's easy to hate a Trump or an Epstein, but what about those who enable them?

SUZANNE MOORE  
*theGuardian*

Where is Ghislaine Maxwell? Where? I sat through the four episodes of Filthy Rich, the Netflix documentary on Jeffrey Epstein. I had to force myself, not because it was so upsetting – which, of course, it also was – but because the tales of his sexual abuse were so monotonous. Brave and defiant, his victims had to numb themselves slightly to tell and retell what happened to them when they were as young as 14. The interviews with the monster himself, as always, were disappointingly banal. Monsters often are tediously ordinary. The magnetic charm, the immense intellect, is one of the biggest delusions of "true crime". See also Ted Bundy.

Anyway Ghislaine, accused of procuring underage girls for Epstein, is said to be a free woman in Paris, living in the swanky 8th arrondissement. French law prevents her extradition. Many of those implicated in Epstein's world of obscene exploitation, including all the art world and socialite scum, must have a clue where she is. Alleged scum, I should say. They love their children just like we do. Sure.

When I watched the speech to university graduates that Ivanka Trump had recorded the other day, I

felt a surge of blood-thumping hate so hard I thought I might be having a mini-stroke. Is she actually worse than her father? Is this my internalised misogyny? Is she not just another victim, like Ghislaine?

But it's not just women, is it? I see the collaborators everywhere. I have thought about this since I was a child and read about the second world war. I thought from a young age about who would fall into line if told by some authority that this was the right time to round up the "undesirables". I have always known myself to be an "undesirable".

To this day, I can walk into a chichi party and pick them out. Most of them would do it not because they were "bad" people but because they had mouths to feed and rents to pay. In the end, it's all just paperwork and nothing ever really happens, they would say. Some would do it because they cover themselves in muck every day as they climb the greasy pole, and call it "human nature". Some would do it in a halfhearted way, losing a little sleep but wondering also if the undesirables hadn't got a bit out of hand lately.

My friends, I can mostly say, would be incapable of collaboration. Partly because they are my friends and partly because they could not be bothered to fill in the forms, or would

lose them. The resistance would hazard, messy, argumentative – but it would be fierce.

Every day I see them, the enablers, in big ways and small. I have a list; it could fill this entire newspaper. Let's go with names you know. Dr Anthony Fauci: man, you are a doctor yet for so long you watched as Trump spouted drivel. Dr Deborah Birx: I know you haven't been seen since he started talking about drinking bleach, but why didn't you start wailing like a banshee? Mike Pence: you will get your comeuppance. One day you will be alone in a room with a strange woman, and believe me you won't like it. The entire Republican party: you sink this low for power? Really? The evangelical right: you think the president has Christian values?

As for the Democratic party – you think some creepy guy is better than many smart women?

Chris Whitty, Patrick Vallance and you scientists who stand alongside floundering politicians talking of our Covid-19 success: why allow your presence to support this lie? The Johnson family: blood is not thicker than water; it's just thick. Why pretend Boris Johnson is the right man for the job or should even be back at work? The cabinet: you have the collective moral fibre of a whelk. Shops before schools? What?

Nick Clegg: you could have been a contender and now you're shilling for Zuckerberg. That level of collusion knows no bounds.

All you civil servants who loyally carry on working for Dominic Cummings, even though he openly disrespects you: one rogue tweet ain't enough. The part of the Labour party that could not and would not listen to what the electorate was saying because it did not fit its purity spiral of a world view: ever thought you got it a teensy bit wrong?

Nigel Farage, now so discredited few will even collaborate with him.

The great and the good, worrying about property prices. Journalists who said they would leave Westminster but never did. Journalists full stop. I know. Don't start.

All of us who say that Black Lives Matter and vaguely hope that gets sorted out soon.

See, it's so much easier to focus it all on a few bad apples, isn't it? The two-minute hate. But none of us are innocent. Just understand when and where you collaborate – and stop.

Take a knee. A knee on a neck. We are the good ones – we know what's right when it comes to that choice, surely? No one would collude with the wrongdoers, would they? I beg to differ. My list stretches into the far distance.

# Nagaland govt extends lockdown till July 15



**KOHIMA, JUN 29 (PTI):** The Nagaland government on Monday extended the lockdown in the state till July 15 to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, a government spokesperson said.

The decision to extend the lockdown was taken during the state Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio, Planning and Coordination and Parliamentary Affairs minister Neiba Kronu, who is also the

government spokesperson on COVID-19, said.

The state cabinet after thorough deliberation and recommendations of the respective district taskforce on COVID-19, decided to maintain status quo on the current lockdown measures, he said.

The state government through different notifications earlier had relaxed agricultural activities, movement of essential commodities, opening of religious places, or

public and plying of local taxis and also rickshaws.

Kronu said that the inter-state borders connecting Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh will continue to remain sealed and the number of police personnel on duty in the inter-state check gates will be increased.

Meanwhile, 19 people, including 18 Army personnel tested positive for COVID-19 in Nagaland, taking the state's tally to 434 on Monday, state Health Minister S

Pangnyu Phom said.

Of the total 434 COVID-19 cases, 266 are active while 168 have recovered.

A total of 19 new cases of COVID-19 have been reported out of 322 suspected samples tested on Monday, he said.

Eighteen are from Jakhama Army Camp Quarantine Centre under Kohima district and one from Peren district, the minister said, adding that four patients - three from Dimapur

and one from Kohima - recovered on Monday.

The districts with COVID-19 cases are Dimapur 183, Kohima 112, Peren 89, Mon 38, Tuensang 8, Zunheboto 3, and one in Phek district, a Health department release said.

The other four districts of the state - Mokokchung, Longleng, Kiphire and Wokha - have not reported any COVID-19 case till date.

## 5 more test COVID positive in Arunachal

**Itanagar, Jun 28 (PTI):** With five fresh COVID-19 cases reported on Sunday, the coronavirus count in Arunachal Pradesh rose to 182, an official said.

Three Indo-Tibetan Border Police personnel from the Capital Complex region and one each from Namsai and Changlang districts were detected

with the infection, state surveillance officer Dr L Jampa said.

All the five cases were returnees lodged in quarantine centres, he said adding that they were asymptomatic.

The state now has 121 active cases. While 60 patients have cured of the disease, one person died.

## Meghalaya CM tests negative for Covid-19

**SHILLONG, JUN 28 (PTI):** Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma, who travelled to Manipur and Delhi last week, tested negative for coronavirus infection, officials said on Sunday.

The chief minister has been under home quarantine for the past four days after his return from Delhi where he took disgruntled National People's Party (NPP) MLAs of Manipur from Imphal to meet Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

The first test was conducted on Sangma, who is also the NPP president, on June 22 and the second one on Sunday, an official at the CMO said.

He had made a trip to

Manipur capital Imphal on June 21 to meet the four party MLAs, who switched allegiance from the BJP-led ruling coalition to the Congress. He again went there on June 23, and travelled subsequently to Delhi along with them and returned on June 25.

As a precautionary measure, the chief minister will be under home quarantine for four more days before he resumes office, the official added.

The CMO official said the team of officials and police, who accompanied the Chief Minister to Guwahati were also tested negative and they are also under home quarantine.

Meanwhile, two BSF personnel tested positive

for coronavirus infection on Sunday, taking the states COVID count to 50.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Alexander Laloo Hek said one of them returned from Haryana on June 26 and another is a driver engaged in transporting troopers from Assam to the BSFs Meghalaya Frontier Headquarters here.

"Both the troopers are asymptomatic and are now admitted at the isolation ward of the composite BSF hospital," he said.

With these new two fresh positive cases, Meghalaya now has seven active cases with one casualty while 42 patients have recovered.

## Monkey hanged to death in Telangana; video goes viral



**HYDERABAD, JUN 29 (PTI):** In a case of extreme brutality, a monkey was hanged to death from a tree by three people in a bid to scare other simians in Khammam district of Telangana, about 275 KM from here, forest department officials said on Monday.

"The perpetrators, who admitted their guilt, are being booked under the Wildlife Protection Act," Sathupalli Forest Range Officer A Venkateswarlu said.

The incident hap-

pened on June 26 in Vemsoor village and the video of the primate being hanged using a rope went viral, prompting the officials to investigate.

"The accused wanted to scare other monkeys by hanging the one which was caught. We found the carcass in a decomposed state.

The accused are being booked under the Wildlife Protection Act," the official told PTI.

According to Venkateswarlu, people at Sathupalli and surround-

ing areas are suffering from monkey menace with the simians raiding the orchards giving sleepless nights to the locals.

The official said as per a Telangana government directive 30 per cent of the area in Sathupalli forest range during afforestation will have edible wild fruit species to enhance the food base of monkeys and other wild animals so that when they are rehabilitated, there will be sufficient food available.

## Saliva test used to test for virus in Australia

**MELBOURNE, JUN 29 (AP):** Health authorities are using what they describe as a world-first saliva test for coronavirus in Australia's second-largest city where the disease is spreading at an alarming rate.

Officials say 49 people tested positive to COVID-19 in Melbourne on Sunday and only four cases were detected elsewhere in Australia.

Australian Deputy Chief Medical Officer Nick Coatsworth told Australian Broadcasting Corp. on Monday the saliva test was being rolled out in Victoria state, where Melbourne

is the capital, and its effectiveness was still being tested.

Coatsworth said the less-comfortable nasal test remained the preferred option and may be more accurate, but the saliva test will be great, particularly for kids.

Victorian Chief Health Officer Brett Sutton said authorities were close to losing control of the spread while pandemic restrictions were easing elsewhere in Australia.

I think it's a genuine challenge now. I think we're right at the edge in terms of being able to manage it, Sutton said.

We know that as

three-quarters of the country goes back to normal way of living, it becomes even more challenging to tell people that it's not the same here and that they've got to go on with a more constrained life, Sutton added.

Melbourne and Sydney, Australia's largest city, began with the largest numbers of cases because of the large numbers of international travellers they receive, Sutton said.

Melbourne's colder weather during the current Southern Hemisphere winter might also play a part in the city's great community transmission, he said.

## Former MP booked for assault after 'abusing' policemen

**Salem (TN), Jun 29 (PTI):** A former MP was booked for assault and other charges here on Monday after he allegedly abused policemen, a video of which has gone viral on the social media, police said.

Cases have been filed against K Arjunan under IPC Sections 294b (obscene act at public act) and 353 (assault to deter the public servant to discharge his duty).

A video of the incident purportedly showed the former MP arguing with

policemen, who were on duty at the check post on Sunday night, for not having an e-pass.

Arjunan, also a former MLA, allegedly abused and assaulted a police official.

According to police, the former MP got furious when an official sought ID Card from the car driver during a vehicle check on Sunday night.

As the police official cautioned him against using foul language, Arjunan, in a fit of anger,

abused and kicked a Sub Inspector, police said.

Meanwhile, Arjunan said he was returning from his farm in Omalur in the district when police stopped him demanding e-pass and identity card.

He claimed that he informed police he is a former MP and an ex-legislator but they "did not allow me to proceed."

He said he got into an argument with a sub-inspector and claimed the latter abused him.

## Chardham yatra to open for Ukd pilgrims from July 1

**DEHRADUN, JUN 29 (PTI):** The Uttarakhand Devasthanam Management Board on Monday decided to open the Chardham yatra for pilgrims from within the state from July 1.

The four famous Himalayan shrines of Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri and Yamunotri in Uttarakhand's Garhwal region are known as Chardham.

An order permitting Uttarakhand residents to visit the four temples from July 1 subject to various anti-COVID precautionary measures and restrictions was issued by the Board's CEO Ravinath Raman on Monday.

The number of pilgrims visiting the temples daily, however, will be limited and they will not be allowed to enter the sanctum sanctorum and adjoining wings of the temples.

The pilgrims will not be allowed to make any offerings or touch deities' idols either at the temples, the order said.

Pilgrims from containment and buffer zones cannot visit the temples, it added.

The SOP for pilgrims visiting the temples makes it mandatory for them to apply online for e-passes to the board on its website.

They can embark on

the yatra only after they are issued the e-passes.

People above sixty years, children below ten years and those with cough, cold and fever have been advised not to apply for e-passes and embark on the journey.

Hand-sanitising, wearing masks and maintaining physical distance will be mandatory during the pilgrimage.

A similar decision was taken by the board earlier this month but had to be withdrawn following protests by priests who were averse to opening the yatra even for locals as COVID-19 cases were on the rise at that time.

### HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?

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## 12 fresh COVID-19 cases in Tripura; count rises to 1,352

**AGARTALA, JUN 29 (PTI):** Twelve more people have tested positive for COVID-19 in Tripura, Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb has said.

Eight of the new patients are from Sepahijala district, three from Khowai and one from Gomati, he said.

"Out of 1,063 samples tested for COVID-19, 12 people found positive.

Among them 9 people have travel history & 3 people were in contact with COVID-19 patients," Deb tweeted late on Sunday. In another tweet on the previous day, he said eight more people have recovered from COVID-19.

Of the total 1,352 cases in the state, 273 are active while 1,079 people have recovered.

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## Odisha FC signs goalkeeper-Ravi Kumar for two years

**BHUBANESWAR, JUN 29 (PTI):** Odisha FC on Monday hired the services of goalkeeper Ravi Kumar ahead of the seventh season of the Indian Super League (ISL).

The 26-year-old has signed a two-year deal with the Bhubaneswar-based club.

After playing for Indian Arrows and Sporting Clube de Goa, Ravi was selected for Delhi Dynamos in the second season of the ISL.

He has also played in the league for NorthEast United and Mumbai City FC in 2017-18 and 2018-19 seasons respectively. The Uttar Pradesh-born goalkeeper had represented I-League side Minerva Punjab FC earlier in his career.

Welcoming him, Odisha FC President Rohan Sharma said, "I am happy to have Ravi join our squad. He is a goalkeeper with a lot of experience and can give good competition to Arsh and Kamaljit."

A delighted Ravi said, "I am excited to be joining Odisha FC and I hope I can help the club compete for titles and trophies and hopefully play in AFC very soon. Looking forward to joining Ama Team."

## Virus death toll drops to 5 in NY, once the US epicenter

**NEW YORK, JUN 29 (AP):** Five people died Saturday from the coronavirus in New York state, the lowest daily death toll the state has reported since March 15.

Saturday's total compared to 13 fatalities the day before as the number of fatalities caused by the virus continues to plummet in the state. During the peak of the pandemic in April, nearly 800 people were dying a day from coronavirus.

We are on the exact opposite end, Gov. Andrew Cuomo said in an interview with NBC's Meet the Press. New York still leads the nation in COVID-19 deaths with nearly 25,000, according to the state's official tally, which doesn't include people who likely died of the disease. Meanwhile, fewer than 900 patients were hospitalized Saturday for COVID-19, down from a peak of over 18,000 in April.

The governor cautioned that the numbers could spike again if New Yorkers let down their guard down and fail to follow social distancing and mask-wearing requirements.

I'm now afraid of the spread coming from other states because we are one country and people travel, Cuomo said. I'm afraid the infection rate in the other states will come back to New York and raise that rate again.

Confirmed daily infections in the U.S. hit an all-time high of 40,000 on Friday, prompting officials in Texas and Florida to reverse course and close down bars in their states again.

# Brilliant Benzema helps Madrid go 2 points clear of Barca

**BARCELONA, JUN 29 (AP):** A brilliant back-heeled pass by Karim Benzema helped Real Madrid take a step toward reclaiming the Spanish league title with a 1-0 win at Espanyol.

With Espanyol about to make it to halftime with a clean sheet, Benzema cleverly unlocked the hosts' defense on Sunday. He used a no-look pass with his heel to poke the ball through the legs of defender Bernardo Espinosa and meet Casemiro's move into the heart of the box.

Casemiro's resulting goal and some flawless defending were all Madrid needed to win and move ahead of Barcelona by two points at the top of the table.

"I see things, that is what football is to me," Benzema said about the goal.

"The assist is good, but Casemiro puts it in and gave us the three points. (This win) is very important. I won't say that we don't pay attention to Barca, of course we do, but we are focused on our matches and each game left is a final for us."

Zinedine Zidane's team took advantage of Barcelona's 2-2 draw at Celta Vigo on Saturday by securing a fifth straight win since the league resumed following a three-month stoppage as Spain contained its COVID-19 outbreak.

The title rivals have six games left. Madrid holds the tiebreaker on head-to-head results in the event they fin-



ish level on points. The run-in seems tougher for defending champion Barcelona, which faces third-place Atletico Madrid on Tuesday at Camp Nou.

Last-place Espanyol appears headed for the second division after falling 10 points from safety.

Sunday's matches continued to be closed to fans due to the coronavirus pandemic, like all games in Spain since the competition resumed two weeks ago.

An accelerated schedule has games every three days in order to finish the season by July 19.

**NO-NONSENSE WIN**  
Espanyol hung on in the

match until Benzema and Casemiro combined to decide the contest between a trophy-chasing powerhouse and a team needing a miracle to avoid the drop.

The biggest weapon of the Barcelona-based Espanyol was China forward Wu Lei, whose speed produced two promising attacks early on. Madrid defender Dani Carvajal blocked a strike by Sergi Darder three minutes into the game when Wu found him with a low cross.

But Madrid proved the more dangerous side throughout. Casemiro forced goalkeeper Diego Lopez to palm his lob from Madrid's

own half over the bar before Benzema tested him with a powerful shot in the 36th.

Lopez was helpless in the 45th when Benzema set up Casemiro, and the hosts never gave signs of recovering in a second half dominated by Madrid's high ball possession.

"The goal is Karim's," Casemiro said.

"I know how talented he is from years of playing together. He heard me ask for the ball in the open space. The goal is 90 percent his."

Espanyol was coached by sports director Francisco Rufete, a former player who stepped in after the club fired Abelardo Fernandez on Sat-

urday. Rufete is the team's fourth coach this season.

**LOOKING UP**

Paco Alcacer and Gerard Moreno scored two superb goals to help Villarreal beat regional rival Valencia 2-0 and stay in the fight for a Champions League spot.

Moreno passed for Alcacer to execute an excellent volley and give Villarreal the 14th-minute lead.

Moreno added a second goal just before halftime off a brilliant pass from Santi Cazorla in an impressive team move. Cazorla used a subtle touch to cushion a long ball lobbed forward by his goalkeeper and kept it aloft for

Moreno to smash home.

Villarreal is one of the hottest sides in the league since play resumed in Spain.

Javier Calleja's team has earned 13 of a possible 15 points since the restart and is now three points from fourth place and the last Champions League place. Villarreal has kept a clean sheet in those four wins. "The biggest change for our team from before the stoppage has been our improvement in defense," Calleja said.

"All our players get along well and they are helping each other out on the pitch.

"We are close to the Champions League and don't put any limits on what we can aspire to."

Valencia is among the worst performers since the resumption of the league. Valencia has won four of 15 points, and is eight points from fourth-place Sevilla.

Coach Albert Celades, who has had run-ins with players recently, said he did not fear for his job despite the bad run of results.

**AWAY FROM DROP ZONE**

Eibar's 2-1 win at Granada moved the Basque Country club further away from the drop zone and the trio of clubs staring at relegation. Celta is the last team in safety, with an eight-point advantage over the bottom three of Mallorca, Leganes and Espanyol.

Levante also beat Real Betis 4-2. Both teams remained in the middle of the standings.

## AC Milan pays tribute to virus victims in win over Roma

Rome, Jun 29 (AP): AC Milan paid solemn tribute to victims of the coronavirus pandemic during a 2-0 win over Roma in Serie A. It was Milan's first home match since the lockdown and the team put up a huge banner on Sunday along one side of the empty San Siro stadium that read "Together Forever," dedicated to victims.

The Lombardy region of which Milan is the capital was the hardest hit area in Italy with more than 16,000 deaths. Under the banner, 13 Milan shirts with victims' names on them were placed over the seats.

In game action, both sides appeared to struggle with the 32C (90F) heat until Ante Rebic finally found the target for Milan in the 76th. Hakan Altanoglu scored from a penalty in the 89th. "It was very hot, so it was unthinkable to play at an intense rhythm for 90 minutes," Milan coach Stefano Pioli said.

The game was labelled an "American derby" between clubs with U.S. ownership. It was Milan's second straight win of the restart after getting eliminated by Juventus in the Italian Cup semifinals and its first



victory this season over a team in the top six. "We won deservedly, because we stayed together as a squad when in trouble," Pioli said.

"We were looking for a victory against a strong opponent and we got it deservedly." The Rossoneri are in seventh place while Roma remained fifth and dropped nine points behind Atalanta, which beat Udinese 3-2 and holds the final Champions League spot. Filling in for the injured Zlatan Ibrahimovic, Rebic scored from close range following a series of rebounds, including one of his own efforts off the post. The penalty was awarded when Chris Smalling tripped Theo

Hernandez. Roma's Edin Dzeko and Altanoglu each wasted early chances.

**INTER LEAVES IT LATE**

Third-place Inter Milan scored twice in the last seven minutes to secure a 2-1 win at Parma. After an early opener from Gervinho, Inter hit back with headers from Stefan de Vrij and Alessandro Bastoni. Parma was reduced to 10 men after De Vrij's goal when Juraj Kucka was sent off for protests.

**SUPER SUB**

Luis Muriel scored twice after coming off the bench in Atalanta's 3-2 win at Udinese. That boosted his total to nine as a substitute this season, setting the record

for Serie A in the era of three points for a victory. Atalanta also broke its club record of goals in a single season, reaching 80, with 10 games still to play. Its previous record was 77 last season when it finished a club-best third place.

The Bergamo team is pushing for third again this season, remaining four points behind Inter. Duvn Zlapata scored Atalanta's opener, joining Muriel in scoring against their former club.

Kevin Lasagna had a brace for Udinese.

**OTHER MATCHES**

Napoli maintained its strong form after the lockdown with a 3-1 win over relegation-threatened Spal.

## Former West Indies boss joins race for ICC chairman's post

**KINGSTON, JUN 29 (PTI):** Former Cricket West Indies (CWI) boss Dave Cameron has thrown his hat in the ring to succeed India's Shashank Manohar as the next ICC chairman.

The United States Cricket Hall of Fame recently wrote to Manohar, indicating that they would like to recommend Cameron to the top post of the International Cricket Council.

"I believe we need to find a sustainable financial model where teams can earn through merit," Cameron, who served as CWI president from 2013 to 2019, was quoted as saying by 'Jamaica Gleaner'.

"The big three India, Australia and England have all the events, the audience and the biggest economy, but the smaller

nations have to always be coming back to the ICC for financial support, so what we want to happen is not equal share

re of revenues, but equitable share," said Cameron.

The former CWI president will need two nominations to stay in the fray and it is not clear if he will receive the support from CWI chief Ricky Skerritt, who had replaced him at the helm, and had a public spat with him.

Manohar will relinquish the post when his term ends this year, paving the way for the new chairman to formally take over the position. The ICC's Annual General Meeting is scheduled at the end of July.

England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) chief Colin Graves is currently

the front-runner for the top post and BCCI president Sourav Ganguly's name have also been doing the rounds.

Cameron said if he gets to become the ICC chairman, he will like to take the sport to USA.

"The overall cricket structure needs change and needs to be looked at from different lenses. There is tremendous opportunity in the Americas which has huge economies that are untapped, and we need to look at the cricket world from a different set of eyes," said Cameron.

"We are still trying to fit Test cricket, T20, ODIs and world events into the same 12 months with more teams, and I think there is a way to look at that to create more money with fewer events and to allow more players to partici-

## Man City defender Mendy wants to visit India



**NEW DELHI, JUN 29 (PTI):** Manchester City defender Benjamin Mendy wants to visit India in the near future and is awaiting an invitation from the EPL club's fans in the country. He was speaking to English Premier League broadcaster Star Sports.

"When are the people going to invite me to India because it's a beautiful country," the 25-year-old Mendy said during an interaction. The left-back also enquired about the coronavirus-forced lockdown in India. "Firstly, I hope the lockdown was okay for everyone in India. I hope they enjoyed the football coming back, the games, the supporters a lot."

Mendy joined City from Ligue 1 team Monaco in 2017 July on a five-

year contract, but in September, the defender injured his knee during a match against Crystal Palace. Due to a subsequent knee surgery, Frenchman Mendy missed action for almost six months before returning as a substitute against Swansea City.

In the 2018/19 season, Mendy played in 10 of the first 12 Premier League games for Manchester City. He was full of praises for his manager Pep Guardiola. "He's so good. You want to give everything for him on the pitch, when he talks in the meetings, on the pitch, he gives, the way he talks he gives you the determination, the power to win the game, to fight for the goal. He loves football," Mendy said.

## Ex-Germany striker Gomez goes out with a goal and promotion

**STUTTGART, JUN 29 (AP):** Former Germany striker Mario Gomez retired from soccer after scoring in his last game for Stuttgart. Gomez, who turns 35 in July, joked that he was in negotiations with Real Madrid and Barcelona before saying he had fulfilled his final wish. That was to help Stuttgart secure an immediate return to the Bundesliga after one season in the second division.

Stuttgart finished runner-up on Sunday, 10 points behind already promoted Arminia Bielefeld, despite a 3-1 loss at home to Darmstadt. "It was my last mission

for Stuttgart after we messed up last year," Gomez said, referring to the club's relegation in 2019.

Gomez was one of the best German forwards of his time, winning the Bundesliga title in 2007 in his first stint at Stuttgart, then two more with Bayern Munich which he joined in 2009. He also won the Champions League in Bayern's treble-winning season in 2013 before he left for Fiorentina. After two seasons in Italy Gomez joined Besiktas to win the Turkish league title in 2016. Gomez scored 19 goals in 52 games for Wolfsburg before

rejoining Stuttgart in 2017.

Altogether he scored 170 goals in 328 Bundesliga games, seven in the second division, and 26 in 36 German Cup matches. Gomez also scored 26 goals in 44 Champions League games. "I'm very grateful for the time I had at Stuttgart," Gomez said. "It was always my biggest dream to give something back and to end my career that I couldn't have imagined here." Gomez missed Germany's World Cup win in 2014 due to an injury-blighted season. He scored 31 goals in 78 appearances for the national team.

**WHO announces new worldwide daily virus record**

**GENEVA, JUN 29 (AP):** The World Health Organisation has announced another daily record in the number of new confirmed coronavirus cases across the world - topping over 189,000 in a single 24-hour period.

The tally Sunday from the UN health agency eclipses the previous record a week earlier at over 183,000 cases, showing case counts continue to progress worldwide.

Brazil recorded the most new cases over the one-day span at more than 46,800, followed by the U.S. at over 44,400. India had nearly 20,000.

Overall the U.S. still has far and away the most total cases, At more than 2,450,000 - roughly twice that of Brazil.

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# China forces birth control on Uighurs to suppress population

**BEIJING, JUN 29 (AP):** The Chinese government is taking draconian measures to slash birth rates among Uighurs and other minorities as part of a sweeping campaign to curb its Muslim population, even as it encourages some of the country's Han majority to have more children.

While individual women have spoken out before about forced birth control, the practice is far more widespread and systematic than previously known, according to an AP investigation based on government statistics, state documents and interviews with 30 ex-detainees, family members and a former detention camp instructor.

The campaign over the past four years in the far west region of Xinjiang is leading to what some experts are calling a form of demographic genocide."

The state regularly subjects minority women to pregnancy checks, and forces intrauterine devices, sterilization and even abortion on hundreds of thousands, the interviews and data show.

Even while the use of IUDs and sterilization has fallen nationwide, it is rising sharply in Xinjiang.

The population control measures are backed by mass detention both as a threat and as a punishment for failure to comply.

Having too many children is a major reason people are sent to detention camps, the AP found, with the parents of three or more ripped away from their families unless they can pay huge fines. Police raid homes, terrifying parents as they search for hidden children.

After Gulnar Omirzakh, a Chinese-born Kazakh, had her third child, the government ordered her to get an IUD inserted.

Two years later, in January 2018, four officials in military camouflage came knocking at her door anyway. They gave Omirzakh, the penniless wife of a detained vegetable trader, three days to pay a 2,685 fine for



having more than two children. If she didn't, they warned, she would join her husband and a million other ethnic minorities locked up in internment camps often for having too many children.

God bequeaths children on you. To prevent people from having children is wrong, said Omirzakh, who tears up even now thinking back to that day.

They want to destroy us as a people. The result of the birth control campaign is a climate of terror around having children, as seen in interview after interview.

Birth rates in the mostly Uighur regions of Hotan and Kashgar plunged by more than 60% from 2015 to 2018, the latest year available in government statistics. Across the Xinjiang region, birth rates continue to plummet, falling nearly 24% last year alone compared to just 4.2% nationwide, statistics show.

The hundreds of millions of dollars the government pours into birth control has transformed Xinjiang from one of China's fastest-growing

regions to among its slowest in just a few years, according to new research obtained by The Associated Press in advance of publication by China scholar Adrian Zenz.

This kind of drop is unprecedented....there's a ruthlessness to it, said Zenz, a leading expert in the policing of China's minority regions. This is part of a wider control campaign to subjugate the Uighurs.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry referred multiple requests for comment to the Xinjiang government, which did not respond. However, Chinese officials have said in the past that the new measures are merely meant to be fair, allowing both Han Chinese and ethnic minorities the same number of children.

For decades, China had one of the most extensive systems of minority entitlements in the world, with Uighurs and others getting more points on college entrance exams, hiring quotas for government posts and laxer birth control restrictions.

Under China's now-abandoned

'one child' policy, the authorities had long encouraged, often forced, contraceptives, sterilization and abortion on Han Chinese. But minorities were allowed two children three if they came from the countryside.

Under President Xi Jinping, China's most authoritarian leader in decades, those benefits are now being rolled back. In 2014, soon after Xi visited Xinjiang, the region's top official said it was time to implement equal family planning policies for all ethnicities and reduce and stabilize birth rates.

In the following years, the government declared that instead of just one child, Han Chinese could now have two, and three in Xinjiang's rural areas, just like minorities.

But while equal on paper, in practice Han Chinese are largely spared the abortions, sterilizations, IUD insertions and detentions for having too many children that are forced on Xinjiang's other ethnicities, interviews and data show. Some rural Muslims, like Omirzakh, are

punished even for having the three children allowed by the law. State-backed scholars have warned that large rural religious families were at the root of bombings, knifings and other attacks the Xinjiang government blamed on Islamic terrorists.

The growing Muslim population was a breeding ground for poverty and extremism, heightening political risk, according to a 2017 paper by the head of the Institute of Sociology at the Xinjiang Academy of Social Sciences.

Outside experts say the birth control campaign is part of a state-orchestrated assault on the Uighurs to purge them of their faith and identity and forcibly assimilate them into the dominant Han Chinese culture.

They're subjected to political and religious re-education in camps and forced labor in factories, while their children are indoctrinated in orphanages. Uighurs, who are often but not always Muslim, are also tracked by a vast digital surveillance apparatus.

## World hits coronavirus milestones amid fears worse to come

**ROME, JUN 29 (AP):** The world surpassed two sobering coronavirus milestones Sunday -- 500,000 confirmed deaths, 10 million confirmed cases -- and hit another high mark for daily new infections as governments that attempted reopenings continued to backtrack and warn that worse news could be yet to come.

COVID-19 has taken a very swift and very dangerous turn in Texas over just the past few weeks, said Gov. Greg Abbott, who allowed businesses to start reopening in early May but on Friday shut down bars and limited restaurant dining amid a spike in cases.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom rolled back reopenings of bars in seven counties, including Los Angeles. He ordered them to close immediately and urged eight other counties to issue local health orders mandating the same.

More Florida beaches will be closing again to avoid further spread of the new coronavirus as officials try to tamp down on large gatherings amid a spike in COVID-19 cases. Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said interactions among young people are driving the surge.

Caution was thrown to the wind and so we are where we are," DeSantis said.

South Africa's health minister warned that the country's current surge of cases is expected to rapidly increase in the coming weeks and push hospitals to the limit. Health Minister Zwelini Mkhize said the current rise in infections has come from

people who moved back into the workplace.

New clusters of cases at a Swiss nightclub and in the central English city of Leicester showed that the virus was still circulating widely in Europe, though not with the rapidly growing infection rate seen in parts of the U.S., Latin America and India.

Poland and France, meanwhile, attempted a step toward normalcy as they held elections that had been delayed by the virus.

Wearing mandatory masks, social distancing in lines and carrying their own pens to sign voting registers, French voters cast ballots in a second round of municipal elections. Poles also wore masks and used hand sanitizer, and some in virus-hit areas were told to mail in their ballots.

I didn't go and vote the first time around because I am elderly and I got scared, said Fanny Barouh as she voted in a Paris school.

In Texas, Abbott appeared with Vice President Mike Pence, who cut campaign events from upcoming visits to Florida and Arizona because of rising virus cases in those states.

Pence praised Abbott for both his decision to reopen the state, and to roll back the reopening plans.

You flattened the curve here in Texas ... but about two weeks ago something changed, Pence said.

Pence urged people to wear masks when unable to practice social distancing. He and Abbott

wore face masks as they entered and left the room, taking them off while speaking to reporters.

Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar, meanwhile, defended the fact that President Donald Trump has rarely worn a mask in public, saying he doesn't have to follow his own administration's guidance because as a leader of the free world he's tested regularly and is in very different circumstances than the rest of us.

Addressing spikes in reported coronavirus cases in some states, Azar said on NBC's Meet the Press that people have to take ownership of their own behaviors by social distancing and wearing masks if possible.

A reported tally Sunday from Johns Hopkins University researchers said the death toll from the coronavirus pandemic had topped 500,00.

About 1 in 4 of those deaths more than 125,000 have been reported in the U.S. The country with the next highest death toll is Brazil, with more than 57,000, or about 1 in 9.

The true death toll from the virus, which first emerged in China late last year, is widely believed to be significantly higher. Experts say that especially early on, many victims died of COVID-19 without being tested for it.

To date, more than 10 million confirmed cases have been reported globally. About a quarter of them have been reported in the U.S.

The World Health Organisation announced another daily record in the number of confirmed

coronavirus cases across the world - topping over 189,000 in a single 24-hour period. The tally eclipses the previous record a week earlier at over 183,000 cases, showing case counts continue to progress worldwide.

Overall the U.S. still has far and away the most total cases. At more than 2,450,000 - roughly twice that of Brazil. The number of actual cases worldwide is much higher.

New York, once the nation's pandemic epicenter, is now on the exact opposite end, Gov. Andrew Cuomo said in an interview with Meet the Press. The state reported five new virus deaths Saturday, its lowest reported daily death toll since March 15.

During the state's peak pandemic in April, nearly 800 people were dying every day. New York still leads the nation in COVID-19 deaths with nearly 25,000.

In the state of Washington, Gov. Jay Inslee put a hold on plans to move counties to the fourth phase of his reopening plan as cases continue to increase. But in Hawaii, the city of Honolulu announced that campgrounds will reopen for the first time in three months with limited permits to ensure social distancing.

Britain's government, meanwhile, is considering whether a local lockdown is needed for the central English city of Leicester amid reports about a spike in COVID-19 among its Asian community. It would be Britain's first local lockdown.

### 14 missing from fishing boat after Philippine sea collision

**MANILA, JUN 29 (AP):** The Philippine coast guard was searching on Monday for 14 people missing since a fishing boat and cargo vessel collided in choppy waters two nights earlier.

The fishing boat was damaged and overturned and the search for its occupants was being hampered by strong waves, according to officials and coast guard pictures.

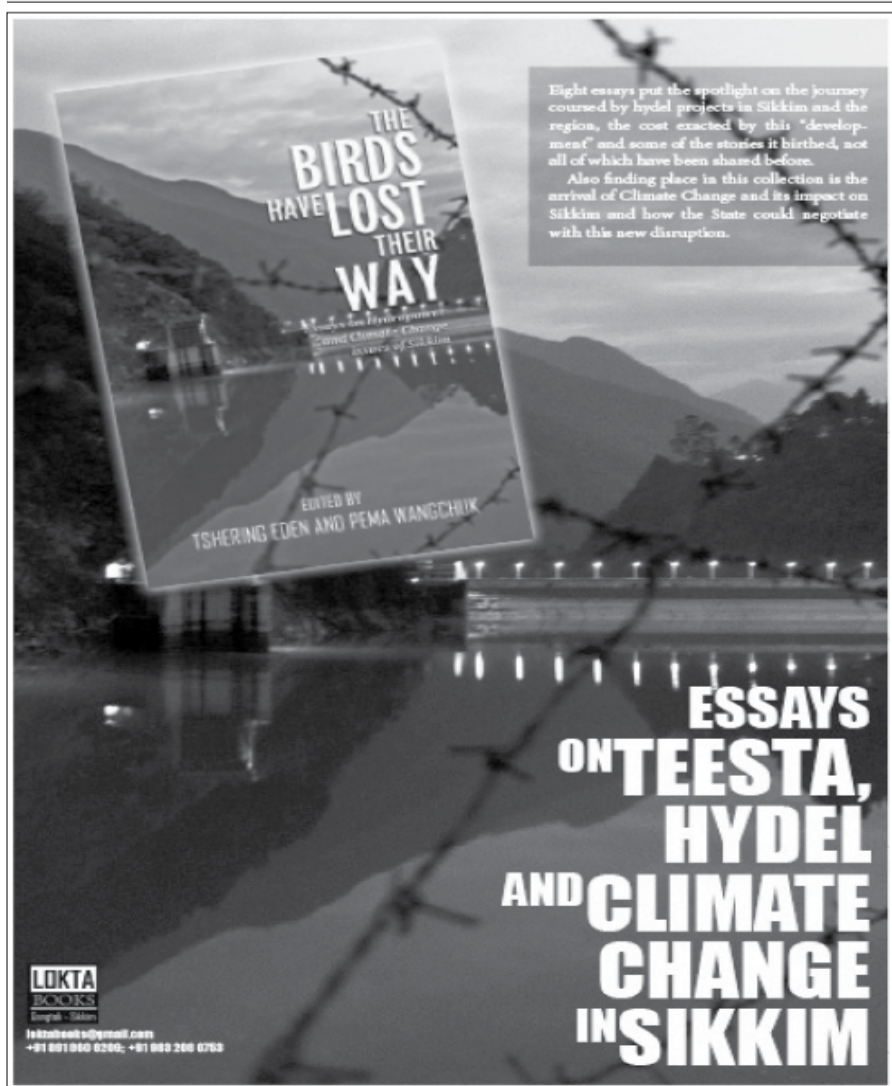
The Philippine coast guard said the cargo ves-

sel MV Vienna Wood collided with the FV Liberty 5 for unclear reasons after midnight in the early morning hours of Sunday about 27 kilometers (17 miles) off Mamburao town in Mindoro Occidental province south of the capital, Manila.

A coast guard light plane and a helicopter joined the search Monday for the 12 fishermen and two passengers on board the Liberty 5, coast guard spokesman Armando Bali-

lo said. The fishing boat had been heading for metropolitan Manila when the collision happened.

The Hong Kong-flagged cargo vessel, which first reported the collision, was being escorted by a Philippine coast guard vessel to nearby Batangas province, the coast guard said. The vessel with 20 crew on board was not carrying any cargo at the time of the collision. It had been en route to Australia.





**IN THE STARS!** Actress, Ashley Greene wore a face mask decorated with stars as she stepped out in LA.

## Anthony Mackie criticises Marvel for lack of diversity

**LOS ANGELES, JUN 29 (PTI):** Actor Anthony Mackie has called out Disney's Marvel Studios for its lack of representation in the cast and crew. The actor, who has been part of the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) since 2014 as Sam Wilson aka Falcon, said now that he is leading Disney Plus series The Falcon and the Winter Soldier, he hopes to help the crew look a little less white.

When The Falcon and the Winter Soldier comes out, I'm the lead, Mackie told actor Daveed Diggs during the pair's recent Variety Actors on Actors interview.

When Snowpiercer came out, you're the lead. We have the power and the ability to ask those questions. It really bothered me that I've done seven Marvel movies where every producer, every director, every stunt person, every costume designer, every PA, every single person has been white, the actor added responding to Diggs question on how he was interacting with Black Lives Matter.

Mackie has appeared in MCU movies Captain America: The Winter Soldier, Avengers: Age of Ultron, Ant-Man, Captain America: Civil War, Avengers: Infinity War and Avengers: Endgame.

The actor said he wants to promote diversity in Hollywood through every project he joins.

I find a lot of my interactions are just trying to make things better in the gigs I have in front of me how can I affect different kinds of representation? What is the thing you feel compelled to do? What is your participation

in this moment? Criticising Marvel for ignoring the need and importance of diversity, the 41-year-old actor said till now the studio has only had one Black producer, Nate Moore, who was behind Black Panther.

Mackie believes the fact that the studio decided to have an all-black cast and crew on the Oscar-nominated 2018 movie made it feel even more racist to him.

We've had one Black producer; his name was Nate Moore. He produced Black Panther. But then when you do Black Panther, you have a Black director, Black producer, a Black costume designer, a Black stunt choreographer.

And I'm like, that's more racist than anything else. Because if you only can hire the Black people for the Black movie, are you saying they're not good enough when you have a mostly white cast?

The actor said people should be cast on the basis of their caliber and gender or color biases should not govern the choices the studios and filmmakers make while roping in the talent.

My big push with Marvel is hire the best person for the job. Even if it means we're going to get the best two women, we're going to get the best two men.

Fine. I'm cool with those numbers for the next 10 years. Because it starts to build a new generation of people who can put something on their resume to get them other jobs. If we've got to divvy out as a percentage, divvy it out. And that's something as leading men that we can go in and push for, he said.

## Forget Thanos, the Avengers will soon meet Marvel's greatest villain

The Marvel Cinematic Universe is on a hiatus right now, as the coronavirus pandemic is still raging. There's no telling when the world will be able to truly contain the disease. The recent COVID-19 resurgence in the US is the best proof of what can happen with communities after they reopen. Going to the movies should be out of the question right now and Black Widow's November premiere can't be guaranteed. Just last week, Christopher's Nolan Tenet was just pushed back yet again. Shooting other films and TV series that are part of MCU Phase 4 might be equally daunting. The Falcon and the Winter Soldier was supposed to resume filming in the Czech Republic this summer, but the European Union may ban travel from the US as long as the number of coronavirus cases remains high in America.

Of course, Marvel is still working behind the scenes on the future of its Cinematic Universe, and we saw a number of reports in the past few days that detailed progress on a number of Phase 4 projects. One of the latest rumors is also a very exciting one. It tells us that Marvel is starting to prepare the MCU for the debut of its biggest villain so far, a character that could make us forget about Thanos completely.

There's no question that Thanos is one of the standout characters of the Infinity Saga, although the Mad Titan didn't take center stage until very late in the first three phases of the MCU. The post-credits scenes featuring Thanos were hardly exciting. It's Avengers: Infinity War and Endgame that really allowed the character to shine. Two movies were enough to make us forget all the other villains that populated the MCU before Thanos. He's is such an incredible threat that the Avengers had to kill twice in Endgame, and they would

have done it again and again had they had to face different versions of him. We're expecting Marvel to weave another Infinity Saga style story or multiple storylines made of plenty of standalone films and TV series. For that to happen, Marvel needs a new Avengers team, as well as new villains for them to face. And Marvel needs at least another Thanos, a character equally complex that audiences will love to hate for years to come. Jer-

will paint a more complex picture of Doom by introducing his kingdom and elaborating on his background. This will be done with the help of additional key characters from the comics that will help build up the character.

Conrad heard that Marvel is planning to bring Lucia Von Bardas to the MCU. She is Doom's successor in the comics after he's deposed as ruler of Latveria: As we haven't been introduced



emy Conrad from MCU Cosmic provided plenty of scoops and commentary about Marvel's plans. He revealed in a blog post a few days ago that Marvel is starting to lay the groundwork for its greatest villain in the MCU. Comics fans will not be surprised to hear that bad guy will be Doctor Doom, a character that was out of Marvel's reach until Disney acquired Fox.

Marvel already confirmed that Doom is very much in the picture in the MCU when Kevin Feige said last July that Fantastic Four projects are underway. We have no idea when the First Family will be introduced, but there's no Fantastic Four without Doctor Doom.

Conrad said that Fox squandered the chance to create a decent Doctor Doom, but Marvel will give the villain "the respect he deserves." Specifically, Marvel

to Doom yet, it's possible Lucia Von Bardas could be used as a way to introduce Latveria, perhaps even as its prime minister (as in the comics), who then would be replaced with Doom. However she's used in the MCU, that they're wanting to bring in a character like Lucia Von Bardas shows that Marvel Studios knows that there is a lot more to Doctor Doom than him just screaming 'Richards!' all the time.

As with other Marvel rumors, there's no telling when Bardas will be introduced or who will play her. Also, we have no idea whether Doom will be introduced before that, or whether they'll be featured in Phase 4. I'd fully expect Doom to appear in some of the films and TV series in Phase 4, hopefully more than Thanos did in the movies that preceded Infinity War.

## DaBaby's reenactment of George Floyd's murder on BET Awards sparks debate

The 20th annual BET Awards on Sunday went entirely virtual due to coronavirus concerns, but the event's slogan this year was "Our culture can't be canceled." Fittingly then, the remote show kicked off with a fiery update of an '80s hip-hop classic, Public Enemy's "Fight the Power" — featuring the reunited Chuck D and Flavor Flav plus Nas, Rapsody, JAH1, YG, and the Roots' Black Thought and Questlove, plus an intro by Keedron Bryant and new verses about George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. P.E.'s performance set the night's tone, though it was hard to imagine that such an explosive set would be topped during the two-hour broadcast.

But then... DaBaby and Roddy Ricch performed "Rockstar," during what was the most talked-about — and certainly the most controversial — moment of the night.

The pretaped clip opened with DaBaby prone on asphalt, his left cheek pressed into the ground as he stared down the lens. As the camera pulled back, a white policeman could be seen pressing his knee into the rapper's neck — a shocking image referencing

Floyd's killing on May 25.

The screen then went dark, and the scene cut to a performance of DaBaby and Ricch in front of burning police cars surrounded by masked Black Lives Matter protesters and police officers in riot



gear. The powerful number ended with a young girl holding up a "More Love" sign, while audio played of a teary viral speech by 9-year-old Zianna Oliphant at a 2016 Charlotte City Council meeting about police brutality. "We are Black people, and we shouldn't have to feel like this," echoed Oliphant's voice. "We shouldn't have to protest because y'all are treating us wrong. We do this because we need to. It's a shame our fathers and mothers are killed and we can't even see them anymore."

## Beyonce to release Black Is King' visual album on Disney Plus

Los Angeles, Jun 29 (PTI): Disney Plus will be releasing new visual album Black Is King, written, directed and executive produced by pop star Beyonce, on July 31. The visual album is inspired by The Lion King and will release just after the one-year anniversary of the theatrical release of Disney's live-action remake of the 1994 animated classic, reported Variety.

Beyonce had voiced lioness Nala in the 2019 movie. Based on the music of The Lion King: The Gift, which also came out last year in conjunction with the remake, the visual album features artistes like Childish Gambino, Kendrick Lamar, Pharrell, 070 Shake, Tierra Whack, Jay-Z, Blue Ivy Carter and Jessie Reyez, Wizkid, Shatta Wale, Burna Boy, Mr Eazi, Tiwa Savage, Tekno, Yemi Alade, Busiswa and Salatiel.

Black Is King' is a celebratory memoir for the world on the Black experience. The film is a story for the ages that informs and rebuilds the present. A reunion of cultures and shared generational beliefs. A story of how the people left most broken have an extraordinary gift and a purposeful future, Disney and Beyonce's Parkwood Entertainment said in a statement.

### ARIES:

Letting go is showing up as a big theme for you once again, Aries. Journal prompt: What am I trying to hold on to, when the Universe is asking me to let go? The art of free writing is extremely therapeutic. Grammar be damned. Put pen to paper and allow the words to flow. Remember, endings are neither good nor bad. They simply are. It is the human mind that likes to attach a story to everything.

Tip: Let go.

### TAURUS:

Truth tea, Taurus: the obstacle is the path. It has been placed where it has been placed to challenge you to evolve. Instead of going into a victim space or convincing yourselves it's time to let go of this opportunity, level up. Know that you are on the right path. Remembering why you started this journey will give you just the shot of courage you need right now.

Tip: Level up.

### GEMINI:

Let's talk about conditioning, Gemini, also known as the process of training individuals in a society to respond in a manner generally approved of by others. Today, you're being asked to observe your words and actions. Not everything is coming from a space of authenticity. Some of your actions (a lot of them, actually) are a product of your upbringing. In order to grow and evolve, we must closely examine the patterns we may have 'inherited' from those around, the patterns that do not serve the narrative we are about to write now.

Tip: This is the time to break old patterns.

### CANCER:

The peek-a-boo act is getting a little old. The 2.0 version of you re-

quires you to embrace your gifts and understand where your true power lies. You are a powerhouse, Cancer, and you're blessed with more talents than one can count. Allow yourself to step into the spotlight, to share your message with the world. Know that you are under no obligation to make those around you feel 'comfortable' with where they are.

### LEO:

There's no doubt you have experienced lack and disappointment in the past. But you don't want to carry these beliefs into the future with you knowing that it is our beliefs that shape our external reality. Spirit is reminding you that there is never a dearth of love, money or opportunities. It is our limited mentality that keeps us from experiencing abundance in its most glorious form. Today, instead of giving in to your fears, realign with Source energy. Trust that everything you need to create the perfect life will find its way to you.

Tip: Breathe into your fears. You are on the right path.

### Virgo:

We've all grown up seeing and hearing things which we have taken on as our own truth. But an important part of the growth and evolution process is differentiating between the beliefs that are authentic to you and the ones that are a product of your upbringing. Today, you're being asked to look at your faith through a fresh lens. The dogmas that you no longer resonate with are the ones you are meant to let go of as part of the transformation process. A Ram Dass quote to awaken you:

Tip: You are looking at your faith through a fresh lens.

### LIBRA:

Monday sees you living your best life. Yes, really! You've always

known what you're meant to do and how you're meant to serve the world. But that doesn't mean you've always had the courage to live your true path—up until now. You may or may not have the entire road map in your hand, but you understand that it is about taking one step at a time (even though it doesn't always make sense logically).

Tip: Ready to walk your true path?

### SCORPIO:

Here's something you need to remember now and for the rest of this year: the day you plant the seed is not the day you eat the fruit. This phase of your life requires you to be patient with your dreams as you tend to your garden with love and care. The results will be magnificent. Trust. The cards are reminding you to look beyond the illusion of what your three-dimensional reality is showing you. There are going to be big breakthroughs in your journey, some of which might bring fame and public recognition too. Work through the fears and stay committed to your path.

Tip: Patience is key!

### SAGITTARIUS:

It's easy to dismiss our hobbies as something to engage in in our free time. But if they bring you "this" much joy and put you on that state of flow, there must be something more! Today, you're being asked to observe the things that raise your vibrations. What if they're helping you reconnect with your true path? Remember, age is nothing more than a number. You have the permission to start over whenever you want.

Tip: Answer the call.

### CAPRICORN:

Let's talk about social conditioning, Capricorn, which is defined

as the process of training individuals in a society to respond in a manner generally approved of by society. In other words, the garbage theories you've been fed as a part of your diet. Today, you're being asked to examine the beliefs that you've held on to from the beginning of time.

Tip: You are experiencing an ego death.

### AQUARIUS:

It's easy to play the blame game and hold others responsible for all the things that went wrong in our life. You know what takes courage? Looking inwards and realising that you have the power to choose. To choose what you want to carry into the future with you and what you want to let go of. Taking your power back is going to be an important theme for you this week. Let go of the so-called negative experiences as you honour the lessons learned in the process. Vow to stay open despite the hurt and the pain, and trust that love will help you transmute what no longer serves the new narrative.

Tip: You have the power to choose.

### PISCES:

It's easy to set boundaries with strangers. Saying 'no' to your loved ones, on the other hand, seems like an impossible task. But certain boundaries are required even in the closest of relationships, which in turn maintains the sanctity of the bond. Where are you dishonouring yourself, Pisces? Now is a good time to introspect on your patterns. But the week ahead is not all doom and gloom. Connecting with your soul family is in fact an important theme for you right now. Consider hosting an intimate gathering for your loved ones.

Tip: Boundaries help maintain the sanctity of a bond.