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JAMES FRANCO: WHAT  
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# SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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## Returnees to be screened with antigen testing at Rangpo starting today WITH ONE NEW CASE AND ONE RECOVERY, COVID COUNT HOLDS STEADY AT 49 IN SIKKIM

**SAGAR CHHETRI**

**GANGTOK, 09 JUL:**

Health Department DG-cum-Secretary, Dr Pempa T Bhutia, informed today that returnees will receive Antigen testing, the quickest reliable test available to screen for Novel Coronavirus, upon arrival at Rangpo starting Saturday.

Antigen testing exists for the flu, in which doctors can administer "rapid influenza diagnostic tests" that deliver results in 15 to 30 minutes.

Since a reasonably reliable screening will be done upon entry itself, and results ready in less than half an hour, those who test positive will be shifted directly to STNM Hospital where they can then be put through more detailed testing like RT-PCR, it is expected.

Those who test negative will proceed to quarantine facilities.

Given the recent spike in COVID cases among the army and paramilitary



personnel, Dr Bhutia informs that even returning soldiers will be screened through Antigen testing and those who test positive will be sent back to Siliguri where the forces have their own quarantine arrangements.

It may be recalled that the forces claim to have quarantine facilities in Siliguri and that soldiers returning to Sikkim stay there for 14 days before

proceeding to the state.

Dr Bhutia believes that Antigen testing will also be advantageous for dialysis patients returning to Sikkim. Those who test negative can be then be taken directly to the dialysis unit in West Sikkim while those who test positive can receive medical attention quicker.

Antigen testing, it is informed, is accurate when it comes to positive

cases and requires follow up testing through other regimes for negative cases.

Meanwhile, when it comes to the COVID count in Sikkim, it held steady at 49 active cases with one more patient making a full recovery to cancel out the one new detection reported in the State.

A 25-year-old returnee from Bihar tested positive for COVID-19 taking the State's overall tally of COVID-19 cases to 134 on Thursday. Of these, 49 are active cases, 72 people have recovered and 13 have migrated out.

The one positive case was detected from 178 samples tested by RT-PCR at the VRD Lab at STNM Hospital. He added that all 14 samples tested by TrueNat yesterday also tested negative for COVID-19.

Out of the 134 COVID-19 cases reported so far in Sikkim, 73 are from East Sikkim, 22 from West Sikkim, 38

from South and one from North Sikkim. All 49 patients are under treatment at the isolation ward of STNM Hospital.

Speaking on the new positive case, Dr Bhutia informed that the 25-year-old returnee from Patna, Bihar and was lodged at a paid quarantine facility. He, along with three others, travelled from Patna to Siliguri on 29 June in a bus and then onwards to Rangpo in an SNT bus. From rangpo, they took another vehicle to the quarantine centre in Gangtok.

He informed that a total of 46 samples were tested by RT-PCR at STNM hospital this morning and all reported negative and 61 more samples will be tested overnight.

Meanwhile, addressing the confusion regarding the price fixed for COVID testing, Dr Bhutia informed that Residential Certificate holders and Voter ID holders of Sikkim will continue to receive the testing for free like COI-holders.

## SPYF displeased with State University still offering only two courses

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 09 JUL:**

Sikkim Progressive Youth Forum has registered displeasure over the Sikkim State University announcing admissions in the new academic session only for two departments.

Students, it may be recalled, want more departments to be opened in the State University and proper faculty hired. The State Government does not appear to have any such plans for the university.

SPYF highlights that with students being unable to go outside to pursue higher studies because of the pandemic, the State University should expand the bouquet of courses it offers instead of just courses in Nepali and Sanskrit as it has done.

Failing to offer more course will continue to keep the university as a token effort of no real consequence. The Government should get its priorities right and try and develop the state university as a centre of excellence

which does not appear to be the course it is on at present.

SPYF has asserted that assurances made to the students of SSU must be fulfilled immediately and new courses be started from this session itself with sufficient funding and infrastructure development.

An SPYF press release mentions that that the Sikkim State University Act was passed in 2003 but the university became operational only in 2018 and the lack of intent from the government's side was being felt clearly.

With even Sikkimese students enrolled outside the State returning, the need to accommodate them was being urgently felt, the release adds, but the inability of the government to create even sufficient space to accommodate students passing class 12 and graduation was regrettable.

"We feel that SSU should start new courses from this session itself. The students have very little choice for

post-graduation within the state and SSU can serve in accommodating the extra students who will be willing to pursue higher education within the state. But this can only happen if maximum possible effort is given to strengthen the university by the government," the release adds.

The release adds that the pandemic does not appear to have stopped the government from releasing funds to pilgrimage tourism projects which makes the lack of funds for education difficult to comprehend.

The release mentioned that the government has not completely fulfilled the assurances made during the dialogue with agitating students of SSU in March earlier this year.

The release adds that SPYF has iterated several times that SSU was an asset for the state and must be developed with the aim of making it a premier institution for higher education. On the same, SPYF has demanded that the government set its priorities straight and build the only state-run University into a Center of Excellence.

## West dist admn launches free hostel and education for children from remote villages

**GYALSHING, 09 JUL**

**[IPR]:** With a mission to improve primary education for children from remote areas, the West District Administration under the leadership of District Collector-West launched a program to provide free hostel facilities in various schools.

Launching the program today, about 20 school children from the remote village of Mangdher will be provided hostel facilities at Reepbhum Academy in Gangyap and New Horizon Academy in Tashiding.

Under the initiative, these schools will provide hostel facilities and primary schooling to these children.

The initiative is being funded by REC Foundation and similar sponsorship drive for children from other remote villages in the district will be undertaken in the coming days.

Today a sum of Rs 1,08,000 was provided to New Horizon Academy as hostel fee support for



six months.

Similarly, Rs 1.56 lakh was provided to Reepbhum Academy.

These schools will start providing education to these sponsored students after the lockdown is lifted.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC West, Karma R. Bonpo, stated that the State Government has given much emphasis to improve and innovate for quality education.

This initiative is being launched to support the mission of the State Government. It is important to provide hostel facilities for these children of Mangdher village as school facilities are not available in the village. Therefore the

students who travel long distances to other schools have been provided hostel facility along with schooling in Tashiding and Gyangap in consultation with their parents.

He stated that he was very hopeful that these children will be provided good education and have a bright future. He also thanked REC foundation for supporting the initiative.

The Additional District Collector, Karma Loday Lepcha, also stated that Renjyong Mutanchi Rong Tarjum had played a key role in identifying the children and motivating the parents to send them to these private schools.

RMRT, a non-profit social organization, has been working tirelessly

to improve the condition of these families in remote areas. The RMRT also contributed an amount of Rs 16,000 each for the education of these children.

The District Administration through its mission of providing hostel facilities to children from remote villages intends to provide quality education to the disadvantaged children so that they are also ready for the competitive challenges of the future.

The program was also attended by Siddhart Yonzon, Principal EMRS; Dawcho Lepcha, President RMRT; Mingma Lepcha, CA to Deputy Speaker; Principal and staff of Reepbhum and New Horizon Academy.

## Stakeholders meet for Gangtok Smart City project

**GANGTOK, 09 JUL [IPR]:**

The Gangtok Smart City Development Limited conducted a stakeholders meeting at the conference hall of Integrated Command and Control Centre, Kisan Bazaar, here today.

Minister for Urban Development, Arun Upreti chaired the meeting along with the Secretary, UDD and Mission Director, Smart City Mission, Sarala Rai.

The meeting was also attended by Mayor Gangtok Municipal Corporation, Shakti Singh Chaudhary, District Collector East, Raj Yadav, Chief Executive Officer GSCDL, Sailendra Sharma, along with Commissioner GMC SP East, SP Traffic, HoDs and representatives of various line departments, staff of GSCDL, local gentry, stakeholders and representatives from Traders and Hawker



Association of Lal Bazaar.

The meeting was mainly held to discuss the remodelling, retrofitting and improvement of Kanchengdzonga Plaza and its surrounding areas at Lal Bazaar.

Addressing the gathering, Minister, Arun Upreti thanked all the stakeholders and HoDs for their valuable presence and putting forth vital suggestions during the course of the meeting.

In his address, the Minister said that with proper implementation

of planning and consultation with stakeholders, the task ahead can be effectively resolved in order to achieve a Smart Gangtok City. He also said that the State government will leave no stone

unturned to work out for the betterment of the public and to address the grievance at the earliest.

Further, he also sought active participation and vital cooperation from all the major stakeholders in making Gangtok, a top class smart city in the

country.

He added that the present Government is a pro-people Government and is greatly involved in providing improved pro-people policies for the people of the State.

He stated that the cleanliness and hygiene is of vital importance and all the line Departments in coordination with the people should work in tandem to make Gangtok, the healthiest smart city in the country.

He stated that the Power

turn Page 2

## Lower Rakdong residents repair road

**WANGHUK BHUTIA**

**MANGAN, 09 JUL:**

The public of Lower Rakdong, East Sikkim, repaired the 1.5 KM stretch of road from Dikchu Bazar to Dikchu School by themselves yesterday. The road was damaged by a landslide.

The construction of the road had started two years ago but remains incomplete due to the alleged negligence of the contractor and the concerned authorities. Even the grade of the road is not level it is plain to see.

The landslide has also damaged the homes of two families.

Due to hazardous condition of the area one family had to shift to a safer location.



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# PIB organizes webinar on Disaster Management and Crisis Communication

Guwahati, 09 Jul (PIB): Unless there is effective form of communication, it is not possible to create resilience in the community. Communication is important to convey timely warning to the people, to be able to alleviate the suffering in a disaster, said Lt Gen (Retd) Syed Ata Hasnain, Member, National Disaster Management Agency, in a Webinar organized by Press Information Bureau, Guwahati today. The topic of the Webinar was "Disaster Management and Crisis Communication". Gracing the Webinar as the Chief Guest, Lt Gen (Retd) Hasnain while delivering his inaugural address said that effective form of communication is required during time of Crisis. Government

must be well prepared to give advance warning of any disaster so that its impact can be minimized, he said.

Giving emphasis on the need of rapid communication in times of disaster, Lt Gen (Retd) Hasnain further added that Communication is known as the backbone of any response or relief effort. He also highlighted the measures to be taken for disaster risk reduction. Lt Gen (Retd) Hasnain appreciated the effort of Press information Bureau, Guwahati for organizing the webinar on such an important topic which is particularly significant in these times.

Press Information Bureau is always there to cater to the requirement of the State Government, said Head of Department,

LR Vishwanath, North East Zone, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting while giving his opening remarks at the Webinar. PIB works to bring in absolute backward and forward linkages between the State and Central Government and always tries to bridge the gaps in the narrative of the government work in Centre and States.

Shri Vishwanath further added that during the time of disaster the people who are most affected usually go unnoticed though it is not intentional. So, there is a need of social audit to see whether those people are receiving the benefits of the welfare schemes of the Government. Assam Government has put up SOPs for social audit of flood relief which is a good transparent

decision, he said.

Head of Department, Joya Chakravarty, Department of Mass Communication, Tezpur University took a session on "How to Communicate and reach out to the people during the time of crisis". She spoke extensively on effective crisis management and said effective communication and coordination is important for controlling disaster.

Assistant Professor, Dr C Lalmuansangkimi, Indian Institute of Mass Communication, Aizawl spoke on "Effective Communication strategy during the crisis times". She spoke about crisis preparedness and tools of effective communication.

Information Officer, Meghna Choudhury, Government of Assam

spoke on "Role of Government Information System during the crisis situations". She informed how the Assam government is dealing with the current crisis situation owing to the floods.

The Webinar was summed up by Joint Director, Keerti Tiwari, Press Information Bureau, Guwahati. Field Publicity Officer, Sucharita Sahoo, Regional Outreach Bureau, Guwahati moderated today's webinar.

The Webinar had participation from District Information and Public Relations Officers from 25 districts of Assam, students of IIMC Aizawl and Tezpur University and also Press Information Bureau and Regional Outreach Bureau officials from the 8 northeastern states of India totaling around 60.

## SKM youth meet in West Sikkim



### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 09 JUL:**

A meeting of the SKM Youth Wing was held at Hotel Kokomendu in West Sikkim today.

Executive members of the Central Youth Wing were special attendees at the meeting along with the Transport Minister and State Level Youth

Cell Vice President, Sanjit Kharel, Chairman of Sikkim State Bank, D Gurung, Chief Convenor of Central Youth Cell, Lakpa Moktan, General Secretary of the State Level Youth Cell, S Sharma and other executive body members.

Discussions and interactions were held

between the central and district teams of the party's youth wing of West Sikkim on the organizational activity and other related issues.

The youth cell of West Sikkim was informed about the work done till date by the Government under the leadership of Chief Minister.

### SKM ward-level committees formed at Gerethang-Labing GPU

### SUMMIT REPORT

**YUKSAM, 09 JUL:**

A committee formation for Gerethang-Labing under Yuksam-Tashiding was held in the presence of the party's CLC vice president, Shiva Luitel and CLC general secretary, Bhagi Raj Sharma and other party workers today, a press release informs.

The CLC general secretary informed that the WLCs were being formed on the directions of

the party headquarter. Next, block level committees will be formed and the party was likely to initiate various welfare and developmental schemes in the villages through the ward level committees, he informed.

Nam Hang Limboo was nominated as president of the Upper Gerethang WLC, while Phuchung Bhutia was nominated Tamatam WLC president and Raj Man Limboo as president of Gerethang WLC.

**REPORTERS**  
**SINGTAM: 8170070813.**  
**MANGAN/ DIKCHU:**  
**9832612485/ 9434011213**  
**GANGTOK: 8116388176**  
**9832424750 . 8016270440.**  
**9679100995**

### Stakeholders meet...

Department is working diligently to restore the electricity lines at some parts of Lal Bazaar and further working out to replace all the old transformers and electricity wires simultaneously.

He further spoke on increasing the capacity of water supply for the people of Lal Bazaar and its surroundings and added that viable solutions are being opted out for the construction of water tanks in coordination with the PHE Department, he added.

The Minister specifically mentioned that the contractors should ensure proper execution of works and added that there should be proper inspection on the quality and progress of the works done by the contractors at regular intervals.

He also urged all the stakeholders and staff of GSCDL to work diligently on all the feedback and suggestions received from the stakeholders and HoDs during the meeting.

At the onset, CEO, Sailendra Sharma informed that the meeting was held in view of the State Government vision and direction to transform Sikkim into a better citizen friendly smart city.

He also presented a backdrop of Gangtok Smart City Development Limited and highlighted on all the infrastructural measures to be taken including augmentation of lighting with solar panels, building of external staircase for lesser crowding, restoration of electrical wires and transformers, water facility, new flooring and tiling, improved safety with installation of CCTV cameras, PA systems, revamped fire fighting system, improved health and hygiene, traffic solutions and increased footfall with better facilities, etc.

He also informed that the people can send their feedback and suggestion to gangtoksmartcity@gmail.com or visit the GSCDL's website: www.gangtoksmartcity.com for further details.

The meeting also included an open house discussion among the dignitaries wherein all the future aspects and challenges relating to the execution of the overall Gangtok smart City project was discussed at length.

### Body Vibe Gym members appeal to dist administration to allow gym to reopen

### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 09 JUL:**

Members of Body Vibe Gym, Rangpo, East Sikkim have appealed to the East district administration to lift its seal on their gym at the earliest.

While registering solidarity to their trainer, Sanjay Chettri, they expressed hope that the District Administration will resolve the issue in the interest of the local youth.

The District Administration had sealed the gym on 23 May when it was found open despite the lockdown. While other similarly sealed business establishments have been allowed to reopen after paying a fine, Body Vibe continues to remain sealed with the district administration refusing to treat it the same as other establishments booked for the same violation.

Addressing a press conference here today, a gym member, Shekhar Rai expressed that if the gym was sealed as per law then it should have been opened by now as many shops sealed during the lockdown are operational now.

"On his personal initiative, Sanjay Chhetri has guided many youth away from substance abuse and towards fitness by providing them training free of cost," he said. On the same, he urged the District Collector [East] to open the gym at the earliest in the interest of the youth.

Likewise, other members, Abhishek Darnal and Prashant Pradhan expressed their hope that the district administration will resolve the issue at the earliest.

They mentioned that Sanjay Chettri was deeply involved in motivating youth and students towards fitness and healthy activities. They stated that if the gym remains closed for a long time, it carried the fear that the youth might return to unhealthy and unproductive activities.

### CONTACT

### SUMMIT TIMES

### REPORTERS

### SINGTAM

8170070813

### MANGAN/ DIKCHU

9832612485/

9434011213

### GANGTOK

8116388176

9832424750

8016270440

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#### FOR RENT:

Two and half storeyed (1st to 3rd floor) complex is available for rent in the heart of Ranipool Bazaar (Opposite UCO Bank). The building area is 35'x60' appx. In each floor ad is fit for offices, shopping complexes, guest houses, banks tec. Contact: 8509755220, 8348007688.

#### GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

Riverside land [General] along Ra-nipool-Rumtek Highway near Adampool, stretching from the roadside down till the river bank. Total area measuring 0.2348 Hectares [approximately 25,274 sq ft]. Ideal for developing a Resort. Parties interested in purchasing the entire plot can contact 9083826462 and 9832556698. Brokers will not be entertained.

#### FLAT FOR SALE

4BHK flat, total area 2376 sqft  
Ninety Bazaar, Near Paljor  
Stadium, Gangtok  
Contact: 9563083895

#### LAND FOR SALE

Two plots available – 30X40 sqft and 50X30 sqft JunkeriDara, SamlikMarchak  
Price negotiable Contact: 6296366498, 9641878315, 9593262407

#### GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

General land 30X40 (3 Plots) available for sale at Tadong 6th Mile next to Harka Maya College. Flat Land no cutting required. Price 27 Lakhs (negotiable).  
**Contact: 9800201335**

#### LAND FOR SALE

A land measuring an area for 50x32 1/2 at Road-side just below housing colony is for sale. It is just a one minute walking distance from Namchi bazaar taxi stand. Interested party may contact 9593373387 and 9434406761

#### LAND FOR SALE

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

## ViewPoint

## The privatization of Railways would be like selling blood veins

**PRIYANKA SAURABH**

The Indian Railways, which were in the news due to the accidents, are now in the grip of the financial crisis arising out of Corona. To bring the world's fourth-largest rail network back on track, the government is preparing to change its form. In addition to cutting thousands of posts, steps are being taken to stop new appointments and to hand over trains on several routes in the country.

Indian Railways has been playing a lifeline for most of the country's population. The unusual increase in fares compared to facilities after going into private hands is believed to be fixed. Rail is the highest employment institution in the country. Currently, it employs over 12 lakh employees.

It is important to understand how this will affect the country's general public life. It is necessary to consider how good or how bad this privatization is for the country. After the operationalization of Tejas Express, India's first private train, Indian Railways has now started the process of allowing private companies to operate passenger trains on its network through 151 new trains. While all these passenger trains are a small part of the entire railway network, the process of privatization initiated by the government marks the beginning of private sector participation in passenger train operations.

Privatization refers to a process in which ownership of a particular public property or business is transferred from a government organization to a private entity. Therefore, it can be said

that through privatization it is possible to develop a new industrial culture. In recent times, there have been attempts to use this experiment with the Indian Railways, which has done the work of provoking some sections, While some sections have also been affected by this move of the government.

It is important to understand how this will affect the country's general public life. It is necessary to consider how good or how bad this privatization is for the country. Commercial train travel in India started in the year 1853, after which the Indian Railways came under the then government in 1900. The largest cooperation in the Indian economy is from this region.

The first electric train of the country was run between Bombay to Kurla in the year 1925. After independence in the year 1947, India inherited an old rail network but about 40 percent of the previously developed railway network went to the part of Pakistan. Then some lines were repaired for the development of railway and some new lines were laid so that Jammu and some areas of North-East India can be connected to other parts of the country.

In 1952, it was decided to convert the Railway into zones to modernize and develop the railway network and a total of 6 zones of the railway came into existence. At that time, railway-related needs were met from abroad, but as the country developed, railway-related needs also started to be met from within the country and our railway continued to progress progressively.

The number of railway zones was increased to 12 in 2003 due to the new era and increasing pressure on railways. And over time, the number of railway zones increased to 17 on other occasions. But as the railway network developed in the country, the challenges related to the operation and management of railways also came up and new options were being discovered. When governments could not increase the profits of railways much, economic experts began to see privatization of railways as an alternative to profit.

Today the biggest question is why the railway which has been the chariot of the poor, why is it being privatized. It is believed that after the privatization of the railways, cleanliness will be better, due to the smooth running of trains, there will be a lot of time savings, better comfort facilities will be provided inside the train. Railways will be able to keep pace with the modernization of their infrastructure and services.

But if we look at the other aspect of privatization, something can be seen. The main objective of private companies is to earn money and they will also use the railways for their profits. Instead of amenities, there will be a sudden increase in fare, which will make rail travel very expensive and difficult for poor people. A section of Indian society depends only on railways for travel, they will lose it due to this privatization.

The biggest thing is that such a large railway sector cannot be operated by any private company. And handing over different parts in different hands would be the equivalent of selling the railway chopped off. Simultaneously,

there will also be a lack of uniformity. Who will take responsibility in case of an accident? When everyone cites their respective regions, they will turn away. After all, it will hit the common poor man who will not be in a position to travel by other means.

Private contractors will see their profits. Where only a poor section would travel by rail, those routes would be closed because they would not be getting money from them and with this step people living in such parts would remain untravelled there. If the railway remains owned by the Government of India, then its biggest advantage is that it provides nationwide connectivity regardless of profit.

Private companies are partnered with foreign companies, so if private companies are given the task of operating rail, then it is likely that its security is compromised and India's image is tarnished in the whole world.

If the Indian government privatizes the railways by recklessly violating the rights of citizens, it would be unfair to them, like selling India's blood veins. For the strengthening of the economy, the government can look for any alternative other than privatization or it can look at the complete privatization of buses.

As a result of railway privatization, a country like Britain had to face a lot of opposition and faced heavy opposition from the public. Profit of the country's economy should not be seen everywhere by the privatization, after all, the government is for the public interest, for small gains we cannot do daily loss of the population.



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**SummitTimesSikkim**  
 Fresh lot of rapid information

Washer Dryer Machine presented to Namchi District Hospital on National Doctors’ Day



**NAMCHI, 09 JUL [IPR]:** The Medical fraternity of Namchi District Hospital has been relentlessly fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. On the occasion of National Doctors Day the Medical Officers, AYUSH Doctors, Dentists & Physiotherapists presented a BOSCH Washer Dryer Machine to Operation Theatre (OT) sections of District Hospital, Namchi. This machine was presented in the presence of Chief Medical Officer (Namchi), Dr DC Sharma, District Medical Superintendent, Dr SN Adhikari, Dr Indu Rawat, Senior medical officers & senior Nurses from District Hospital Namchi. The machine will assist in supplying of clean linen for the patients as well as the medical staff while maintaining a proper hygiene condition.

New team takes charge at Lions Club, Rangpo



**SUMMIT REPORT RANGPO, 09 JUL:** Lions Club, Rangpo Gateway of Sikkim formed a new team for 2020-21 under the presidentship of Ramakant Rai today. Pramod Prasad was nominated Secretary, Suresh Kumar Prasad Club Marketing cashier, Rajen Gurung C o m m u n i c a t i o n vice president, VK Chairman, Sanjay Nigam and Gaurav Agarwal as Service Chettri as directors, Chairman and Rakesh Dr Dixya Poudyal as Agarwal as LCIF Club Membership Coordinator, a press Chairman, Ishori release informs.

Sikkim’s Eye is on Melli

**JIWAN RAI**  
It’s not that Melli was a totally nondescript town outside the range of the local media radar. The principal supply source of poultry products in Sikkim, Melli has become the hot and happening place for entrepreneurially minded and driven localities in the state. However, the latest reason that has shot it into prominence is singularly regrettable. The well-founded public rage has every right to rise to the highest degree until a detailed and thoroughly investigated explanation is provided, leading to all-round public satisfaction.  
How the Sikkim Police will satisfactorily solve the ‘mystery’ of the alleged illegal entry of five individuals, defying the protocols and screening in place at the Melli check post, will be of intense interest for more reasons than just the legal one. The politicians, activists and Facebookers who are questioning this defiance are raising suspicions about the involvement of Sikkim’s chief secretary and the Director General of Police. Things came to such a pass that the office of the Chief Secretary gave a press release stating that he “has no relatives either in Sikkim or Haryana or Jharkhand or within a radius of 1000 km of Sikkim”.  
The DIG Range, Prawin Gurung gave a long press conference explaining how the miscommunication among police officers involved led to the granting of permission to Gauri Shankar Gupta and his family members to enter Sikkim. He does deserve credit for going public with the video recordings of the phone calls and his efforts to record his departmental explanation for public cognizance. But his refusal to comment on the DGP’s phone call and his overall explanation, albeit fairly well put, do not solve the core issue.  
Chief Minister PS Tamang’s instant order to investigate the matter at several levels and his party’s decision to refrain from giving a press conference without knowing the full truth behind the issue has been a smart move. He has also asked the DGPA. Shankar Rao to give an explanation. The eyes of every Sikkimese individual are on the CM, eagerly waiting to see how he is going to ensure that nobody will be allowed to twist facts. He ruffled a few feathers when he mentioned ‘miscommunication’ (the famous ‘in’ ‘out’ confusion) as a cause of the illegal entry. It was unsayable at his level as the CM. No one is suspecting the Chief Minister’s intention and he looks visibly outraged. That is a good sign. But as the Head of the state government, he must avoid giving such explanations simply because it primarily implies that the DGP calling the Melli SHO on that fateful night was fine. People are not demanding an explanation from the CM but a fair investigation and stringent action against whoever is finally going to be convicted. Much of the public displeasure is about the DGP’s phone call which apparently smacks of highhandedness. How can a senior official call his subordinate, asking him to allow entrance for certain people, when there are clear-cut protocols in place? Any rumour, suspicion or varied interpretation of such a case could travel far afield.  
The outcome of the investigation will be another big story whenever it comes. We will eventually know if it was a case of blatant high-handedness or misplaced humanitarianism or something else. Sikkim, however, must see beyond the outcome and ponder as many questions as can be asked. How will Sikkim be convinced of the urgency of the police chief personally making a phone call to the SHO on behalf of an individual in the middle of the night? Is this case of a senior official making phone calls to his subordinate despite clear cut protocols the tip of the iceberg? How safe and genuine is the hitherto applauded ‘law abiding Sikkimese culture’? Sikkim maintained a dignified silence when its lockdown-protocol-defying-citizens were punished in all possible manners, thus fully supporting the law enforcement authority’s obligation to observe a complete lockdown. Is such public commitment being taken for granted by some? The return of hundreds of Sikkimese people had to be delayed and many are still stranded outside Sikkim as fulfilling the official formalities takes time. Many have, unfortunately, contracted this terrible infection as they waited to return. When all that is happening to us, how is it possible that a group of people can (allegedly) approach the police chief to obtain a special verbal permit. What was also most reprehensible in the entire episode is the fact that the hapless policeman manning the gate was informed that a gentleman named Gauri Shankar would come there and ‘take the name of the DGP’. What in the world does that mean? Ask that question, bearing in mind the unprecedented emergency situation that Sikkim has been plunged into with public life completely restrained. Isn’t that insanely ridiculous?  
Is the selective silence of the otherwise vocal social media users indicative of Sikkimese people being overtly politically sensitive? Curiously enough, the proportion of apolitical individuals and organizations raising the matter is not healthy when compared with the number of political parties going hammer and tong on the issue. Does Sikkim benefit by politicizing the issue? The significance of this case transcends politics. Should we not tell the people that this case has nothing to do with ruling-opposition politics and fight unitedly? Will a divided approach not benefit the culprit(s)? The Sikkimese people must realize that we can collectively become much stronger than our perceived misfortune. There are times when we need to throw away our political lens and look at things with a blatantly naked eye.  
Here is my biggest fear. Our politically overcharged Sikkimese public sentiment is the biggest danger. Our social offenders have always been assisted by a social structure that is hopelessly ripped in the middle politically. This political dichotomy is not ideological - but deeply emotional - which means people are not opposed to each other in their minds (intellectually) but in their hearts (sentimentally). That is exactly why Sikkim cannot handle a case like this in a manner that will give Sikkim the victory. This is not an SKM-SDF-BJP-Congress battle. Nor will the outcome of the case determine the victory or loss of those political parties. Sikkim must stand with the state government and the government must be ruthlessly honest and fixatedly diligent in fact-finding and rendering a final judgement.

ViewPoint  
The privatization of Railways would be like selling blood veins

**PRIYANKA SAURABH**  
The Indian Railways, which were in the news due to the accidents, are now in the grip of the financial crisis arising out of Corona. To bring the world’s fourth-largest rail network back on track, the government is preparing to change its form. In addition to cutting thousands of posts, steps are being taken to stop new appointments and to hand over trains on several routes in the country.  
Indian Railways has been playing a lifeline for most of the country’s population. The unusual increase in fares compared to facilities after going into private hands is believed to be fixed. Rail is the highest employment institution in the country. Currently, it employs over 12 lakh employees.  
It is important to understand how this will affect the country’s general public life. It is necessary to consider how good or how bad this privatization is for the country. After the operationalization of Tejas Express, India’s first private train, Indian Railways has now started the process of allowing private companies to operate passenger trains on its network through 151 new trains. While all these passenger trains are a small part of the entire railway network, the process of privatization initiated by the government marks the beginning of private sector participation in passenger train operations.  
Privatization refers to a process in which ownership of a particular public property or business is transferred from a government organization to a private entity. Therefore, it can be said that through privatization it is possible to develop a new industrial culture. In recent times, there have been attempts to use this experiment with the Indian Railways, which has done the work of provoking some sections, While some sections have also been affected by this move of the government.  
It is important to understand how this will affect the country’s general public life. It is necessary to consider how good or how bad this privatization is for the country. Commercial train travel in India started in the year 1853, after which the Indian Railways came under the then government in 1900. The largest cooperation in the Indian economy is from this region.  
The first electric train of the country was run between Bombay to Kurla in the year 1925. After independence in the year 1947, India inherited an old rail network but about 40 percent of the previously developed railway network went to the part of Pakistan. Then some lines were repaired for the development of railway and some new lines were laid so that Jammu and some areas of North-East India can be connected to other parts of the country.  
In 1952, it was decided to convert the Railway into zones to modernize and develop the railway network and a total of 6 zones of the railway came into existence. At that time, railway-related needs were met from abroad, but as the country developed, railway-related needs also started to be met from within the country and our railway continued to progress progressively.  
The number of railway zones was increased to 12 in 2003 due to the new era

and increasing pressure on railways. And over time, the number of railway zones increased to 17 on other occasions. But as the railway network developed in the country, the challenges related to the operation and management of railways also came up and new options were being discovered. When governments could not increase the profits of railways much, economic experts began to see privatization of railways as an alternative to profit.  
Today the biggest question is why the railway which has been the chariot of the poor, why is it being privatized. It is believed that after the privatization of the railways, cleanliness will be better, due to the smooth running of trains, there will be a lot of time savings, better comfort facilities will be provided inside the train. Railways will be able to keep pace with the modernization of their infrastructure and services.  
But if we look at the other aspect of privatization, something can be seen. The main objective of private companies is to earn money and they will also use the railways for their profits. Instead of amenities, there will be a sudden increase in fare, which will make rail travel very expensive and difficult for poor people. A section of Indian society depends only on railways for travel, they will lose it due to this privatization.  
The biggest thing is that such a large railway sector cannot be operated by any private company. And handing over different parts in different hands would be the equivalent of selling the railway chopped off. Simultaneously, there will

also be a lack of uniformity. Who will take responsibility in case of an accident? When everyone cites their respective regions, they will turn away. After all, it will hit the common poor man who will not be in a position to travel by other means.  
Private contractors will see their profits. Where only a poor section would travel by rail, those routes would be closed because they would not be getting money from them and with this step people living in such parts would remain untravelling there. If the railway remains owned by the Government of India, then its biggest advantage is that it provides nationwide connectivity regardless of profit.  
Private companies are partnered with foreign companies, so if private companies are given the task of operating rail, then it is likely that its security is compromised and India’s image is tarnished in the whole world.  
If the Indian government privatizes the railways by recklessly violating the rights of citizens, it would be unfair to them, like selling India’s blood veins. For the strengthening of the economy, the government can look for any alternative other than privatization or it can look at the complete privatization of buses.  
As a result of railway privatization, a country like Britain had to face a lot of opposition and faced heavy opposition from the public. Profit of the country’s economy should not be seen everywhere by the privatization, after all, the government is for the public interest, for small gains we cannot do daily loss of the population.

Rotary Club of Gangtok South hands over walk-in sample collection kiosk to STNM Hospital

**SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 09 JUL:** Rotary Club of Gangtok South handed over a walk-in sample collection kiosk to STNM Hospital today. The club also felicitated Corona warriors of STNM Hospital for their dedication and hard work during this pandemic. On behalf of the STNM Hospital, AMS



Dr Yudok received the letter of appreciation.

SMIT faculty awarded project grant from SMU Dr TMA Pai Research Grant Fund

**SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 9 JUL:** Assistant Professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering, Dr Ranjan Kumar Ghadai, Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology (SMIT) under Sikkim Manipal University (SMU) has been awarded with a project grant of Rs 10 Lakh from the SMU Dr TMA Pai Research Grant Fund for the year 2020-21.  
The grant is for the project titled “Influence of Artificial Aging on Stir Cast Aluminum alloys and Metal Matrix Composites” with Dr Ghadai as Principle Investigator. Soham Das is the co- Principle Investigator in this project.  
Aluminum metal matrix composites (AMMC) are getting widespread acceptance for aerospace, automobile, agriculture and farm machinery and

many other industrial applications due to their excellent properties such as high strength, very good wear resistance low density, compared to any other metals. The addition of reinforcements such as graphite, fly ash, silicon carbide, red mud, organic material etc. to the Aluminum matrix in various proportions can significantly improve the properties of the AMMC. To produce AMMCs, stir casting considered to be a low-cost method. The advantages of this process lie in its simplicity, flexibility, and applicability to large volume production. This process is the most economical among all the available routes for AMMCs production, and it allows very large-sized components to be fabricated. However, the distribution of reinforcements depends on stirring process parameters. The study of effect of stirring process parameters in the particle distribution and optimal selection of these is still a challenge for the researchers.  
This project will be carried out in collaboration with Dr Kanak Kalita, Faculty Veltech University, Chethan KN, Manipal Institute of Technology and Prof Xiao-Zhi Gao, University of Eastern Finland.  
Dr Ghadai completed his PhD from Indian Institute of Engineering Science and Technology, Shibpur, Kolkata in the area of Material science and Nanotechnology. His active research area is Material Science and Nanotechnology and he has published more than 30 SCI/Scopus index research articles.

## Awaiting Collaborations *If people don't network, their issues will get hijacked*

Gangtok is cleaner than most State capitals in India, much cleaner than any other hill station. And the Gangtokians appear happy with that much because one is yet to see any community-level initiative to improve civic conditions any further. For instance, it had to be the State Government which gave the nod to a proposal which came from a foreign funding agency to declare MG Marg a “litter & spit free zone”. The declaration was easy, it was the implementation that tested the patience of the enforcers. It has succeeded, but again as a top-down initiative, and with it, much before the rest of India was told to go swachh, Sikkim had added another USP to its appeal. Of course, no tourist is going to come to Gangtok only to see a litter & spit free zone (which, admittedly, is under some stress already), but it will be initiatives like this that will add up to provide that larger argument which will convince visitors to choose Gangtok over, say a Shimla for their summer vacations. It would, however, have been so much more palatable and welcome if such a “zone” had come about on public initiative. Why did it have to be the State which had to enforce the new stipulations? Why couldn't a local NGO have pursued the concept and convinced the locals to stop littering and spitting at MG Marg?

The problem lies with the fact that Gangtok, although it is the most urban of spaces in the State, is still also closed and uninvolved, populated by Gangtokians who are closeted not only in their lifestyles, but also their thinking. They complain that the UD&HD garbage collection trucks do not detour to their residences often enough, but will never come together to work out a solution for locality garbage disposal problems on their own. They will be scandalised when reports of a fire in a school in South India hits the headlines and will worry about the safety of their children, but will wait for the State Government to draw up a legislation to make the schools safer. And then they will forget to keep track. They will not come together as parents and pressure the respective school managements to install the safety mechanisms. They will complain of drunken driving on weekends until one of their own gets challaned for driving under the influence of alcohol and then it will be about how overbearing the cops have become. And through all this, they will not convince their neighborhood bars to collect car keys and refuse to hand them over to inebriated drivers or unless the group has a sober hand for the wheels. They know that substance abuse is a problem as is juvenile delinquency and also suicides, but remain cocooned in the belief that all that is happening to someone else until the hammer hits home and then they will convince themselves it was an aberration.

What Gangtokians do not realize is that it does not take a rocket scientist to identify the problem areas and suggest remedial measures when it comes to working out how communities can work together to make living better. The oft-expressed need for a civil society in Gangtok is not misplaced, the problem is, it does not appear to be forming; not until Gangtokians stop reacting only to personal discomforts and ignoring community issues. The problem with such an attitude is that when real issues crop-up, because the people are not interested in understanding them in their entirety, they get hijacked by people we all know commonly as “vested interests.” When this happens, there is a lot of noise, but no resolution. It is for the people to decide whether they want to continue living in this cacophony or opt for saner collaborations.

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# How Coronavirus Affects the Brain

MICHAEL ZANDI

THECONVERSATION.COM

Six months into the COVID-19 pandemic, we're still learning what the disease can do. There are now detailed reports of brain illness emerging in people with relatively mild lung illness, in those who are critically ill and also in those in recovery.

One key thing we're seeing is that severity of lung illness doesn't always correlate with severity of neurological illness. Having only minor lung illness doesn't protect against potentially severe complications.

When it comes to the brain and nerves, the virus appears to have four main sets of effects: “A confused state (known as delirium or encephalopathy), sometimes with psychosis and memory disturbance.”

1. Inflammation of the brain (known as encephalitis). This includes a form showing inflammatory lesions – acute disseminated encephalomyelitis (ADEM) – together with the effects of low oxygen in the brain.

2. Blood clots, leading to stroke (including in younger patients).

3. Potential damage to the nerves in the body, causing pain and numbness (for example in the form of post-infectious Guillain-Barré syndrome, in which your body's immune system attacks your nerves).

4. To date, the patterns of these effects seem similar across the world. Some of these illnesses are fatal and, for those who survive, many will bear long-term consequences.

This raises an important question: will COVID-19 be associated with a large epidemic of brain illness, in the same manner that the 1918 influenza pandemic was linked (admittedly somewhat uncertainly) to the epidemic of encephalitis lethargica (sleeping

sickness) that took hold until the 1930s? At this stage, it's hard to say – but here's what we know about the virus's effects on the brain so far.

WHAT'S HAPPENING INSIDE PEOPLE'S HEADS?

Firstly, some people with COVID-19 experience confused thoughts and disorientation. Thankfully, in many cases it's short-lived. But we still don't know the long-term effects of delirium caused by COVID-19 and whether long-term memory problems or even dementia in some people could arise. Delirium has been mostly studied in the elderly and, in this group, it's associated with accelerated cognitive decline beyond what's expected if patients already suffer dementia.

The virus also has the potential to infect the brain directly. However, most of the physical effects we've seen in survivors look like secondary impacts of the virus being present in the brain rather than the effects of direct infection. For example, our immune system can appropriately fight the virus, but may start to attack our own cells – including our brain cells and nerves. This may be through the actions of immune cells and antibodies via an inflammatory mechanism known as a cytokine storm, or through mechanisms we don't yet understand.

There are also COVID-19 patients having ischaemic strokes, where a blood clot blocks the flow of blood and oxygen to the brain. Some of these patients have stroke risk factors (for example high blood pressure, diabetes or obesity), though their strokes have been particularly severe. It seems that this is because the blood rapidly becomes thickened in COVID-19 and, in these patients, there have been multiple blood clots in the arteries feeding blood to the brain, even in patients already receiving blood thinners. In others, there is brain bleeding

due to weakened blood vessels, perhaps inflamed by the effects of the virus.

Where infection with the coronavirus is associated with inflammation or damage to the nerve endings themselves, individuals may develop burning and numbness and also weakness and paralysis. Often it's difficult to know if these are the effects of a critical illness on the nerves themselves or if there's brain and spine involvement.

All of these effects on the brain and nervous system have the potential for long-term damage and can stack up in an individual. But we need to know more about what's going on in people's nervous systems before we can accurately predict any long-term effects.

One way of finding out more is to take a look inside patients' heads using brain-imaging techniques, such as MRI. So far, brain imaging has revealed a pattern of previously unseen findings, but its still very early days for using it in this pandemic.

In one study, patterns found included signs of inflammation and a shower of small spots of bleeding, often in the deepest parts of the brain. Some of these findings are similar to those seen in divers or in altitude sickness. They might represent the profound lack of oxygen being delivered to the brain in some patients with COVID-19 – but we are only starting to understand the full scope of the brain's involvement in the disease. Brain-imaging and postmortem studies for those killed by COVID-19 have been limited to date.

PARALLELS WITH THE PAST

The 1918 influenza pandemic may have killed 50-100 million people – one in 50 of those infected, and three to six times the number killed in the first world war. Yet it has faded from our collective memory. It's not often mentioned that this pandemic was linked to

an outbreak of brain disease – the “sleeping sickness” encephalitis lethargica.

Encephalitis and sleeping sickness had been linked to previous influenza outbreaks between the 1580s to 1890s. But the 20th-century epidemic of encephalitis lethargica started in 1915, before the influenza pandemic, and continued into the 1930s, so a direct link between the two has remained difficult to prove.

In those who died, postmortems revealed a pattern of inflammation in the seat of the brain (known as the brainstem). Some patients who had damage to areas of the brain involved in movement were locked in their bodies, unable to move for decades (post-encephalitic Parkinsonism), and were only “awakened” by treatment with L-Dopa (a chemical that naturally occurs in the body) by Oliver Sacks in the 1960s. It is too early to tell if we will see a similar outbreak associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, though early reports of encephalitis in COVID-19 have shown features similar to those in encephalitis lethargica.

The aftermath of this global event has many lessons for us now in the time of COVID-19. One, of course, is that we may see widespread brain damage following this viral pandemic.

But importantly, it's also a reminder to consider the political and societal impact of pandemics, and the need to help vulnerable people who have illness afterwards. COVID-19 has already exposed disparities in access to healthcare. Societies will remain judged on how they protect and treat those most at risk from – and sustain the health consequences of – this virus. This will include people with neurological disease arising from COVID-19.

*[the writer is Consultant Neurologist and Honorary Associate Professor in Neurology, UCL]*

## How can we stop people wanting to buy illegal wildlife products?

LAURA THOMAS-WALTERS, BOB SMITH & DIOGO VERÍSSIMO

THECONVERSATION.COM

Conservationists have been working for decades to save species such as pangolins and rhinos from illegal hunting and trading. And, with fears that the coronavirus pandemic originated from the wildlife trade, there's never been more pressure to find solutions.

One approach is to try and reduce demand for wildlife products so that the market effectively dries up. Persuading people to stop eating pangolins or using rhino horn in medicine is likely to be difficult, but perhaps easier than enforcing a global ban on the international trade and less heavy-handed than stopping poachers.

Since 2015, 32 countries have pledged to eradicate the market for illegal wildlife products and provided funding for projects aimed at encouraging customers to change their behaviour. But how effective are these likely to be?

It's a relatively new approach – and not one that scientists have thoroughly tested. We decided to review research on behaviour change in public health to give us an idea of what works and what doesn't. These ranged from efforts by community workers to improve sanitation in rural India, to education programmes on avoiding steroids among high school American football players in the US.

Money, motivations and mores

Projects designed to persuade people to change their behaviour rarely affect everyone they target. A study of health campaigns that used mass media channels, from television to billboards, showed that, on average, just 8% of the target audience changed their behaviour. One project which ran public television advertisements and distributed cheap devices able to estimate blood alcohol levels to shops and bars resulted in a 5% decrease in drink-driving incidents.

But campaigns that tried to get people to do something new, such as use seat belts regularly, were more successful than those that tried to get people to stop doing something, such as quit smoking. So conservationists may have more success by promoting a safe and acceptable alternative to a wildlife product than just telling consumers to stop altogether.

The most effective projects target a specific audience and consider the other factors competing with their message too – like anti-obesity projects aiming to overcome TV adverts for unhealthy food. But even then, success is not guaranteed. Another recent study found that less than half of high-quality health campaigns have positive results.

Other fields attempting to change the behaviour of their viewers, such as advertising, tend to have more money and experience than people trying the same methods in conservation. This all suggests that



progress in reducing demand for wildlife products will be slow. A single campaign aimed at rhino horn buyers in Vietnam might reduce demand, but it probably won't stop it altogether.

Research also shows that behaviours change when projects account for a person's motivations and desires. This is why incentivising people to quit smoking with cash prizes (so-called “quit and win” contests) rarely work in the long term. Fewer than one in 500 smokers maintained their good habits when the rewards stopped, because the underlying reasons for smoking weren't addressed.

The same issue applies to conservation. Projects are likely to fail or have unintended consequences if they don't tackle the things motivating people to buy wildlife products. In Japan, the horns of rhinos and saiga antelopes are believed to have similar medicinal effects. When the 1980 international trade ban on rhino horn came into effect, the Japanese traditional medicine industry just switched to saiga horn instead. Unfortunately, the saiga antelope is now classified as Critically Endangered, due in part to illegal hunting for horns.

Luckily, market research can help us understand these motivations, and work out who may be most receptive to change. For instance, a status-conscious consumer in Vietnam might be set on buying wild meat, but farmed meat will be more acceptable to those concerned about price.

Tread carefully

Campaigns can also make things worse if they accidentally change a person's perceptions and values. One drug prevention programme aimed at teenagers in the US actually increased illegal drug taking this way. It involved uniformed police officers visiting schools to warn students about the harmful

effects of drugs, making drug use seem more common than it actually was, and so more socially acceptable.

Equally, many illegal wildlife products, such as pangolin meat and scales, are used by a relatively small proportion of people. Mass media campaigns give the impression that eating pangolins is more much common, and could unwittingly encourage others to follow suit.

No single approach or project is going to work on its own. If conservationists want to save a species through reducing demand for wildlife products, we must plan for the long term and think about what could go wrong.

We don't want to undermine public support and create tensions in communities by acting without fully considering the consequences. This is what happened when a ban on wild meat in Sierra Leone turned people against expert advice. During the 2013-2016 Ebola outbreak, the government told villagers that wild meat was risky, but this contradicted the everyday experiences of people who had safely eaten it for generations. Communities became suspicious and suspected a sinister motive behind the ban.

Changing people's behaviour is possible if we can promote new habits, tackle the core motivations behind buying illegal wildlife products, consider the cultural context of using those products and focus on a target audience without making the illegal behaviour seem more widespread than it actually is. Armed with this knowledge, there is hope for turning the tide against this destructive trade.

[Laura Thomas-Walters is PhD Candidate in Conservation, University of Kent; Bob

Smith is Director, Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology, University of Kent; Diogo Veríssimo is Research Fellow in Conservation, University of Oxford]

## Drive to protect Gangetic dolphins in Bengal

**KOLKATA, JULY 9 (PTI):** In its effort to protect and conserve the endangered Gangetic dolphin, the West Bengal forest department has set up an awareness centre at the riverside town of Katwa in East Burdwan, where the freshwater mammal is often sighted.

Chief Wildlife Warden Ravikant Sinha said “the awareness centre

will launch campaigns against dolphin poaching, and involve local people in the conservation drive”.

“The centre has been set up by the south east circle of the West Bengal Forest Directorate for conservation of the elusive and endangered freshwater Gangetic dolphin and the riverine biodiversity at Katwa,” Sinha said.

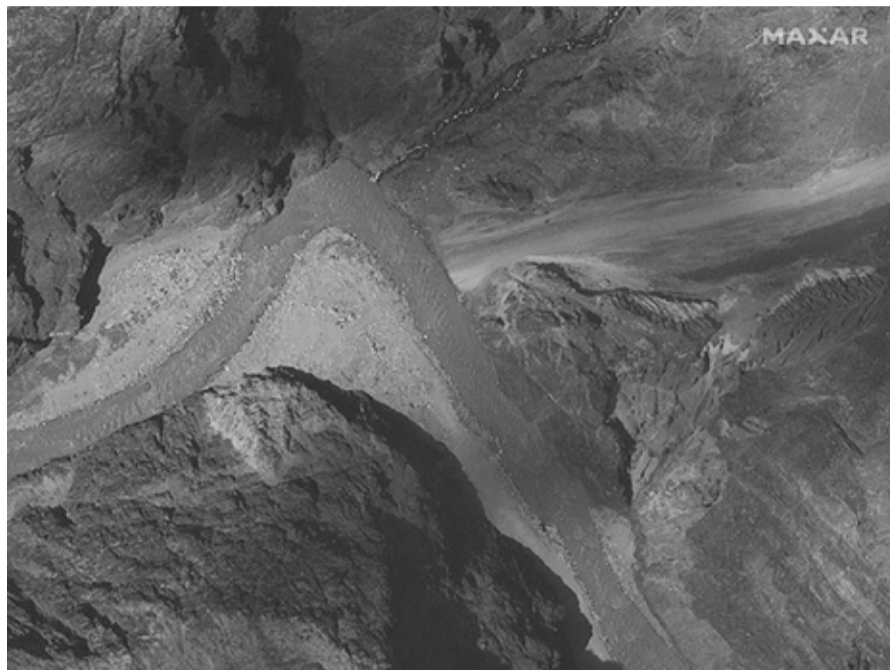
The department is also planning to build a dolphin breeding centre at the confluence of rivers Hooghly and Ajay, forest minister Rajib Banerjee said.

“So far, the department had been working towards preservation of tiger and other wild animals. This is the first time we are launching a campaign for

dolphin conservation,” he said, after inaugurating a speed boat which would keep a tab on the movement of the freshwater mammal.

The minister, on the occasion, also unveiled a special GPS-enabled vehicle, ‘Airavat’, for monitoring movement of elephants in East and West Burdwan and Birbhum districts.

## Chinese, Indian border troops taken ‘effective measures’ to disengage along LAC: China



**BEIJING, JULY 9 (PTI):** China on Thursday said Chinese and Indian troops have taken “effective measures” to disengage at the Galwan Valley and other areas along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh and the situation is “stable and improving,” days after the two sides agreed on an expeditious withdrawal of soldiers from all the standoff points.

The remarks by Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian came a day after people in New Delhi familiar with the developments said that the Chinese military removed all temporary structures and completed withdrawal of its troops from the face-off site in Hot Springs in eastern Ladakh.

media briefing here that “following the consensus reached at the commander-level talks, China, India border troops have taken effective measures to disengage at the front-line at the Galwan Valley and other areas.”

“The situation along the border is stable and improving,” he said.

Asked about further talks between the two countries, Zhao said the two sides will continue dialogue and communication through military and diplomatic channels including by holding meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultations and Coordination (WMCC) on the Sino-Indian border affairs.

“We hope India will work together with us

to take concrete action and implement the consensus reached and jointly work for de-escalation along the border,” the spokesman added.

The disengagement process of the troops on both sides began on Monday morning after a nearly two-hour telephonic conversation between National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Sunday.

At the talks, the two sides agreed on an expeditious withdrawal of troops from all the standoff points to bring back peace and tranquility in the region. Doval and Wang are Special Representatives (SR) for the boundary talks.

In New Delhi, the people familiar with

the developments said that the two armies are expected to carry out a joint verification in the next few days to assess the implementation of the disengagement process once the dismantling of the temporary infrastructure and withdrawal of troops by China are completed at the friction points along the LAC in eastern Ladakh.

There has been thinning out of troops from Finger areas in Pangong Tso as well, they said. Pangong Tso has been a major face-off site between the two sides.

The two militaries are set to hold extensive talks on finalising modalities for restoring normalcy and bringing back peace and tranquillity in the region after the verification of the disengagement exercise is completed, they added.

Government sources in New Delhi said the Chinese military has already removed tents and withdrew its personnel from patrolling point 14 in Galwan Valley, the site of violent clashes between the two armies on June 15 that left 20 Indian soldiers dead.

The Chinese side also suffered casualties but it is yet to give out the details. According to an American intelligence report, the number of casualties on the Chinese side was 35.

## Air pollution increases risk of COVID-19, deaths: Study



**BENGALURU, JULY 9 (PTI):** Air pollution in Bengaluru is linked to the loss of an estimated 6,300 lives in the first half of 2020 and 3.7 per cent decline in the city’s annual GDP despite strictly enforcing COVID-19 related lockdown, a study has revealed.

According to a new online tool by IQAir AirVisual and Greenpeace-Southeast Asia, research shows that long-term air pollution exposure increases the risk of severe COVID-19 infections and death.

“Air pollution in

Bengaluru is linked to the loss of an estimated 6,300 lives in the first half of 2020 despite a strict COVID-related lockdown,” the two organisations claimed in a statement.

It is also revealed that air pollution took a major toll on the citys economy at a cost of approximately Rs 6,973 crore over the last six months, an equivalent of 3.7% of Bengalurus total annual GDP, the statement said.

The study claimed that the health damage from air pollution is expected to cost 1-5.8% of cities GDP in the major

metropolitan cities of the world in the first half of this year.

Of all the 28 cities studied, Delhi bears the highest economic cost of air pollution as a percentage of GDP due to the impacts of PM2.5 and NO2 pollution.

While some cities have seen a temporary return of blue skies as a result of COVID-19 related restrictions, these gains were reversed as soon as lockdowns ended, the organisations observed.

“... Chronic air pollution exposure is associated with diseases such as hypertension,

diabetes, cardiovascular disease and chronic lung disease. Patients with these conditions are at a greater risk of hospitalisation with COVID-19,” they claimed.

The study observed that it is more important than ever that investments are directed towards green, just and sustainable sectors of society.

“Now is the time for a rapid shift away from polluting fossil fuels for our health, community, and for our economies, Greenpeace India’s Avinash Chanchal was quoted as saying.

### Meghalaya’s COVID-19 caseload crosses 100-mark

**SHILLONG, JUL 9 (PTI):** Meghalaya’s COVID-19 caseload crossed the 100-mark on Thursday with five more persons testing positive for the infection, officials said.

Two of the new patients are BSF personnel. The northeastern state’s virus count now stands at 104, they said.

In a series of tweets on Wednesday night, Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma said that of the three other patients, two had recently returned from Delhi and Bihar.

Of the 104 cases, 57 are active while 45 people have recovered

and two patients have died, a health official said.

With the number of infected BSF personnel posted in the state rising to 27, the health authorities have ordered tests on the personnel of the border force.

Twenty-seven Border Security Force (BSF) personnel and a high-risk contact of one of them have tested positive for COVID-19 while test results of 108 others are awaited, Director of Health Services, Amar War, said.

Rapid diagnostic tests have been conducted on 1,006 BSF personnel, he added.

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### Gangster Vikas Dubey arrested in MP; 2 aides killed in UP

**BHOPAL/LUCKNOW, JUL 9 (PTI):** Gangster Vikas Dubey, wanted in connection with the Kanpur ambush in which eight policemen were killed, was arrested from Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh on Thursday, an official said.

Madhya Pradesh Home Minister Narottam Mishra confirmed the development. He told reporters that Dubey is in the state police’s custody in Ujjain.

“Yes, we have arrested him and he is in our custody,” the minister said, without revealing how police nabbed him.

The minister did not confirm if the gangster, carrying a reward of Rs 5 lakh on information leading to his arrest, was nabbed from within or outside the Mahakal temple premises.

“Dont bring the temple into it. Inside the temple or outside it... he is arrested from Ujjain, Mishra said.

“We will share details after going deep into the matter. It is a matter of intelligence and we cant reveal it now, the minister said, when reporters asked if a priest or a security guard had identified the gangster.

“It is a big achievement for the Madhya Pradesh police. They were on high alert after the Kanpur incident, Mishra said.

Meanwhile, temple sources said Dubey reached the temple gate in the morning and purchased a Rs 250 ticket from a counter near the police post. When he went to a nearby shop to buy ‘prasad’ for the deity, the shop owner identified him and alerted police, they added.

When the policemen asked him his name, he loudly said “Vikas Dubey”, following which the cops and private security personnel deployed at the temple nabbed him, the sources said.

Eyewitnesses said Dubey was accompanied by two associates. Police are yet to confirm this account.

Lauding Ujjain police for arresting Dubey, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan tweeted, “Those who feel that after going to the Mahakal temple, their sins will be wiped out, they do not know about the Mahakal. Our government will not spare any criminals.”

Chouhan said he

spoke to his Uttar Pradesh counterpart Yogi Adityanath after the gangster’s arrest. The MP police will hand over Dubey to Uttar Pradesh police, he added.

Meanwhile, two more aides of Dubey were gunned down in separate encounters in Uttar Pradesh, police said.

While Kartikeya alias Prabhat was killed in Kanpur when he tried to flee from police custody, Praveen alias Bauwa Dubey was shot dead in an encounter in Etawah, they added.

Kartikeya, who was arrested from Faridabad on Wednesday, was being brought to Kanpur on transit remand when he snatched the pistol of a policeman and tried to flee, ADG, Law and Order Prashant Kumar said.

“The encounter took place in the Panki area of Kanpur when a police team was bringing Kartikeya alias Prabhat from Faridabad to Kanpur on transit remand. The police vehicle had a flat tyre. Taking advantage of the situation, Kartikeya tried to flee after snatching the pistol of a policeman,” he said.

Kartikeya opened fire at the policemen

accompanying him, injuring two Special Task Force (STF) personnel, and was killed in the ensuing exchange of fire, the officer said.

Praveen alias Bauwa Dubey, wanted in connection with last week’s Kanpur ambush, was killed in an encounter in Etawah, the police said.

“The police team surrounded a person at about 4.30 am and he was killed in an exchange of fire. The deceased was identified as Praveen alias Bauwa Dubey, wanted in connection with the Kanpur ambush. He was carrying a reward of Rs 50,000 for information leading to his arrest,” Etawah SP Akash Tomar said. Eight policemen, including a deputy superintendent of police, were ambushed last Friday in Bikru village in the Chaubeypur area of Kanpur, when they went to arrest Vikas Dubey and fell to bullets fired from rooftops.

Five persons have been killed in police encounters since the Kanpur ambush.

Amar Dubey was killed in Uttar Pradesh’s Hamirpur on Wednesday, while Prem Prakash Pandey and Atul Dubey were gunned down in an encounter in Kanpur on July 3.



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700072, Ph. 033-22124148/ fax 033-22124037/ mob. +91-9030547774/ +91-

983003297, E-mail: [contact.synapse@gmail.com](mailto:contact.synapse@gmail.com)/ [irshad.ali123@gmail.com](mailto:irshad.ali123@gmail.com)

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# Manchester City thump Newcastle with David Silva in starring role

**JAMIE JACKSON**  
**MANCHESTER, 09 JUL [THEGUARDIAN]:** Manchester City cantered to a win that ended Newcastle's unbeaten four-game run since the restart of the Premier League. As is so often the case Pep Guardiola's side had far more class and were far more accomplished than opponents who barely threatened to score.

The rout took City to 86 goals. "It is good to score five again," Guardiola said. "And one point [more] to qualify for the Champions League."

His response to City's defeat at Southampton – their ninth of the season – was to make five changes, who included John Stones making a first league start in seven months. Steve Bruce's side showed six different players from the draw with West Ham last time out that had made Newcastle safe.

Kevin De Bruyne swung in the first corner, which had Stones interested, but Martin Dubravka collected the ball. The next time City attacked they scored. João Cancelo came infield before the ball was moved on to Rodri,



Phil Foden and David Silva, who stroked a cross over from the left wing. Gabriel Jesus finished neatly.

City were in control. Next Foden glided past two opponents and saw a shot go wide. Silva then overhit a pass that Cancelo could not keep in play, a moment of sloppiness that visibly displeased Guardiola.

Better was about to occur. City squeezed Newcastle on the left, Silva fed Foden and his ball released De Bruyne. A pull-back found Riyad Mahrez and he doubled

the margin.

The drinks break allowed Bruce to tell his players to wake up – fast – if they hoped to stop a rout. But it was City – via Mahrez – who threatened next, though the forward allowed a through ball to slip under his feet.

Matt Ritchie was able to float a free-kick to an unchallenged Federico Fernández in a rare attack for Newcastle but City soon reasserted their grip. They ended the half with Rodri, Silva, De Bruyne, Foden and Mahrez moving the ball

around their opponents. Foden held his head in his hands after missing from close range.

As the second half commenced it was Newcastle who required inspiration. Guardiola had swapped Ilkay Gündogan for Rodri and Kyle Walker for Cancelo but City were again in keep-ball mode. It was Walker who fashioned a sand-wedge chip into De Bruyne, who played a pass from which Foden should have scored from close range but he again missed badly.

City cruised in no

more than third gear, toying with Newcastle. Blue shirts continually recycled the ball, and when the visitors managed to move into City's half, it was a collector's item.

What occurred next was akin to Keystone Kops defending. Jesus swapped passes with Foden but now Ritchie intervened, stabbed at the ball, this hit Fernández's hand and it spiralled past Dubravka, clipped the right post, and it was 3-0.

In what was hardly better news for

Newcastle, Guardiola replaced Jesus and Foden with Bernardo Silva and Raheem Sterling. The latter drew a foul from Joelinton and David Silva took the dead ball, arrowing it into the top corner for his 59th league goal of a glittering City career.

Bruce brought on Dwight Gayle, Javier Manquillo and Matty Longstaff for Joelinton, Valentino Lazaro and Jonjo Shelvey but, as with so many against Guardiola's side, his team were in a damage-limitation exercise.

Guardiola gave Tommy Doyle the final 15 minutes, the 18-year-old midfielder's league bow. City ended with a Sterling strike in added time confirming a fine night for them, a miserable one for Newcastle. "Painful," Bruce said.

Guardiola was asked about reports in Spain claiming Eric García is wanted by his former club, Barcelona and that the centre-back wants a return. "He has one year left and we're going to try and convince him to stay for many years," the manager said. "He knows, his agent knows, and his family knows we want him."

## Musa Juwara: from a refugees' dinghy to San Siro supersub with Bologna

**ED AARONS**  
**LONDON, 09 JUL [THEGUARDIAN]:** Sinisa Mihajlovic says it was destiny. With his Bologna side a man down after Roberto Soriano's red card and trailing 1-0 at Internazionale on Sunday, the coach surveyed his bench and weighed up his options.

"The first idea was to put [Mattias] Svanberg on the right, then watching the game I said to myself: 'Let's put Musa on. He always causes a mess when he plays and they won't understand anything,'" recalled Mihajlovic.

A little more than four years to the day since Musa Juwara first set foot on Italian soil after the unaccompanied teenager travelled from the Gambia through Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and then Libya before crossing the Mediterranean on a rubber dinghy, his dream was about to come true.

Seizing on an Inter mistake, the 18-year-old orphan from Tujereng rifled home a shot from the edge of the area with his left foot to fulfil his manager's prophecy to

the sporting director, Riccardo Bigon, a few minutes earlier. "I told him that he would score," Mihajlovic said. "And after three minutes he did! He deserves it: he played at San Siro even if empty; it means having personality."

A legal wrangle with the Italian football federation which prohibited clubs from signing unaccompanied minors prevented Juwara from joining Chievo in the summer of 2017, only for Summa and his wife, Loredana Bruno, to successfully appeal. After Juwara thrived at youth level, Bologna paid a reported €500,000 to sign him last summer and 13 goals in 18 matches for their primavera side saw the winger promoted to Mihajlovic's squad.

"Even when they lost against Juventus in the first match after the restart, he came on and had an impact that led to Danilo being sent off," Bah says. "It was very exciting."

Juwara is not the only Gambian player to have taken his opportunity after risking everything to reach Europe. Five



of the nine now on the books of Italian clubs in the top three divisions arrived as refugees, including the Catania winger Kalifa Manneh and Roma's 19-year-old midfielder Ebrima Darboe, who was on the bench for a league match against Milan last year. The Sampdoria defender Omar Colley – who moved to Serie A after making his name in Finland, Sweden and Belgium – has been heavily linked with Southampton and could become the second Gambian to play in the Premier League after Swansea's Modou Barrow in 2014.

"Everybody in

Gambia supports Bologna, Atalanta or Sampdoria now," Bah says. "We can watch the matches live on TV and also catch the highlights so people are able to see how they are getting on and these players are really popular here. They have a huge following on social media as well."

Around 30,000 Gambians are thought to be living in Italy, although many have been threatened with being returned to a country that remains politically unstable despite the fall of the longtime dictator Yahya Jammeh in January 2017.

According to Bah,

the success of Juwara, Barrow and Colley is providing hope that the national team could make history under their experienced Belgian manager Tom Saintfiet. "We've never been to the Nations Cup and we are a small country in terms of African football history but when I look at the talents that we have, the only thing lacking is the infrastructure and the exposure," he says. "The future looks really bright even though we don't have the right structures in place."

"We are producing so many good young players but you have to ask how many would we

have produced if there was a proper academy system that they could attend from the ages of six or seven? If we had the structures then wow ... For me, our players are better than even our neighbours Senegal."

The Gambia's closeness to one of African football's powerhouses has allowed several players to attend Génération Foot – the Dakar academy where Liverpool's Sadio Mané and Ismaïla Sarr of Watford started. The promising winger Abbie Jallow and the striker Yankuba Jarju have benefited from the academy's partnership with the French club Metz, and Jallow spent the 2019-20 season on loan at Ajaccio.

Juwara has yet to make his international debut but after his heroics against Inter, that is surely a matter of time. "I'm really happy to score my first goal, which I want to dedicate to my family and all those who've helped me on my journey," he said. "This is a dream for me and a day I'll remember for the rest of my life."

## Barcelona wins derby against Espanyol, relegates city rival

**MADRID, JUL 9 (AP):** Barcelona kept its title hopes alive with a 1-0 win in the city derby against Espanyol in the Spanish league, sealing the rival's relegation for the first time in nearly three decades.

Luis Su rez scored the winning goal early in the second half on Wednesday to move Barcelona within a point of leader Real Madrid and send Espanyol to the second division after 26 straight seasons in the top flight.

Real Madrid can reclaim a four-point lead with three rounds left with a home win against relegation-threatened Alav s on Friday. Madrid, seeking its first league title in three years, has a perfect record since the league resumed following the coronavirus break.

"We knew it would be a difficult match because of Espanyol's situation,"

Su rez said.

"We are going to keep trying to win our matches and see if Madrid falters."

Only a win in the city derby could have kept last-place Espanyol with a chance of staying in the top tier. The club owned by Chinese businessman Chen Yansheng hasn't played in the second division since the 1993-1994 season. It had been among the teams with most consecutive seasons in the top flight, along with Barcelona, Real Madrid and Athletic Bilbao.

"We have to apologise to our fans for what we have made them go through," Espanyol captain Javi L pez said.

"This is a difficult moment. Nothing went right for us this season. We are committed to coming back stronger."

It was the sixth straight loss for Espanyol, and its 11th consecutive league defeat away to Barcelona at the Camp

Nou Stadium. It has 24 points from 35 matches 11 points from safety.

Both teams went a man down to a straight red card early in the second half. Barcelona forward Ansu Fati was sent off after a hard foul on Fernando Calero in the 51st, and Espanyol midfielder Pol Lozano was ejected after a tough foul on Gerard Piqu in the 54th.

It didn't take long for Barcelona to take advantage of the extra space, and Su rez broke the deadlock from close range in the 56th after an exchange between Antoine Griezmann and Lionel Messi inside the area.

Griezmann, a starter for the second consecutive match after a lengthy period without getting many minutes, had already successfully teamed up with Messi in the team's 4-1 win at Villarreal in the previous round.

It was Su rez's 195th goal for Barcelona, moving him past Ladislao Kubala to become the club's third all-time highest scorer, behind C sar Rodriguez (232) and Messi (630).

Barcelona was in control from the start but Espanyol had some significant chances to open the scoring in the first half, hitting the post once and forcing goalkeeper Marc-André ter Stegen to make a tough save.

Barcelona, a two-time defending champion, next visits Valladolid on Saturday. OTHER RESULTS

Villarreal kept alive its chances of qualifying for the Champions League with a 3-1 win at Getafe, moving within three points of fourth-place Sevilla.

Santi Cazorla scored penalties in the 66th and 86th minutes for Villarreal, which opened a four-point gap to sixth-place Getafe.

## MLS returns to action after poignant moment of silence

**KISSIMEE (US), JUL 9 (AP):** Nearly 200 players took the field for an 8-minute, 46-second moment of silence to protest racial injustice before Major League Soccer's return to action.

Players wore black T-shirts, black gloves and black facemasks emblazoned with Black Lives Matter on Wednesday night. The shirts had varying slogans that included Black And Proud, Silence Is Violence and Black All The Time.

The players walked toward midfield, raised their right arms one at a time and held the pose so long that some could be seen stretching fatigued muscles afterward.

It was a poignant moment that put two of the nation's most prominent changes over the last four months masks and movements at the forefront of the sport's return.

The group was formerly called the Black Players Coalition of MLS but changed its name this week to Black Players for Change. Originally announced on Juneteenth, the group started in the wake of George Floyd's death with the hope of combating systemic racism both in soccer and the players' communities. The league and the players' union endorsed the organization.

Several other players from Orlando City and Inter Miami took a knee near midfield during the demonstration. Orlando's Nani scored in the seventh minute of stoppage time and held on for a 2-1 victory over expansion Miami.

The two in-state teams delivered their own moment of silence by taking a knee along with the referee and the line judges just before the opening kick.

The national anthem was not played before or after the demonstration. MLS previously said it would not be played because no fans were in attendance.

Floyd, a Black man, died May 25 after a white Minneapolis police officer pressed his knee on Floyd's neck for nearly eight minutes. Prosecutors said that a police officer had his knee on the neck of Floyd for 7 minutes, 46 seconds not the 8:46 that has become a symbol of police brutality.

MLS players had weeks to decide what to do prior to the MLS is Back tournament at ESPN's Wide World of Sports complex at Disney World.

The league's teams are sequestered in resorts for the duration of the World Cup-style tournament, which began with a Group A match that was the first meeting between two Sunshine State teams.

FC Dallas withdrew Monday after 10 players and a coach tested positive for COVID-19. A day later, Nashville SC's status was thrust into doubt with five confirmed positive tests.

Nashville was supposed to play Chicago in the second game of a doubleheader Wednesday but it was postponed.

MLS shut down because of the coronavirus pandemic on March 12, after the league's teams had each played two regular-season games.

The reboot had a considerably different feel without fans and with plenty of concern even amid a safety bubble. Can 25 teams that include nearly 700 players plus coaches, trainers and other support staff do everything right for a month? And what's the threshold for more positive tests? The NFL, the NBA and Major League Baseball surely have a close eye on what's happening outside Orlando.

The NBA should get an up-close look. The league already has part of its bubble established at the ESPN venue. NBA team flags fly on every flagpole, and some areas have been sanitized and cordoned off for basketball's return later this month.

MLS is using three fields near the back of the complex, two of the ones the NFL used for Pro Bowl practices the last four years. The league mandated masks for everyone other than players. Coaches, support staff and media donned masks during the game. Miami star Rodolfo Pizarro, who wasn't in the starting lineup, also wore one during warmups.

Miami's Andres Reyes left the field on a stretcher early in the second half after a scary collision with Orlando's Dom Dwyer. Replays appeared to show Dwyer hitting Reyes in the throat as they went for a 50-50 ball.

Reyes had trouble breathing as teammates and the referee called for help. Adding to the growing concern on the field, the emergency crew got hung up trying to gain access to him.

Security personnel struggled to open a gate, delaying the medical team's response. It was slow enough that one of Reyes' teammates, Juan Agudelo, ran across the field to help and ended up assisting in pulling the stretcher across the soggy grass.

Chris Mueller scored the equalizer for Orlando, getting a sliding toe on a perfect cross from Nani to the back post in the 70th minute.

Agudelo scored the first goal of MLS' return, drilling a left-footer past Pedro Gallese to cap a play that started with two teammates on top of each other in the box.

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## Facebook removes false accounts linked to Brazil's Bolsonaro

**SAO PAULO (BRAZIL), JUL 9 (AP):** Social media giant Facebook said Wednesday that it has removed dozens of accounts linked to supporters or employees of Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro as part of an investigation into the spread of false news online.

Nathaniel Gleicher, the company's head of cybersecurity policy, said in a statement that 73 Facebook and Instagram accounts, 14 pages and one group were removed. Brazilian courts have been investigating the spread of false news in connection with Bolsonaro.

There was no immediate comment from the presidential office about Facebook's action.

Facebook's executive said the accounts were linked to the Social Liberal Party, which Bolsonaro left last year after winning the 2018 presidential election, and to employees of the president, two of his sons, Sen. Flávio Bolsonaro and congressman Eduardo Bolsonaro, and two other lawmakers.

This network consisted of several clusters of connected activity that relied on a combination of duplicate and fake accounts some of which had been detected and disabled by our automated systems to evade enforcement, create fictitious personas posing as reporters, post content, and manage pages masquerading as news outlets, Gleicher said in the statement.

He added that some of the content posted by the accounts had already been taken down for community standards violations, including hate speech.

## International probe launched into facial recognition firm that scrapes images from the internet

Privacy regulators in the U.K. and Australia have announced a joint probe into Clearview AI's "data scraping" practices.

The New York-headquartered company has built a facial recognition database by taking images from social media platforms and other websites without the consent of the people featured. It is reported that Clearview has "scraped" more than 3 billion images from the internet to build its database, which law enforcement agencies use to try and identify criminals.

"The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) and the UK's Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) have opened a joint investigation into the personal information handling practices of Clearview Inc., focusing on the company's use of 'scraped' data and biometrics of individuals," reads a statement on the ICO's website.

"The investigation highlights the importance of enforcement cooperation in protecting the personal information of Australian and UK citizens in a globalized data environment."

CNBC contacted Clearview for comment but did not immediately hear back.

Clearview's platform allows clients to upload a photo of an individual and match it to photos of that person that are stored in Clearview's database.

Clearview doesn't publish the names of its clients, but BuzzFeed



News reported in February that it had worked with 2,200 law enforcement agencies, companies, and individuals worldwide. Macy's, Walmart, Bank of America, and Target have all reportedly used the service.

In May, Clearview said it would stop working with non-law enforcement entities and private companies amid regulatory scrutiny and potential

law suits.

Clearview pulled out of Canada earlier this week after privacy protection authorities launched an investigation into the firm. As a result, a contract between the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and Clearview has been terminated.

Canadian authorities said they will continue their investigations into Clearview.

"An ongoing issue under investigation by the authorities is the deletion of the personal information of Canadians that Clearview has already collected as well as the cessation of Clearview's collection of Canadians' personal information," the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada said.

Google, YouTube, Twitter and Facebook

have sent cease-and-desist letters to Clearview after they learned it was scraping images from their platforms.

Last month, the European Data Protection Board warned that Clearview technology was likely to be illegal in Europe.

"The use of a service such as Clearview by law enforcement authorities in the European Union would, as it stands, likely not be consistent with the EU data protection regime," it said.

In February, BuzzFeed reported that the company has expanded into 26 countries outside the U.S. including Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. The report stated that Clearview had "engaged" with national law enforcement agencies, government bodies, and police forces in those countries.

## Heavy rain hits scenic central Japan, more damage in south

**TOKYO, JUL 9 (AP):** Flooding and mudslides have stranded hundreds of people in scenic hot springs and hiking areas in central Japan, while rescue workers searched on Thursday for more people missing in the disaster that already has killed nearly 60 people in a southern region.

Parts of Nagano and Gifu, including areas known for scenic mountain trails and hot springs, have been flooded by massive downpours.

More than 300 people, including hotel employees and visitors, were trapped in Kamikochi, as floods and mudslides hit a main road connecting



the town to Matsumoto, another tourist destination in Nagano. All of the stranded people were safe, prefectural officials said.

In neighbouring

Gifu, hundreds were also isolated in the hot spring towns of Gero and Ontake.

As of Thursday morning, the death toll from the heavy rains which started over the

weekend had risen to 59, most of them from hardest-hit Kumamoto prefecture on Japan's third largest island of Kyushu. Searching continued for 14 still missing in Kumamoto.

Hundreds of thousands of people were in areas under evacuation advisories, but leaving wasn't mandatory and the number who sought shelter was not known.

Japan is at high risk of heavy rain in early summer when wet and warm air from the East China Sea flows into a seasonal rain front above the country. In July 2018, more than 200 people, about half of them in Hiroshima, died from heavy rain and flooding in southwestern Japan.

Meteorological Agency officials said the seasonal rain front has stayed above Japan longer than usual, prompting heavy rain to persist.

## Worsening U.S. outbreak prompts tough actions as new coronavirus cases hit record

**NEW YORK (Reuters)** - New Jersey adopted a stringent coronavirus face-mask order on Wednesday, and New York City unveiled a plan to allow public school students back into classrooms for just two or three days a week, as newly confirmed U.S. COVID-19 cases soared to a daily global record.

Officials in New Jersey and New York, the hardest-hit states at the outset of the U.S. outbreak, are trying to preserve progress in curbing the spread of the virus in the face of a resurgence elsewhere across the country, especially the South and West.

More than 47,000 people have died of COVID-19 in the two northeastern states, accounting for more than a third of the 132,000-plus Americans killed by the virus, according to a Reuters tally.

More than 60,000 new COVID-19 infections were reported across the United States on Wednesday, the greatest single-day tally of cases by any country since the virus emerged late last year in China. And U.S. deaths rose by more than 900 for the second straight day, the highest level seen since early June.

New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy unveiled an executive order requiring face coverings outdoors where social distancing is not possible, citing a rise in the state's coronavirus transmission rate.

"It's about life and death," Murphy, a Democrat, said at a briefing.

Many states require masks in public indoor settings and recommend them outside but have stopped short of mandating their use outdoors.

"I think that's the right thing to do," said Jordan Grant, 23, a real estate accountant who expressed dismay at seeing people congregating without masks. "It's what we should have been doing months ago."

Republican state Senator Michael Doherty, however, accused Murphy of "exploiting a public health crisis for power," calling the new mask directive "oppressive."

In New York City, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced a plan for 1.1 million students in the nation's largest public school district to return to classes in September. Pupils would alternate attending school two or three days weekly and spend the remaining time at home under the "blended learning" schedule, which requires state approval.

'BACK TO SCHOOL' Republican President Donald Trump, who has exhorted Americans to return to their daily routines, threatened to cut off federal funding to schools that fail to reopen on their normal schedule due to the coronavirus outbreak.

States are chiefly responsible for primary and secondary education, but the federal government provides some supplementary funding.

Vice President Mike Pence said the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention would soon issue new back-to-school protocols after Trump criticized current recommendations as too strict and costly. But Pence stressed that CDC guidelines are advisory.

Coronavirus cases have been on the rise in 42 of the 50 states over the past two weeks, according to a Reuters analysis. Meanwhile, the percentage of people testing positive among those who are screened has climbed above 5% - to levels health experts deem concerning - in some two dozen states.

On Tuesday, the number of confirmed U.S. cases crossed the 3 million mark, roughly equivalent to 1% of the population and about 25% of all known infections worldwide.

## UN Council rejects Russia bid to limit Syrian aid deliveries

**UNITED NATIONS, JUL 9 (AP):** The UN Security Council on Wednesday overwhelmingly rejected a Russian resolution that would have cut back the delivery of humanitarian aid to Syria's mainly rebel-held northwest to just one crossing point from Turkey.

Western countries that voted against the resolution have insisted on keeping the two current crossings from Turkey, with strong backing from UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and humanitarian groups.

UN humanitarian chief Mark Lowcock has called the two crossings from Turkey a lifeline for millions of civilians whom the UN cannot reach by other means.

The Russian resolution needed a minimum of nine yes votes in the 15-member council for approval, but Moscow got support from only three other countries China, Vietnam and South Africa.

Its failure to get the nine votes meant the US, UK and France didn't need to consider using their veto. Those three permanent council members voted against the resolution along with Germany,

Belgium, Estonia and the Dominican Republic.

Four countries abstained Tunisia, Niger, Indonesia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Russia, Syria's closest ally, circulated the draft resolution after it joined China on Tuesday in vetoing a draft resolution co-sponsored by Germany and Belgium to maintain aid deliveries through two border crossing points from Turkey for a year. It received 13 yes votes.

The current Security Council mandate for UN cross-border aid deliveries expires Friday, and Germany and Belgium are expected to circulate a new proposal, likely to authorize the two current crossings from Turkey for six months. In a joint statement after the vote, Germany and Belgium said that millions of people are counting on the Security Council to allow for as much humanitarian access as possible ... (and) we will keep on working to this end.

Whether the differences between the five veto-wielding council members can be resolved in the next 48 hours remained to be seen.

Russia has argued that aid should be delivered from within

Syria across conflict lines. But the UN and humanitarian groups say aid for 2.8 million needy people in the northwest can't get in that way.

US Ambassador Kelly Craft accused Russia and China of breathtaking callousness and dishonesty and distorting the realities on the ground.

Their actions in both resolutions underscore a harrowing truth that Russia and China have decided that millions of Syrian lives are an insignificant cost of their partnership with the murderous Assad regime, she said in a statement.

Moutaz Adham, the Syria director for the humanitarian group Oxfam, called the council's failure to reach agreement a devastating blow to the millions of Syrian families who rely on this aid for clean water, food, health care and shelter.

Cross-border aid is needed now more than ever, as Syrians face the threat of COVID-19, he said.

All available avenues for delivering aid will be critical in helping the more than 11 million people in need of assistance across Syria.

In January, Russia scored a victory for Syria, using its veto threat to force the Security Council to adopt a resolution reducing the number of crossing points for aid deliveries from four to just two, from Turkey to the northwest.

It also cut in half the yearlong mandate that had been in place since cross-border deliveries began in 2014 to six months, as Russia insisted.

The defeated German-Belgian resolution had dropped a call for the re-opening of an Iraqi crossing to the northeast to deliver medical supplies for the COVID-19 pandemic.

In May, Russia's UN Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia said: Do not waste your time on efforts to reopen the closed cross-border points.

The German-Belgian resolution would have extended the mandate for the two border crossings from Turkey to the northwest Bab al-Salam and Bab al-Hawa for a year.

The Russian-drafted resolution would only authorize cross-border deliveries through the Bab al-Hawa crossing for six months.

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**SummitTIMES**



**MONOCHROMATIC!** The reality tv star, Kim Kardashian heads out in her cute green leather romper and green boots to match.

## Chris Hemsworth's Toughest Centr Trainer Shares A Punishing Bodyweight Workout

Try this series from Da Rulk to toughen up your home training.

Chris Hemsworth has been one of the most visible celebrities in the fitness space over the last few years. Along with lending his muscles to blockbusters like The Avengers and streaming hits like Extraction, the actor frequently shares his workout sessions on social media for his fans to follow.

In light of gym closures and other challenging circumstances in which many people have found themselves during the current pandemic, Hemsworth's fitness team have developed a new bodyweight-only workout program for his fitness app, Centr.

This workout is from Centr trainer Da Rulk, a functional training expert who has taught his Raw Functional Training (RFT) method to military and first responders, Olympic gold medalists, MMA fighters, and pro athletes, along with Hemsworth.

The session below isn't part of Centr's Unleashed program—but it is a challenging bodyweight series you can do anywhere, anytime using the app. You'll

run through three separate clusters of bodyweight movements, working for 40 seconds at a time. By the end of the almost 30 minute period, you'll be toast—but stronger than when you started.

Da Rulk's Centr Functional Training Session:

Cluster 1:-

Perform each exercise for 40 seconds, then rest for 20 seconds. Repeat 3 times.

Modified Side Gorillas

Modified Hostages

Forward to Reverse Crawl 75%

Cluster 2:-

Perform each exercise for 40 seconds, then rest for 20 seconds. Repeat 3 times.

Single Sit-Thrus (Left) - 20 seconds

Single Sit-Thrus (Right) - 20 seconds

Modified Switch

Modified Ballistic Pulses

Cluster 3:-

Perform each exercise for 40 seconds, then rest for 20 seconds. Repeat 3 times.

Forward to Reverse Crawl 100%

Running in Place

Vertical Jump

# Lady Antebellum sue black singer Lady A over name change

Country music trio claim Anita White has 'demanded a \$10m payment' over the stage name she has used for 20 years

The US country group Lady A – known until recently as Lady Antebellum, before changing their name to shed slavery-era connotations – is suing the black female artist Lady A over use of the name.

When the trio first announced the name change in June out of respect for black Americans, it appeared that they were unaware that Anita White had been performing as Lady A for 20 years. "This is my life," White said at the time.

The two parties shared an image of a Zoom call and said they were "moving forward with positive solutions and common ground". The talks appear to have broken down. In a statement, the members of Lady A said that representatives for White "demanded a \$10m [£7.79m] payment".

The group is not seeking financial damages from White, nor that she change her stage name, but is instead suing her for recognition of a trademark it claims "we have held for many years" and to avoid further litigation.

Hillary Scott, Charles Kelley and Dave Haywood formed Lady Antebellum in 2006, and say that they faced no opposition, including from White, when they registered "Lady A" as a trademark in 2010.

"We are sad to share that our sincere hope to join together with Anita White



in unity and common purpose has ended," the group said in a statement. They added that with White they had "shared our stories, listened to each other, prayed and spent hours on the phone and text writing a song about this experience together.

They added: "We can do so much more together than in this dispute."

White had told Newsday she felt "the group's camp is trying to erase me". In June, she told Rolling Stone: "They're using the name because of a Black Lives Matter incident that, for them, is just a moment in time. If it mattered, it would have mattered to them before. It shouldn't have taken George Floyd to die for them to realize that their name had a slave reference to it."

She has not commented directly



about the lawsuit, however, on Wednesday she posted on Twitter: "No Weapon formed against me shall prosper."

Lady A concluded their statement with a commitment to "educating ourselves, our children and doing our part to fight for the racial justice so desperately needed in our country and around the world".

The group are one of several music industry entities to have changed their name following the recent Black Lives Matter protests. Country group the Dixie Chicks announced that they would henceforth be known as the Chicks. British indie label One Little Indian changed its name to One Little Indie, and electronic label Whities is now AD 93.

## Breakfast bender, James Franco: What happened on day 2 of Johnny Depp's libel case

Images unveiled in Johnny Depp's libel case in London on Wednesday show a table laid out with his morning meal of booze and drugs during one rage-fueled bender.

The snap — taken in 2013 by Depp's ex-wife Amber Heard inside her LA apartment — showed two glasses of whiskey and a crossbones-decorated pill box marked "property of JD," which Depp conceded "probably" contained cocaine, according to reports.

The "Pirates of the Caribbean" star, 57, definitely didn't forget his vitamin-C — there are four lines of what appears to be coke, near a credit card and straw. The images came on the second day of Depp's three-week court battle against The Sun newspaper for once calling him a "wife beater" — as a lawyer for the paper continued to paint the troubled actor as a violent addict who repeatedly assaulted Heard.

Questioned about the photo, Depp admitted his breakfast of champions that day included booze and blow after a spat with Heard.

"It had been quite a nasty argument," Depp said, according to The Sun. "I was definitely partaking of the cocaine and whiskey that morning."

The day the photo of the drug-littered table was taken, Heard's sister, Whitney Henriquez, got to the couple's home



to find it in complete disarray, said Sasha Wass, the attorney representing the tabloid.

"Whitney was confronted with a lot of mess — whiskey, lines of cocaine on the kitchen table — and the sight of Ms. Heard who was very red and had obviously been crying," Wass said, according to The Sun.

Depp responded: "I don't recall the level of destruction Whitney describes."

## Naya Rivera Is Missing After A Lake Trip In California

The Glee star's four-year-old son was found alone on a boat she rented at Lake Piru.

Glee actor Naya Rivera is missing after her four-year-old son was found alone on a boat, per the Los Angeles Times. Ventura County Sheriff's Office is currently conducting a search for Rivera, who rented the boat on Wednesday (July 8) afternoon at Lake Piru in California.

At the time of her disappearance, a search-and-rescue team was dispatched "as well as a sheriff's helicopter and search drone,"

the Ventura County Star reports. "[Rivera and her son] were seen going out on the lake together in the early afternoon, and approximately three hours after they left the dock another boater out on the lake discovered the boat drifting with [her son] on board asleep," Captain Eric Buschow, spokesman for the Sheriff's Office said, per Digital Spy. "Indications are that we believe she did go in the lake. At this point, it's still a search and that's what we know up to this point," he added. "This may well be a case of drowning. [Lake Piru] is

a big reservoir, it's deep, these kinds of things happen. We don't know all the circumstances, but investigators are working on that and getting as much information as possible."

Rivera's car was found in a parking lot near the lake with her purse still inside, Metro reports.

The search was postponed overnight and is set to continue "at first light" on Thursday morning. Rivera's son is currently with family, who "are going through a very traumatic time right now," Buschow said.

**Aries:** Love is not a battlefield, Aries. You can't enter the room with the intention of winning at all costs. Your need to prove a point could cause serious damage to your interpersonal relationships. What you want to do instead is hold space for a two-way conversation, keep an open mind, and listen to what the other person has to say. You may or may not be able to solve the crisis immediately, but you will have made progress in the right direction.

**Taurus:** "Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us." A Marianne Williamson quote to awaken you to the gifts of the soul you possess. Don't let anybody tell you your dreams are too big or too unrealistic. Don't fall prey to the limitations projected onto you by another. Taurus, you are a warrior of love and light, a force to be reckoned with. Today, you're being asked to look at your dreams through the eyes of wisdom and know that you are worthy of manifesting every bit of what you desire—starting now.

**Gemini:** Gemini, you're likely to find yourself at a crossroads today. The first pathway reeks of familiarity; the second promises to open the door to infinite possibilities. Let your adventurous side prevail! Following your instincts is the key to manifesting the wealth and abundance you deserve. The energy at the moment is inspiring you to go big or go home. So don't shy away from tooting your own

horn (tastefully, of course!) and letting the people who matter know you have something worthwhile to offer to the world.

**Cancer:**

It's easy to play tragedy queen. It's easy to blame the world and her aunt for everything that's going wrong. But you know what takes an insane amount of courage? Taking charge of the situation and bringing forth the energy of change. Cancer, think of yourself as an embodiment of courage. Take the next step with awareness and know that Spirit has got your back.

**Leo:**

Leo, you're likely to be faced with some rather tough decisions today. It will be easy for you to give up, to say that your side of the argument doesn't matter. But is maintaining order for the sake of maintaining order going to serve you in the long run? Only you have the answer to this one. The cards are urging you to turn to your soul squad. Ask them to play sounding board as you work through the pros and cons. This will help you arrive at a logical solution. PS: Spirit has got your back no matter what!

**Virgo:**

Are things falling apart or finding a way to come together? Let rock bottom be the solid foundation on which you build your life. Virgo, you are about to turn this breakdown into your biggest breakthrough. Remember to assess what your experiences are teaching you before you move on to the next stage. We all have our limitations, and that is okay. Setting realistic goals (and letting go of the lofty ones)

seems like the best way forward for now.

**Libra:**

Author Joshua Becker says, "Minimalism is intentionally living with only the things I really need—those items that support my purpose." Libra, you're in the mood to draw inspiration from his words and revisit Project Downsizing. This time of solitude has helped you realise the amount of excess baggage you have been carrying, be it physical or emotional. So let go of the frills, and do so with the energy of gratitude and love. Trust that this cleansing process will help you redirect your energy towards the things that make your life meaningful.

**Scorpio:**

Given that we are in the midst of pandemic, your side hustle could be in serious jeopardy. Ask yourself why you're trying so hard to hold on to something that is causing mental unrest. In moments of stillness, you will come face-to-face with the fears that are making you settle for less than what you deserve. Breathe out the anxiety. Breathe in the trust. Know that the Universe has got something better planned for you, even if it takes a bit for the plan to reveal itself.

**Sagittarius:**

It all starts with the self, Sagittarius. Your beliefs about yourself shape your relationships with the world. It's easy to blame others for deceitful behaviour. But if you're giving them the permission to take advantage of you, you're equally at fault here. The cards are urging you to be mindful of your time and energy. Your higher self is telling

you who deserves a space in your sacred circle and who does not.

**Capricorn:**

You've been defending them at the risk of your own mental and emotional well-being, Capricorn. But, what have you gained from this warfare? Has their behaviour transformed in any way? The cards are urging you to pick your battles mindfully. Let go of the need to make everybody else's problem your problem, no matter how close you are to them. Establishing and firming your boundaries will assist you in this process.

**Aquarius:**

Aquarius, you've been giving selflessly and supporting your soul crew in the best way you can. But what about your mental and emotional well-being? Do you not believe that you are deserving of the love you so freely give to others? The cards are urging you to examine the root of this negative thought pattern. The light of awareness will help bring about a shift and help you open up to the energy of receiving.

**Pisces:**

It's not that you haven't resisted the 'new normal', it's that your inherent watery nature helps you adapt and adjust. This week, you're establishing new rituals and routines as you take your self-care game to a whole new level. You understand the need for nurturing yourself physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, a sacred act which in turn helps you serve the world from a space of fullness, rather than lack.