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ON LIVE TV WHILE COVERING  
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# SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

RNI No. SIKENG/2016/69420

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## Astrologer Bejan Daruwalla passes away

**AHMEDABAD, MAY 29 (PTI):** Renowned astrologer Bejan Daruwalla died at a private hospital here on Friday evening, his family said.

Daruwalla, known for his newspaper columns on astrology, was 90.

Apollo Hospital here confirmed that Daruwalla died during treatment.

Speaking to PTI, his son Nastur Daruwalla denied the speculation on social media that his father had contracted coronavirus.

Daruwalla was suffering from only pneumonia, he said.

## No govt approval needed for COVID-19 tests:

### Gujarat HC

**AHMEDABAD, MAY 29 (PTI):** In a relief to private doctors and people, the Gujarat High Court on Friday said that there was no need to take approval of the government for carrying out coronavirus tests if doctors recommend it.

The Ahmedabad Medical Association (AMA) had approached the high court against a Gujarat government order, which prohibits private doctors and hospitals from conducting COVID-19 tests without getting approval from designated health officials.

In its plea, the AMA argued against this directive saying that doctors' opinion should be treated as final because any delay would adversely affect the health of both the patient and the doctor.

The division bench comprising Chief Justice Vikram Nath and Justice J B Pardiwala clubbed the plea with a suo motu PIL it has been hearing since March about various aspects related to coronavirus pandemic. The judges have been hearing the PIL and related matters from their residences through video-conferencing.

The AMA claims that it usually takes two to three days for the approval to come.

While hearing the plea, the bench asked the government why people were barred from getting tested when the ICMR had already recognised 12 laboratories to conduct COVID-19 tests in the state.

Replying on this, the state government informed the bench that doctors only need to send an email to the designated officer and permission is usually granted in two days.

# Online chess tourney receives enthusiastic participation despite short notice

**SAGAR CHHETRI**

**GANGTOK, 29 MAY:**

More than 160 players from the eight north-eastern states participated in the North East State Level Online Chess Tournament held here on Friday.

The tournament, officially inaugurated by Sports & Youth Affairs Minister, KN Lepcha, this evening, is being organized by the Sports & Youth Affairs Department in collaboration Sikkim Chess Association [SCA].

The tournament is being played on the Lichess App platform and players with the highest points after the game of around an hour and thirty minutes will be declared winners in their respective categories.

The results are expected to be declared after 24 hours on completion of the screening and verification process. The tournament carries a total prize money of Rs 50,000 for the top-20 winners and winners in 18 other categories.

The tournament was also joined by All India Chess Federation secretary, Bharat



Singh Chauhan, South Asian Chess Council deputy president, Dharmendra Kumar, presidents and general secretaries of different chess association of north-eastern states, grand masters, representatives of Sikkim Olympic Association and Sikkim

Chess Association and officials of Sports & Youth Affairs Department.

In his inaugural address, the Minister expressed best wishes to all participating players.

While thanking the players, he highlighted that win-

ning and losing were part of the game and that participation was more important.

Earlier, Secretary to Sports & Youth Affairs Department, Kuber Bhandari thanked the enthusiastic response received by the tournament despite the short notice.

On the occasion, SCA general secretary, Mahendra Dhakal read out the message sent by chess grandmaster Viswanathan Anand to the organizers. The short inaugural function ended with the presentation of vote of thanks by Sports & Youth Affairs De-

partment Deputy Director, Zigmi Yodzer Lepcha.

Speaking to media persons, the Minister said that the department took the initiative of organizing the tournament in association with Sikkim Chess Association to provide a break from the monotony of the lockdown.

He stated that the department came up with this initiative as social distancing was possible online and the experience of competing just as rich. He stated that the online chess tournament in the north-eastern level was also a start to bring people from the region together during the lockdown.

The Minister expressed happiness on the participation of players from all the north-eastern states and expressed that such enthusiastic participation was a great encouragement for the organizers to continue with such initiatives.

He also urged the people to strictly maintain social distancing and safety protocol during this pandemic to defeat COVID-19.

## India's coronavirus death toll overtakes that of China

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

India's coronavirus death toll has surpassed that of China after it reported a total of 4,706 fatalities, while it overtook Turkey to become the ninth worst-hit nation by the pandemic with 1,65,799 COVID-19 cases.

The country has registered 175 deaths and a record 7,466 fresh coronavirus infection cases in the last 24 hrs till Friday 8 am, according to the Union Health Ministry.

According to the John Hopkins University (JHU) data, India has now overtaken Turkey and is the ninth most affected nation in terms of COVID-19 cases after the US, Brazil, Russia, UK, Spain, Italy, France and Germany.

China has confirmed 84,106 cases and 4,638 deaths from COVID-19 so far, according to the JHU.

This is the first time that the single-day spike crossed the 7,000 mark, with the country reporting over 6,000 coronavirus infection cases per day since May 22.

The number of active COVID-19 cases in India stood at 89,987, while 71,105 people have recovered so far and one patient has migrated.

"Thus, around 42.89 per cent patients have recovered so far," a senior Health Ministry official said.

According to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) a total of 34,83,838 samples have been tested as on May 29 till 9 am and 1,21,702

samples have been tested in 24 hours. Of the total 4,706 fatalities, Maharashtra tops the tally with 1,982 deaths followed by Gujarat with 960 deaths, Madhya Pradesh with 321, Delhi with 316, West Bengal with 295, Uttar Pradesh with 197, Rajasthan with 180, Tamil Nadu with 145, Telangana with 67 and Andhra Pradesh with 59 deaths.

The death toll reached 47 in Karnataka and 40 in Punjab. Jammu and Kashmir has reported 27 fatalities due to the disease and Haryana has 19 deaths. Bihar has reported 15 deaths, while Odisha and Kerala have reported seven deaths each.

Himachal Pradesh has registered five COVID-19 fatalities, while Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, Chandigarh and Assam have recorded four deaths each so far.

Meghalaya has reported one COVID-19 fatality so far, according to the ministry data.

According to the ministry's website, more than 70 per cent of the deaths are due to comorbidities.

According to the health ministry data updated in the morning, the highest number of confirmed cases in the country are from Maharashtra at 59,546 followed by Tamil Nadu at 19,372, Delhi at 16,281, Gujarat at 15,562, Rajasthan at 8,067, Madhya Pradesh at 7,453 and Uttar Pradesh at 7,170.

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## South Korea postpones school reopening due to new outbreak



**SEOUL, 29 MAY [THE-GUARDIAN]:** South Korea has postponed the planned reopening of more than 800 schools as it battles a renewed outbreak of the coronavirus, with cases now at their highest level for almost two months.

The country's easing

of lockdown measures has gone into reverse, with museums, parks and art galleries closed again on Friday for two weeks. Kindergarten pupils, and some primary and secondary school students were due back from Wednesday, in the last phase of school re-

openings. According to the education ministry, however, 838 schools out of 20,902 nationwide remain shut. They are located in areas hard hit by the latest wave of infections, including the capital, Seoul, and the cities of Bucheon and Gumi.

South Korea has been praised for its deft handling of the Covid crisis. It seemed to have brought the virus under control only to record 79 new cases this week, the highest daily figure for two months. The government has responded by bringing back lockdown measures in the Seoul metropolitan area, home to half of the country's 51 million population.

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## 700 samples await testing at NBMC, efforts on to clear backlog

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 29 MAY:**

Secretary, Health Department, Dr Pemba T Bhutia, today said that results are awaited for around 700 samples sent from Sikkim to North Bengal Medical College, Siliguri. He added that efforts are meanwhile underway to build pressure on NBMC to clear the backlog.

The Sikkim samples awaiting clearance from NBMC were last sent on 23 May.

It may be recalled that NBMC had returned the around 90 samples sent by Sikkim on 27 May. These have been kept at STNM Hospital here and will be tested at the State's own viral lab once it gets operational.

Sikkim's own viral lab could become operational as early as Saturday, he informs.

Meanwhile, the primary focus moving forward, in light of the thousands of returning Sikkimese, will be on Trunat testing which is quicker and for which the State had recently increased its capacity.

Dr Bhutia also addressed demands being raised

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# 'Make noise and don't panic': India tries to ward off locust invasion

**AMRIT DHILLON**

**NEW DELHI, 29 MAY [THE-GUARDIAN]:** Residents of Delhi are bracing themselves for a possible invasion of locusts, which have been ravaging areas in the north of the country.

A change in wind direction could save the city, but Dr K L Gurjar, deputy director of the Locust Warning Organisation, has warned residents to be prepared to "make a lot of loud noise so that instead of settling, they keep flying and fly past the city. And don't panic".

Parts of India are experiencing the worst locust invasion the country has seen for 25 years. Skies above large parts of north India have darkened during the

day due to millions of locusts. Rajasthan is the worst affected state, but Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Punjab have also experienced damaging swarms.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization's locust watch website said the movement of the locusts has been affected by the strong westerly winds from Cyclone Amphan, which hit the coast of India earlier this month.

About 50,000 hectares have been affected by the insects so far. While produce in some parts of the country had already been harvested, in other areas farmers have seen the insects devour their crops. Unless the locusts are controlled,

they fear summer crops could also be destroyed.

Tractors have been spraying pesticides and fire engines have been used to target locusts in trees. Honking horns and sounding police car sirens other methods deployed to try to ward the locusts off. In the fields, farmers have been playing loud music and banging anything they can find to stop the insects ravaging their crops.

"We are hoping to contain it in the next 10 days," said an official in Barmer, in Rajasthan. "Our officials are out spraying pesticide early in the morning. When the sun comes out and [the locusts] get warm is when they start flying. This year, they

are younger, immature adults who fly faster and cover distances of up to 150km per day."

On Monday, swarms were spotted in the city of Jaipur in Rajasthan.

Gurjar hopes the change in wind direction will spare Delhi.

Neighbouring Pakistan declared a nationwide emergency in February after swarms devastated parts of the country.

India's agriculture ministry is hoping to control the invasion before monsoon season hits north India at the end of June, when locusts mature and breed. If the infestation is not controlled, it may threaten summer crops such as rice, maize and sorghum.



# India's first 'green' village adapts to life without tourists

**ANNE PINTO-RODRIGUES**  
**NEW DELHI, 29 MAY [THE-GUARDIAN]:** As he looks to the future, Kezhaseriya Meyase, a 37-year-old resident of Khonoma, expresses confidence in the youth of the village. "They are well aware of the importance of conserving our forests and wildlife," he says.

For the first time since the creation of the Khonoma Nature Conservation and Tragopan Sanctuary (KNCTS) in 1998, tourism in Khonoma has come to a halt. In 2019, the remote 700-year-old village in the Indian state of Nagaland, near the Indo-Myanmar border, received more than 4,000 visitors. Nearly a fifth of the tourists were from overseas, drawn to Khonoma's rich biodiversity and conservation success (in 2005, it was named India's first "green village").

The 20 sq km (7.7 sq mile) sanctuary, consisting of dense subtropical and temperate broadleaf forests, is the first formally conserved community sanctuary in India. It is home to several vulnerable mammal species, including the clouded leopard, Asiatic black bear and hoolock gibbon; and villagers have recorded more than 300 avian species. Bird-Life International recognises the sanctuary as one of the 555 Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in India, and the Blyth's tragopan, a large pheasant which is the state bird of Nagaland, thrives in the higher reaches of KNCTS.

Khonoma, like the rest of the world, is coping with the economic fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic and the lockdown in India, which began on

25 March. Visitors stayed away during the peak birding season of March and April.

Meyase, chairman of KNCTS, says: "Yes, people from the village providing tourism-related services have lost cash income due to the lockdown. But they are still able to sustain themselves by farming and rearing livestock."

He remains optimistic. "Soon after the lockdown is lifted, people from neighbouring villages and from within the state will start visiting."

Dismissing concerns about hunting in the sanctuary during the lockdown, Meyase adds: "As long as there is no free movement of people, the sanctuary is safe."

"Once the lockdown is lifted, the Khonoma Youth Organisation, which is responsible for monitoring the sanctuary, will continue their surveillance."

A steep fine of 20,000 rupees (£210) for any person caught hunting in KNCTS, as well as Khonoma's long history as a village of fierce warriors, serve as deterrents to any potential poachers, he adds.

Pulling together Khonoma's residents belong to the Angami people, who have lived off the forest for centuries, with hunting being a sacred cultural practice. In the early 1990s, following the mass slaughter of Blyth's tragopans by villagers over the Christmas period, a few of Khonoma's conservation-minded elders began campaigning for a protected area. They also recognised that conserving the forest, which is a rainwater catchment area,

would secure water for the village and for the rice terraces in the valley below.

Their sustained efforts bore fruit when the Khonoma village council passed a resolution for the creation of KNCTS in 1998. The hunting and logging ban was soon extended beyond the sanctuary, to include the entire village.

To ensure that the men wouldn't return to hunting, they were recruited as forest wardens for three years and paid a salary via a grant from the Gerald Durrell Memorial Fund. Women, who had traditionally foraged in the sanctuary for fruit and vegetables to sell, were banned from doing so.

Vitsokhono Pier, 35, who owns a plant nursery in Khonoma, says: "Women turned their attention to other income-generating activities like running a homestay or maintaining a nursery. Poinsettias are in big demand before Christmas."

The initial trickle of tourists to Khonoma led to the opening of the first homestay – homes offering accommodation to paying guests – in 2006. There are 12 homestays in the village today and before the lockdown 20 people were employed as guides. Several more made handicrafts while others provided taxi services. The cash earned from tourism enables these families to buy groceries, pay for their children to go to school and meet other household expenses.

According to Tsilie Sakhrie, 77, one of the village elders instrumental in the formation of KNCTS, about 100 (out of 600) families in the village

have benefited from the tourist trade.

But despite the lockdown and the loss of income from tourism, the village continues to have a high level of food security. Khonoma is known for its sustainable agriculture, and takes great pride in the fact that it has been self-sufficient since ancient times. Paddy terraces are positioned at the base of surrounding hills and the fields are irrigated by nutrient-rich rainwater that flows down the slopes. More than 20 rice varieties are grown in the village.

"In addition to rice, we also grow a variety of grains like millet, corn and Job's tears," says Kevikelie Pier, 52, a teacher at the local government school. "And our livestock can last us for at least a year."

Produce such as squash, pumpkin, carrot, cabbage, potato, mustard, ginger, garlic and king chilli are also grown in the village, in home gardens and rotating, shifting cultivation plots. Vegetables are also bartered with neighbours.

Following the creation of KNCTS, several villages in the state began to emulate Khonoma's conservation efforts. Village elder Khriekhoto Mor, 64, says: "Today, there are over 700 community-conserved areas (CCAs) in Nagaland, though only a handful are as actively conserved as Khonoma."

In November 2014, the Nagaland Community Conserved Areas Forum (NCCAF) was formed with 22 members to facilitate the exchange of ideas and strengthen the conservation movement in the state.

## Minister inaugurates Flu clinic at Namthang

**NAMCHI, 29 MAY (IPR):** Minister Transport Department cum Area MLA, Sanjeet Kharel inaugurated a separate 'Flu Clinic' at Namthang Primary Health Centre (PHC) today. Present during the occasion was Medical Office In-charge, Dr Mingyur Bhu-tia, BDO (Namthang), Ram Tamang, CDPO, Lakshman Tamang, Medical staff of the PHC and local gentry.

This kind of flu clinic is one of it's kind which has been established in a makeshift structure at the vicinity of Namthang PHC. This clinic will cater to people who are suffering

from fever and other flue like symptoms. Patients who have completed 21 days of mandatory quarantine period but still have flu like indication can visit the clinic for check-up. The medical practitioners will do a thermal scan and if necessary will refer the patient to hospitals. This clinic will aid the public of the locality in the future as well.

The main guidelines of COVID-19 will be strictly followed at this clinic and if anyone is suspected of COVID-19 symptoms then the patient will directly be transported to STNM, Gangtok.

## 700 samples await ...

from certain quarters that this Trunat testing be shifted to the border check-posts.

He highlighted that equipment and technicians for this were finite and that it was advisable to have them at a centralised location like STNM Hospital which had the required infrastructure and back-up required to keep such testing safe.

Returning Sikkimese were already travelling together at least from Siliguri onwards, so testing at the border served only limited purpose.

## India's coronavirus...

The number of COVID-19 cases has gone up to 4,536 in West Bengal, 3,296 in Bihar and 3,251 in Andhra Pradesh.

It has risen to 2,533 in Karnataka, 2,256 in Telangana, 2,158 in Punjab, 2,036 in Jammu and Kashmir and 1,660 in Odisha.

Haryana has reported 1,504 coronavirus infection cases so far, while Kerala has 1,088 cases. A total of 856 people have been infected with the virus in Assam and 469 in Jharkhand.

Uttarakhand has registered 500 cases, Chhattisgarh has 399, Chandigarh has reported 288 cases, Himachal Pradesh has 276, Tripura has 242, Ladakh has 73 and Goa has 69 cases so far.

Manipur has reported 55 COVID-19 cases, Puducherry has 51 instances of infection while Andaman and Nicobar Islands has registered 33 infections.

Meghalaya has registered 21 cases. Nagaland has reported 18 infections, Arunachal Pradesh reported three cases, Dadar and Nagar Haveli has two cases, while Mizoram and Sikkim have reported a case each till now.

"4,673 cases are being reassigned to states," the ministry said on its website, adding, "Our figures are being reconciled with the ICMR."

State-wise distribution is subject to further verification and reconciliation, it said.

## DC South and team visits JNV quarantine centre



**NAMCHI, 29 MAY (IPR):** A team led by DC (South), Ragul K, ADC (South), Satyan Pradhan and SDM (HQ), Chiran Rizal visited Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV) which is currently functioning as one of the quarantine centres at Ravangla.

The officials briefed the inmates about the

guidelines of COVID-19 and elucidated about the various functions of the Centre. They added that grievances put forward by the people has been taken into account and that the south district administration is looking into it and if needed will try to bring about constructive changes in the

Centre as requested by the inmates.

The South District administration is doing it's best in providing adequate facilities at the centre. Moreover, mandatory medical checking and testing is being undertaken by the medical practitioners posted at the Centre.

## 3 cops test COVID-19 positive in Gautam Buddh Nagar

Noida (UP), May 29 (PTI): Three Uttar Pradesh police personnel posted in Gautam Buddh Nagar have tested positive for coronavirus, officials said on Friday.

All three are police constables and about 30 people who came in their contact have been quarantined, the officials said.

"One of them was posted at the office of the Deputy Commissioner of Police (Traffic), while the other two were attached with the Phase III and Sector 49 police stations," a police spokesperson said. "About 30 people who came in contact with the two constables attached with the police stations have been quarantined and their samples taken for COVID-19 testing," the spokesperson added.

## Amit Shah briefs PM on CMs views on lockdown

New Delhi, May 29 (PTI): Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and informed him about the views of all chief ministers on the extension of the ongoing nationwide lockdown beyond May 31, officials said.

During the meeting, Shah briefed Modi about the suggestions and the feedback he received from the chief ministers during his telephonic conversations on Thursday, a government official said.

The nationwide curbs were first announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 24 for 21 days in a bid to contain the spread of novel coronavirus. It was first extended till May 3 and then again till May 17. The lockdown was fur-

ther extended till May 31. The home minister's telephonic conversations with the chief ministers came just three days before the end of the fourth phase of the lockdown.

During his talks with the chief ministers, Shah sought to know the areas of concern of the states and the sectors they want to open up further from June 1, the official said.

Interestingly, till now, it was Modi who had interacted with all chief ministers through video conference before extension of each phase of the coronavirus-induced lockdown and sought their views.

This was for the first time that the home minister spoke to the chief ministers individually before the end of another phase of the lockdown.

Shah was present in all the conferences of chief ministers along with the prime minister.

It is understood that majority of the chief ministers wanted the lockdown to continue in some form but also favoured opening up of the economic activities and gradual return of the normal life, another official said.

The central government is expected to announce its decision on the lockdown within the next two days.

The number of COVID-19 cases in India has climbed to 1,65,799 on Friday, making it the world's ninth worst-hit country by the coronavirus pandemic.

The Health Ministry said the death toll due to COVID-19 rose to 4,706 in the country.

While extending the fourth phase of the lockdown till May 31, the central government had announced continuation of prohibition on opening of schools, colleges and malls but allowed opening of shops and markets.

It said hotels, restaurants, cinema halls, malls, swimming pools, gyms will remain shut even as all social, political, religious functions, and places of worship will remain closed till May 31.

The government, however, allowed limited operations of train and domestic flights. The Indian Railways is also running special trains since May 1 for transportation of migrant workers from different parts of the country to their native states.

## South Korea..

Most of these cases have been linked to a distribution centre in Bucheon. The warehouse is run by the country's biggest e-commerce firm Coupang. Health officials traced at least 82 infections to the facility, with the virus found on workers' shoes and clothes. They are now testing all employees and visitors.

In the Philippines, meanwhile, plans were unveiled on Friday to ease strict lockdown measures despite a record spike in new cases. The country reported 539 infections on Thursday, bringing its total to 15,588, with 921 deaths.

From Monday the capital, Manila, will allow gatherings of up to 10 people and free movement in and out of the city as long as travellers wear masks and keep their distance. Workplaces, shops and some public transport will reopen. Manila is home to 12 million people and is the centre of the nation's outbreak and efforts to battle the contagion.

"For me, this does not look bad," President Rodrigo Duterte said in a televised address. He described the country's mortality rate as low and called for a move to the "new normal". Health minister, Francisco Duque, said 90% of the country's Covid-19 cases were "mild".

Manila's lockdown will this weekend surpass the 76-day quarantine of Wuhan, the city in China where the first outbreak of the coronavirus was detected. Manila's restrictions have hit the livelihoods of millions of workers and there is pressure to ease damage to an economy that is facing its deepest contraction in 34 years.

Globally, deaths stand at nearly 360,000, with 5.8 million cases. Asia is struggling to cement early success in controlling outbreaks of coronavirus.

In India, Mumbai's hospitals are on the verge of collapse, with footage emerging of patients sharing beds and oxygen tanks. "The volume and density of our population in Mumbai makes it very difficult to see how we will get out of the other side of this peak," said Manish Shetty, a doctor on the Covid-19 ward in Guru Nanak hospital in Mumbai. "The magnitude of the cases is overwhelming us all."

Weeks earlier, footage emerged of patients being treated next to dead bodies, lying unclaimed by families fearful of infection.

Meanwhile in Sri Lanka, some lockdown rules will be rolled out again from Sunday after more than 250 returnees from Kuwait were found to be infected with coronavirus.

In Japan, a cluster response team has been sent to the south-western city of Kitakyushu, which has seen a sudden rise in cases after three weeks with no new infections. The city has clocked up 43 cases this week, bringing its total to 119. How more than a dozen of the latest infections came about remains unclear.

The mayor, Kenji Kitahashi, warned of a second virus wave and asked residents to refrain from non-essential outings. "If we leave this as it is, we will definitely be hit by a large second wave," he said.

Several Middle Eastern countries eased restrictions on Friday. In Saudi Arabia a three-day transition to relative normality got under way, with malls and waterfronts open and the Kingdom readying to allow up to 90,000 mosques to receive worshippers on Sunday for the first time in nearly two months.

In the United Arab Emirates, Dubai's beaches and parks reopened. The city's museums are expected to reopen their doors on Monday, as officials try to position the country as 'open for business' after the most crippling economic slowdown in the country's history.

Both the Emirates and Saudi Arabia have been among the regional states most affected by Covid-19, with the virus taking an unprecedented toll on state revenues and forcing seismic shake-ups in labour markets and other key sectors.

Balancing dwindling revenues and consumer confidence against a public health emergency has been particularly challenging for the UAE, one of the globe's main aviation hubs and an emerging tourist destination, the viability of which depends heavily on a pre-Covid interconnected world resuming on a similar scale.

Both countries have enforced social distancing and have imposed curfews throughout the crisis. Numbers have increased steadily throughout the pandemic, with more than 32,500 cases registered in the UAE and more than 80,000 in Saudi Arabia. Migrant workforces account for large numbers of cases in each state. The ratio of deaths to contractions in each state is lower than the global average, at less than one per cent.

~ SummitTIMES ~  
**CLASSIFIEDS**

### 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



## HC asks Delhi govt to file detailed reply on pleas challenging levy of 70% 'special corona fees'

**NEW DELHI, MAY 29 (PTI):** The Delhi High Court Friday asked the Delhi government to file a detailed affidavit on a batch of pleas challenging the decision to levy 70 per cent 'special corona fees' on the MRP of liquor of all brands in the national capital.

The Delhi government had earlier filed its response to the petitions, saying that trade or consumption of liquor is not a fundamental right of a citizen and the State has the authority to regulate its sale and levying 70 per cent 'special corona fees' on MRP of all alcohol brands is a price for grant of such privilege to public.

A bench of Chief Justice D N Patel and Justice Sangita Dhingra Seghal, conducting the hearing through video conferencing, heard part arguments and asked the government to file another detailed affidavit and listed the matter for further hearing on June 19.

The Delhi government, in its earlier affidavit, has opposed the petitions which have challenged a May 4 notification levying a 'special corona fees' on liquor in the national capital and said there is an element of privilege

via a viz sale/ dealing in liquor and the State is free to regulate it under the excise law.

A citizen, therefore, has no fundamental right to do trade or business in liquor or for that matter also to consume liquor. On the other hand, the State has the authority and jurisdiction to regulate (including prohibit totally or partially) such trade and commerce as well as to regulate the sale, purchase and consumption of liquor, it said.

Besides Delhi, 10 other states, Assam, Meghalaya, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal have imposed similar fees, the government argued.

The affidavit said owing to the clamp down on all economic activities due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) lockdown, the revenue of Delhi government (which primarily comes from VAT/GST collection, state excise and stamp duty) has shrunk by almost 90 per cent in April 2020 and the total collections dwindled to a mere Rs 300 crore as opposed to approximately Rs 4,000 crore in the corresponding month in 2019. Between

May 4 to 25, the total sale of operational liquor vends has been Rs 187 crore which is way too less as compared to the sale figures of May 2019 as the number of shops operational last year were around 800 and as of now, only 40 per cent of them are operational due to various restrictions imposed by the government in view of the coronavirus outbreak, it said.

The government has said the total excise revenue, including the corona fee, collected by the state during May 4 to 25 has been to the tune of Rs 227.44 crore which includes Rs 127 crore of special corona fee, against the total revenue collection of Rs 425.24 crore in May last year.

The Delhi Excise Act, 2009 and the Rules framed thereunder also empowers the state to accord the privilege of a peculiar nature and also to regulate/ supervise the sale, purchase and consumption of liquor in the national capital territory of Delhi during the currency of COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in view of the lockdown measures/ directives announced by the Central government/ Delhi

government and its Excise Department, it said. A batch of petitions were filed, including by advocate Lalit Valecha and Praveen Gulati, challenging levy of 'special corona fees'.

Valecha contended in his petition that the 'special corona fees' is in excess of what has been authorised by law and accordingly it is being collected arbitrarily.

In his petition, he said that the order of levying fee was an afterthought and an after effect of the overcrowding and violation of social distancing norms outside liquor shops.

The unprecedented levy of 'special corona fee' by the Delhi government resulting in overall increase in MRP (maximum retail price) of the liquor by 70 per cent was "arbitrary, uncalled for and bad in law", he alleged.

Gulati's plea has sought quashing of the May 4 notification claiming that it is highly arbitrary, irrational and, therefore, violates Article 14 (equality before law) of the Constitution. He has also sought directions to the government to refund the money collected under the notification.

## Contribution towards CM's Relief Fund



**GANGTOK, 29 MAY [IPR]:** Sujendra Rai and Pramod Chettri called on the Secretary to the Chief Minister, SD Dhakal in his office at Tashiling Secretariat this afternoon and handed over the cheque,

a contribution from the Nari Shakti of Wok Omchu GPU, Mandir Committee and the different sections of the people of Poklok Kamrang constituency for the Chief Minister's Relief Fund to help Government's ef-

fort to fight the COVID-19, a global pandemic.

The Secretary, Shri Dhakal on behalf of the Government thanked the people of Poklok Kamrang constituency for their kind gesture and generous contribution.

## There was no recent Modi-Trump contact: Govt sources



**NEW DELHI, MAY 29 (PTI):** There has been no recent contact between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump, government sources said on Friday.

The clarification came after Trump said in Washington that he spoke to Modi over In-

dia's ongoing border row with China in Eastern Ladakh.

On Tuesday, Trump offered to mediate between India and China to resolve the border dispute.

"The last conversation between Modi and Trump was on April 4 on

the subject of hydroxy-chloroquine," a source said.

On Thursday, the Ministry of External Affairs made it clear that India is directly in touch with the Chinese side through established mechanisms and diplomatic contacts to resolve the row.

## Mini blood donation camp at old STNM



**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 29 MAY:**

Mini blood donation camp was organized by Voluntary Blood Donors Association of Sikkim at old STNM complex emergency ward today under the leadership

of STNM central blood bank, Chief Consultant, Dr Chintamani Sharma, VBDAS East District Coordinator, Gaurav Raj.

Total of 14 donors from Gangtok and adjoining areas donated blood in the camp.

## SDM provides relief materials at Tingda



**WANGCHUK BHUTIA**

**MANGAN, 29 MAY:**

Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Kabi, Prem Gurung along with a relief team provided relief materials and rescue kits at Tingda. Mr Gurung has been inspecting landslide affected areas around Kabi-Tingda.

The Relief Camp at

Community Recreation Centre, Lingchom was set up promptly and all necessary items were procured locally through vendors. All necessary items including basic clothing and other essential commodities were provided to the displaced families along with other requirements for the camp.

## New Zealand beaches turn red as lobsters dig in to the death

**ELEANOR AINGE ROY**

**DUNEDIN, 29 MAY [THE GUARDIAN]:** The sandy beaches of Otago in the deep south of New Zealand have turned blood red after millions of squat lobster died in a series of mass strandings.

Locals in the small coastal communities of Broad Bay and Edwards Bay, who have seen whole swaths of coastline saturated in colour, reported the phenomenon to the national broadcaster this week.

Dr John Zeldis, a marine ecologist at the National Centre for Water and Atmospheric Science, said the red tinge was produced by the corpses of munida gregaria. The crustaceans cling to the sand at high tide – an instinctive "settling" behaviour for breeding – and then perish when the low tide re-

treats. Over the decades Zeldis has seen patches of dead squat lobster 20-30cm thick, landing on Otago beaches any time from December through to June, and extending as far south as the Catlins and as far north as Banks Peninsula.

This year local people have reported numerous beaches turning red, meaning that adult squat lobster are refusing to give up their breeding grounds on the seafloor.

This leaves millions of teenage squat lobster with nowhere to breed. The strong instinct to settle and "cling" to surfaces leads to their demise.

"The settling behaviour is critical to their life cycle," said Zeldis, who studied the Dunedin creatures for six years, saying he was drawn to their unusual habits. "If

they try to settle into the niche of adults that aren't ready to move on, there's a whole lot of aggression that goes on," he said.

"Eventually they settle on to the bottom of the sea 30-40m deep, and they live there for the next couple of years. That's where they spawn and make the next generation so that behaviour of wanting to settle is innate."

Although people are sometimes alarmed by the vivid red of the dying animals, Zeldis said the dead squat lobster represented a "tiny" fraction of the overall population, which remained healthy despite a planet – and ocean – in flux.

"They have so many interesting and fascinating aspects of their lives ... appearing on the beaches is just the most visible part the public see."

## Delhi's COVID death toll jumps to 82 in last 24 hours



**NEW DELHI, MAY 29 (PTI):** Delhi's COVID-19 death tally has jumped by 82 in the last 24 hours, due to inclusion of 69 deaths that were reported late, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said on Friday.

He said 13 deaths occurred on Friday while the remaining 69 took place in the last 34 days and were reported late.

The total deaths due to COVID-19 in Delhi has mounted to 398 so far, Health Minister Satyendra Jain said.

Sisodia said there was no need to panic since Delhi's rate of recovery from the virus infection was around 50 per cent.

He also said that people need not visit hospitals unless there are symptoms of virus

infection, and added 80-90 per cent recovery was registered in cases where patients were home quarantined.

Jain said out of 69 late reported deaths, 52 took place at Safdarjung Hospital.

Fresh 1,106 coronavirus cases have been reported, taking total tally in Delhi to over 17,000, he said.



What is Novel Coronavirus - nCoV?

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

### Symptoms of nCoV

- Fever
- Difficulty in breathing
- Dry Cough
- Severe acute respiratory syndrome
- Pneumonia - like symptoms

### Treatment

- Treatment is symptomatic and supportive, based on the patient's clinical condition.
- No vaccinations available as of now.
- Visit Doctor in case symptoms detected

### Precautions to Prevent nCoV

- Wash your hands often with soap.
- Use an alcohol based hand sanitizer
- Observe good personal hygiene.
- Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
- Avoid contact with people with possible symptoms.
- Avoid contact with animals and consumption of undercooked meats.
- Avoid travel to nCoV affected places.
- Wear a mask if you have respiratory syndrome, and cover your mouth while coughing or sneezing.



If you seek help, you may call :  
-Toll free no. 104  
District surveillance Officer  
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WEST : 9593297809  
NORTH : 9641957468  
SOUTH : 7407691463  
New STNM  
AMS : 9434711402

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE  
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

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## Repairs Alone Will Not Do

*For the long run, roads here need customized solutions*

The pre-monsoons, even though the drizzles have been sustained, has been relatively weak thus far. Its lashings have been varying in intensity over various parts of Sikkim and the region. And yet, even this subdued season of downpours, has been strong enough to convert culverts into raging rapids and jhoras into torrents bringing down boulders, washing away alignments, sweeping aside retaining walls, pouring down at least one landslide of enormous volume and catching the concerned agencies wrong-footed yet again.

The monsoon remains moody, but its impact on daily life in Sikkim remains consistent in its ability to impose disruptions. The fragility of Sikkim's mountains contribute to the instability of the roads and the precariousness of the houses here, but the most substantial role in the annual ritual of blocked drains and roads is played by the continuing prioritizing of repairs over solutions and the triumph of ignorance over science. Deploying work gangs to clear drains, bull-dozers to clear away debris and investing tonnes of stones and crores of rupees in erecting retaining walls are at best, short-term measures providing immediate relief. Unfortunately, these have been the only engineering skills applied to the annual assault of slush and debris that roads here come under. Much more refined science should have been applied to fortify Sikkim's roads by now. The level of preparedness should have evolved into a multidisciplinary exercise by now. The problem is obviously not only in the intensity of the monsoons or the vehicular stress on the roads. Worsening the situation is the degradation of the catchment areas, the weakening of the jhoras [through quarrying and encroachments, for example], the obvious seismic activity [which, it appears, no one bothers to keep track of or share information about anymore], and, of course, the still only sketchily understood reasons behind load limits for different roads.

Those responsible for the care of roads have to realize that roads can be tended properly only if all these aspects are factored in and the reasons behind at least the traditional trouble-spots understood better. Solutions will have to then be devised through interventions from all fields and disciplines and not just by throwing more stones and more crores into repairs. Even the technology deployed for repairs appears to be as archaic, if not even older, than the vintage of the roads themselves.

The alternate highway supposedly sanctioned for Sikkim will be helpful, but remains still an assurance, and one must still bear in mind that even this alternative will snake through the same hills, and will be managed by the same agencies, ergo, will be beset by the same problems and limitations. Repairs are necessary, but for the long run, customized solutions are required.

### WRITE US:

Readers are invited to comment on, criticise, run down, even appreciate if they like something in this paper. Letters carrying abusive/ indecorous language and personal attacks, except when against people responsible in this newspaper (who are fair game), will have to be ignored. Letters which carry forward a conversation or initiate a dialogue will command immediate attention and receive prominence. Mail us at: [news@summittimes.com](mailto:news@summittimes.com)

# Donald Trump's attacks on social media threaten the free speech rights of all Americans

ELIZA BECHTOLD  
*theconversation.com*

Given that US president Donald Trump appears to use Twitter almost instinctively, his recent attacks on the platform may seem counterintuitive.

But his feud with Twitter is another example of the ways in which the president has routinely distorted the principles of the First Amendment in order to undermine the very freedoms he claims to be championing – as well as American democracy more broadly.

On May 26, Trump tweeted that – contrary to all available evidence – mail-in voting is plagued by rampant voter fraud. Twitter placed a factcheck label on the tweet linking to information demonstrating the falsity of Trump's claims.

In response, Trump attacked Twitter, accusing it of stifling “free speech” and threatened to take measures to strongly regulate social media platforms or to potentially close them down entirely.

On May 28, Trump signed an executive order purportedly directed at preventing online censorship, which proposes sweeping changes to protections afforded to social media platforms under US law.

These abuses must be recognised and challenged. Trump is making a concerted effort to disseminate false information regarding the integrity of America's electoral process with the goal of eroding the public's confidence in election results and making it more difficult for Americans to vote in the 2020 election. It is a direct attack on American democracy.

The First Amendment's protections, commonly referred to as “free speech” rights, do not apply to restrictions on speech imposed by non-government actors. As a result, the president cannot legitimately claim that social media platforms are violating his – or anyone else's – free speech rights. Put simply, there is no First Amendment right to use social media.

Moreover, the Supreme Court expressly recognises that corporations and other private entities have their own free speech rights, and that the First Amendment prohibits the government from interfering in the editorial judgements of private

speakers – including business entities – on issues of public concern. In other words, the government may not tell a private speaker what to include or not include in speech about such issues.

So when the president endeavours to interfere with the content of social media platforms via government regulation, he is endangering free speech, not protecting it.

### CHANGING THE RULES

The main target of the order is the Communications Decency Act (CDA), which established a comprehensive immunity for digital intermediaries for civil liability resulting from the content of third-party users. This means, for example, that Twitter may not be held liable for defamatory comments made on its platform by third parties.

If the CDA was repealed by Congress, this would mean that intermediaries such as social media sites would be treated as traditional publishers like newspapers, magazines and television stations. All of these entities can be held liable for publishing or distributing obscene or defamatory material written or prepared by others and all are free to publish criticism of the president and factcheck his claims.

There is no obligation under the First Amendment for publishers to be neutral on matters of public concern. Indeed, this would be antithetical to US free speech principles. Additionally, the Supreme Court has made it clear that the government has no right to interfere with the “open marketplace” of ideas and no interest in “equalizing” the relative ability of individuals and groups to influence the outcome of elections.

The American Civil Liberties Union warns that the order represents a direct threat to platforms that they will be punished if they engage in speech that displeases the president, and correctly points out that the president “has it backwards: the First Amendment protects us from the government, not the government from us”.

The director of the Program on Platform Regulation at Stanford's Cyber Policy Center, Daphne Keller, describes the order as “95% political theatre – rhetoric without legal foundation, and with-

out legal impact”. The order should be called out for what it is – a blatant attempt by the president to bully and intimidate platforms in an effort to improperly manipulate public discourse.

It appears that, for the moment, Twitter is refusing to be bullied by the president. On May 29, Twitter hid one of Trump's tweets regarding unrest in Minneapolis following the killing of George Floyd. In line with the company's rules, administrators attached a warning that the tweet “glorifies violence”.

Anyone wishing to view the tweet can do so, but only after clicking through the warning.

### FREE SPEECH? OR AUTHORITARIAN RULE

Trump's attacks on social media platforms and the press reveal his true intention – which is not to protect the free speech rights of Americans. Instead his strategy appears to be aimed at stifling any and all expression that endeavours to hold him and his administration to account. His use of social media to attack the press as “evil” and the “enemy of the people” – and to malign anyone who criticises him – are blatant attempts to insulate himself from any form of accountability.

Such behaviour is anti-democratic and undermines fundamental First Amendment principles, including that the press serves as an important restraint on government and that public discourse must remain free and open to prevent the government from controlling the search for “political truth”.

Trump wants free rein to lie to the American people regarding vital matters of public concern without any restraints whatsoever, including factchecking. In so doing, he is effectively behaving like an authoritarian, attempting to control and manipulate public discourse without criticism or accountability.

The president's efforts to undermine free speech and to misinform the American public represent a serious threat to American democracy that should not be lost in the cacophony of contemporary political discourse in the US. While alarm bells are ringing, we should all be concerned that with so much noise, not enough people will hear them.

*[the writer is PhD Candidate in Law, Durham University]*



# Is it safe for children to return to school?

STÉPHANE PAULUS & ELSE BIJKER  
*theconversation.com*

In England, the phased reopening of schools is due to begin on June 1. But a recent poll of parents has revealed that around half are unconvinced that their children are safe to return.

Fortunately, there is an increasing body of evidence that we can consider. In light of the widespread concern, we've reviewed the risks posed to children by COVID-19 and answered the most pressing questions.

### ARE CHILDREN LESS LIKELY TO CATCH CORONAVIRUS?

To answer this, we can look at two important sources. The first is data from widespread community testing. In Iceland, 6% of the population was screened early on in the pandemic (22,279 people). In the targeted testing group (which tested people either with symptoms, from high-risk areas or who had come into contact with someone with COVID-19), 6.7% of children under 10 tested positive, compared with 13.7% of people aged 10 or over. In the random population screening group, all under-10s tested negative, while 0.8% of persons 10 years or older tested positive.

And, in the municipality of Vo' in northern Italy, 86% of the population (2,812 people) were tested after a resident died early on in the epidemic. All 217 children aged 10 or under tested negative. Out of the 250 young people aged 11-20 who were screened, 1.2% were positive, compared with 3% for those 21 years and older.

The second useful source is detailed track-and-trace data linked to demographic information. A Chinese study analysed whether 105 COVID-19 patients transmitted the virus to their 392 household contacts. It revealed the risk of a child acquiring the virus from a positive household

member was only 4%, compared with 17.1% for adults. Similarly, contact tracing data from Hunan province in February showed that 6.2% of children aged 0-14 who had been in contact with a COVID-19 patient caught the virus, compared with 10.4% of older people.

Thus, accumulating evidence from various places indicates that children are significantly less susceptible to infection than adults.

### DO CHILDREN FALL ILL IF INFECTED?

Young infants are generally more susceptible to picking up infections and falling ill. But for COVID-19 the evidence suggests it's the other way around. Public Health England data up to May 22 showed that only 1.6% of all COVID-19 cases had been in children (aged 0-19), despite them making up 23.4% of the population.

Of course, this data is influenced by many factors, including testing strategy. For example, very young children may not be tested in the community, while testing in hospitals is likely to include more seriously ill patients, who tend to be adults. But reports from other countries consistently show low numbers of cases among children, with milder disease compared to adults.

Data from China and the USA and a review of studies published up to May 1 show that the illness in children is either asymptomatic, mild or moderate in 88-97% of cases. Only about 0.6-2% of children are admitted to intensive care and 0-0.18% of cases are associated with a fatal outcome.

This compares with a case fatality rate of 3.5-3.6% for those in their 60s, 8.0-12.8% for those in their 70s and 14.8-20.2% for those 80 or over, as reported in Chinese and Italian cohorts. Why children are less affected remains unclear, although several hy-

potheses have been raised.

A novel syndrome in children (called the paediatric inflammatory multisystem syndrome temporally associated with SARS-CoV-2 infection, or PIMS-TS) has gained increasing attention recently. This condition remains rare, with about 230 suspected cases across Europe and two fatalities reported. A British Paediatric Surveillance Unit study is underway to gain further insight into the condition.

### DO CHILDREN TRANSMIT CORONAVIRUS TO OTHERS?

It is difficult to formally quantify the extent to which children contribute to transmission of the coronavirus. There is, however, increasing circumstantial evidence suggesting that their contribution is limited and that children are far from being the “super-spreaders” that they can be with seasonal flu.

An analysis of 31 household transmission clusters found that in only three was the index case a child. And a systematic review on children and coronavirus transmission found that, although able to transmit it like any other individual, children seem much less likely to do so.

In the Netherlands, the tracing of more than 700 contacts of patients with COVID-19 has shown different infection rates depending on the patient's age. For patients aged 18 and under, none of their contacts tested positive. In patients 19 years or older, however, 9% of their contacts were positive.

### IS IT SAFE FOR SCHOOLS TO RE-OPEN?

Denmark was the first country to reopen schools in Europe, and others such as Norway, Germany, France and the Netherlands have followed. In Denmark, the virus's reproduction number rose from 0.6 to 1.0 after opening schools, but came down

again within a week. As of May 12 there were no reports of outbreaks in Swedish schools, which have remained open during the pandemic.

In New South Wales in Australia, schools have remained open. Analysis of 18 cases that occurred in 15 schools showed that, out of 735 children who had close contact, only two (0.3%) were infected. None of the 128 staff who had close contact were infected.

The available evidence would suggest that the risks posed by children returning to school is small. The potential for transmission of coronavirus within schools can be reduced by adequate infection control measures, such as pupils physically distancing from staff whenever possible, frequent handwashing, and prompt testing and isolation of individuals with possible COVID-19 symptoms. Additional measures such as children remaining within a small peer group (“social bubble”) and increasing the time spent outdoors should also be considered.

School plays a critical role in the wellbeing of children. It is not only a place to learn, but to socialise and exercise, and for some children to simply be safe. While some schools provide effective online learning, this is far from universal, and children from more disadvantaged backgrounds are increasingly deprived of crucial education by school closures.

We therefore conclude, like other colleagues have also recently done, that a progressive return of children back to school, supported by adequate preventive measures and an effective test, track and isolate strategy, is now advisable.

*[Stéphane Paulus is Honorary Senior Clinical Lecturer in Paediatric Infectious Diseases, University of Oxford; Else Bijker is Clinical Lecturer in Paediatrics, University of Oxford]*



# Tripura man's online chess tournament goes global



**AGARTALA, MAY 29 (PTI):** The Lockdown on-line International Chess Tournament, which was launched by a chess enthusiast from Tripura, has gained popularity worldwide with 29 foreign countries participating in the contest.

The tournament which completed its 87th

contest with participation of 2000 players from 29 countries will end on June 9 after completing the 100-mark, the organiser, Nirmal Das said.

The participating players hail from countries including Germany, Scotland, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Cuba, Chile, Ukraine, Brazil,

Mexico, South Africa, Australia, besides most of the Indian states.

Das, who launched the tournament, said a few months back he had participated in an on-line chess tournament controlled from Chennai with an entry fees of Rs. 200 and since then he planned to organise such

an online tournament without any entry fee.

"When the lockdown was announced on March 24, I thought this tournament can play a role to keep people stay at home and safe. So, it was launched on March 28 and soon it received good response globally. The tournament is played

through App called 'Li Chess,'" he told PTI.

The competition has all forms like Bullet, Blitz, Rapid and Classical time control games and maximum time given is two hours.

Secretary of the Sports Council of Tripura, Amit Rakshit congratulated Das for organising the online competition.

"This tournament is a unique way of keeping people inside home during lockdown. It helped people stay safe and free from infection of coronavirus," he told reporters.

Among others, Fide Master Prasenjit Datta, Sidi Boydia of Qatar, International Masters like Diptayan Ghosh and Srijit Pal, Tripura's chess prodigy Arshiya Das, who clinched gold at Asian Championship, had participated in the tournament.

Das said the 100th tournament would be held on June 9 and top 15 players would be given cash awards.

## Mamata announces relaxations from June 1



**KOLKATA, MAY 29 (PTI):** West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee announced a series of relaxations from June on Friday while claiming that the number of coronavirus cases is increasing in the state due to the massive influx of migrant workers. She announced that religious

places can open up from June 1 and allowed full attendance at public and private offices.

Banerjee, who has been criticising the railways for the past few days for ferrying a large number of migrant workers to the state without consulting her government, claimed that it is

being done without following the norms of social distancing.

"Is the railways running Corona Express trains, instead of Shramik Special trains?" she asked and wondered why more trains are not being run for the migrant workers returning from other states.

## Bengal minister tests positive for COVID-19

**KOLKATA, MAY 29 (PTI):** A minister in West Bengal has tested positive for COVID-19, making it the first such case in the Mamata Banerjee-led state cabinet, a well-placed source in the government said on Friday.

State Fire Services minister Sujit Bose has been advised to undergo home quarantine after his test results came out positive, the source said.

A domestic help at the minister's residence was diagnosed with the disease, following which samples of Bose and his family members were sent for examination.

The reports, which arrived on Thursday night, showed Bose and one of his family members have contracted the virus, the source added.

West Bengal on

Thursday registered the biggest one-day spike with 344 people testing positive for COVID-19, taking the total number of confirmed cases to 4,536.

As many as 223 people have succumbed to the disease in the state so far. Earlier, the government had attributed the death of 72 coronavirus patients to comorbidities.

## KARE varsity signs MOU with Nanochip solutions



**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 29 MAY:**

Kalasalingam Academy of Research and Education, Krishnankoil signs MOU with Nanochip solutions, Bangalore, in on-line Meet held today, a press release informs.

The vice president, Dr S Shashi Anand signed

on behalf of KARE Varsity and said this MOU will benefit KARE Students of Electronics and communications Engineering to be industry ready and will prepare them for real industry world.

Training will be in VLSI Design-RTL Verification using Verilog/ UVM, Embedded IOT

and Artificial Intelligence stream for Cyber security Professionals-ASIC SOC physical design. Certificates will be given by Industry, Director explained. Nanochip solutions executives, D Nagarajan, Varun Gaikwad, Vidhya and Archana also joined in the meeting.

## Commercial flight operations resume at Agartala airport

**AGARTALA, MAY 29 (PTI):** Commercial flight operations resumed at the Maharaja Bir Bikram Airport here on Friday with 166 passengers arriving on a plane from Kolkata, officials said.

Private carrier IndiGo operated the flight from Kolkata to Agartala, they said.

The aircraft landed

at 10 am and the return flight to Kolkata took off at 11:15 am.

"166 passengers have come from Kolkata, while 167 passengers left for Kolkata. No aircraft landed at MBB airport since the nationwide lockdown was imposed on March 25, airport director V K Seth told reporters.

## 6 more COVID-19 cases in Meghalaya, total rises to 27

**SHILLONG, MAY 29 (PTI):** Six more persons have tested positive for COVID-19 in Meghalaya on Friday, taking the total number of cases in the state to 27, Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma said.

Of the 27 COVID-19 cases, 14 are active while 12 have recovered from the disease and one has died.

Those who tested positive for COVID-19 on Friday had returned from Maharashtra, Bangalore and Chennai, the chief

minister said. "6 more residents who had returned to the State have tested positive for COVID-19. 3 from South West Garo H, 1 from West Garo H, 1 from East Khasi H, and 1 from West Khasi H.

They had come from Maharashtra, Bangalore, West Bengal and Chennai. All are under quarantine & asymptomatic," he tweeted.

All the six new COVID-19 cases are in quarantine and are asymptomatic.

## Monkey business triggers false alarm over coronavirus

**MEERUT (UP), MAY 29 (PTI):** A video clip on social media showing a band of monkeys with samples snatched from a lab technician triggered a false alarm over coronavirus.

Some thought the samples being taken to Meerut medical college were from suspected COVID-19 patients, and could infect the monkeys and then people.

The blood samples being taken to the medical college turned out to be of patients suffering from diabetes and other ailments.

Meerut medical college principal S K Garg told PTI on Friday that

the samples taken away by the simians were not meant for COVID-19 testing. He said the samples were of patients affected by diabetes and other ailments.

Garg said there is no need to panic, adding the samples were taken again.

The video clip which went viral shows a troop of monkeys snatching three samples from the hands of a lab technician. The technician was taking the samples to the LLRM laboratory at the medical college.

It also shows the monkeys sitting on a tree and chewing the sample collection kits.

## Case against SP leader Abu Azmi, others over protest



**MUMBAI, MAY 29 (PTI):** A case was registered on Friday against Samajwadi Party MLA Abu Azmi and 45 others for violating lockdown norms during a protest in the city, a police official said.

Azmi, president of the Maharashtra unit of the Samajwadi Party, had had a heated argument with senior police inspector of Nagpada police station Shalini Sharma in the early hours of Thursday.

He had alleged that inspector Sharma misbehaved with him.

The SP leader had staged a protest at Nagpada junction in south Mumbai on late Wednesday night against 'mismanagement' of transportation of migrant workers back to their home states.

A First Information Report was registered against Azmi, his supporters and some unidentified persons under IPC sections 188 (defying public servant's order), 269 (Negligent act likely

to spread infection of disease dangerous to life), 270 (Malignant act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life) and also the Disaster Management Act.

He violated lockdown norms while staging protest and the protesters did not maintain social distancing, said a police official. No arrest has been made.

Azmi had blamed the city police for ferrying workers to a railway station where they were supposed to board a train to Lucknow which got canceled, resulting in chaos.

A senior officer, however, claimed that the police were not at fault, as the train was canceled because of unavailability of railway coaches.

Inspector Sharma, meanwhile, was transferred as senior inspector of Chembur police station while senior police inspector of Chembur, Jayprakash Bhosale, was transferred to Nagpada on Thursday.

## Nor'wester hits Bhubaneswar, uproots trees



**BHUBANESWAR, MAY 29 (PTI):** A Norwester at a wind speed of about 40 kilometre per hour hit Bhubaneswar and its adjoining areas in the early hours of Friday, uprooting trees and damaging electric infrastructure, officials said.

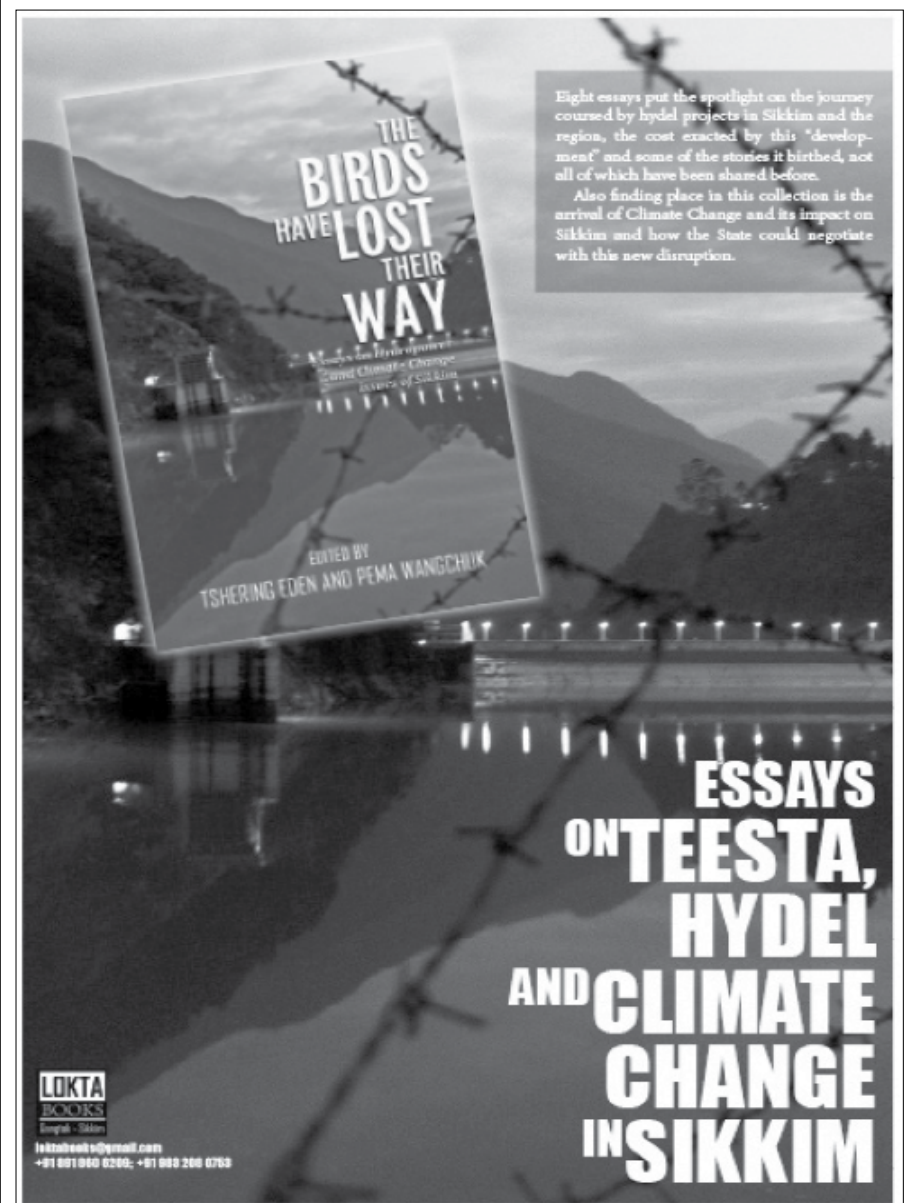
The Norwester ac-

companied by lightning and thundershower struck the city around 4 am.

Some parts of Cuttack also received heavy rains along with strong winds.

Odisha Fire Service personnel have started clearing the roads at some places, officials

said. The Meteorological Centre has forecast thundershowers with lightning and gusty surface wind with speed reaching 40-50 kmph and light to moderate rainfall at one or two places in Dhenkanal, Balasore, Mayurbhanj, Puri, Keonjhar and Ganjam.



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# Mathews’ absence in 2011 WC final hurt us: Sangakkara



**KOLKATA, MAY 29 (PTI):** Former skipper Kumar Sangakkara believes missing Angelo Mathews due to an injury hurt Sri Lanka badly in the summit clash of the 2011 World Cup, which hosts India won after a gap of 28 years.

Having played a key role in their thrilling semifinal win against New Zealand, Mathews was forced out of the final against India at Mumbai’s Wankhede Stadium by a quadriceps muscle injury.

Reflecting on the six-wicket loss to India, the former Sri Lankan captain said Mathews’ injury

forced him to opt for a 6-5 combination and was also the reason behind his decision to bat first after winning the toss.

“In that WC final, that’s the biggest thing I look back and think... You can talk about drop catches and all of that happens. But the composition of the side and the fact that we were forced to make the change was to me the turning point,” Sangakkara said in the latest episode of Instagram series ‘Reminisce with Ash’ hosted by India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin.

Mahela Jayawardene’s unbeaten 103

went in vain as India hunted down 275 with Gautam Gambhir setting up the chase with a 97-run knock before skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni finished off in style, smashing Nuwan Kulasekara for the winning six in his unbeaten 91.

“But for 100 per cent, if Angelo (Mathews) had been fit, I know for sure we would have gone for chase... I’m not sure whether the result would have changed. That balance of team that Mathews would give at seven really was a bonus,” the former wicket-keeper batsman said

“If you take our entire

campaign, whatever we did Mathews’ overs and his ability to bat with the tail and read situations was an incredible bonus to us. He was a young chap who came into the side and from day one he could read situations. It’s just instinct, how to up the rate, how to control the bowler, when to accelerate.”

During the conversation, Ashwin also asked him about the controversial toss when the coin was flipped twice amid the cacophony of the Wankhede and eventually Sangakkara elected to bat.

“The was crowd was

huge. It never happens in Sri Lanka. Once I had this at Eden Gardens when I could not talk to the first slip and then of course at the Wankhede. I remember calling on the toss then Mahi wasn’t sure and said did you call tail and I said no I called head.

“The match referee actually said I won the toss, Mahi said he did not. There was a little bit of confusion there and Mahi said let’s have another toss of the coin and heads went up again,” he said.

“I am not sure whether it was luck that I won. I believe probably India might have batted if I had lost.”

The loss prolonged Sri Lanka’s wait for another world title as yet again the 1996 champions failed in the final hurdle.

“Whether we win or lose, we have this equilibrium on how to take a win or loss. The smile hides a huge amount of sadness, of disappointment, of thinking of 20 million people back in Sri Lanka who had been waiting for this for so long, since 1996.

“We had an opportunity in 2011, opportunity in 2007, then T20 opportunities in 2009 and 2012,” Sangakkara said.

## Police want any match where Liverpool can win title played at neutral venue



**LONDON, 29 MAY [AP]:** Police have set out the Premier League matches they would like to be played at neutral venues, which would include any Liverpool game where the title could be won.

The matches which have been requested to take place at neutral grounds are Manchester City v Liverpool, Manchester City v Newcastle, Manchester United v Sheffield United, Newcastle v Liverpool and Everton v Liverpool. The police statement adds that “the game in which Liverpool could secure the league title” should also be moved but this may end up needing to be more than one match if the Jürgen Klopp’s side do not clinch it at the first attempt.

Deputy chief constable Mark Roberts of South Yorkshire Police, the UK’s football policing lead, said in a statement: “Our discussions with the Premier League throughout this process have been positive, with

a shared focus on the priority of public health. As such we have reached a consensus that balances the needs of football, while also minimising the demand on policing.

“The majority of remaining matches will be played at home and away as scheduled, with a small number of fixtures taking place at neutral venues, which, contrary to some reports, have yet to be agreed. The views and agreement of forces which host Premier League clubs have been sought and where there were concerns, the Premier League has been supportive in providing flexibility in arranging alternative venues where requested. “This plan will be kept continually under review to ensure public health and safety and a key part of this is for supporters to continue to respect the social-distancing guidelines and not to attend or gather outside the stadiums.”

Newcastle, in 13th, are the lowest-ranked

side to be involved in a match at a neutral venue as things stand. There had been complaints from some clubs towards the bottom of the table, including Brighton, about the impact of playing at neutral venues on sporting integrity.

Clubs will hold further discussions on whether to proceed with the season on this basis when they meet again on 4 June. The police statement did not mention any matches in the English Football League.

Championship clubs are back in training with a view to restarting next month and an EFL spokesperson said: “It remains our intention to play all remaining league matches at clubs’ home grounds as long as they comply with the relevant government guidance.

“We will only seek to move matches if they are not permitted by the relevant local authority, following any representations from the local police force.”

## Test is best for England fast bowler Wood

**LONDON, MAY 29 (AFP):** World Cup-winning fast bowler Mark Wood would opt for a place in England’s Test side if a congested schedule means they have to field entirely separate squads this season following the coronavirus outbreak.

An expanded training group of up to 45 players is due to be named on Friday, with the 18 bowlers already invited back for individual sessions soon to be joined by batsmen and wicketkeepers.

Despite the pandemic delaying the start of their home season, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) still plans to stage a full international programme that includes three-Test series against West Indies and Pakistan as well as limited-overs internationals against Australia and Ireland.

The ECB previously said its “worst-case” scenario, with no cricket played, could mean a 380 million pound (469 million) hole in its finances. But with several months of the season wiped out, England may still need to field separate red and white-ball squads in order for players to have sufficient time for training and recovery.

Wood was a member of the England side that won last year’s World Cup but the Durham quick would still rather play Test cricket. The 30-year-old’s career has been blighted by ankle injuries, meaning he has played just 15 Tests since a 2015 debut against New Zealand at Lord’s. But the last of those, against South Africa at Johannesburg in January saw him return Test-best match figures of nine for 100 and Wood is keen to carry on from where he left off at the Wanderers ground.

## Germany rallied to save women’s football – the FA should be embarrassed

**SUZANNE WRACK**  
**LONDON, 29 MAY [THE GUARDIAN]:** On Monday the Women’s Super League and Championship seasons were ended by the Football Association after weeks of waiting for what had become an inevitable announcement.

While women’s football in England has become the latest sporting casualty of Covid-19, elsewhere the situation is being used to help fuel the growth of the game. On Wednesday details of a one-month 25-game Challenge Cup tournament in the US were unveiled, scheduling women’s football as the first sport to return in the country. And on Friday the Frauen Bundesliga resumes with the league leaders, Wolfsburg, playing struggling Cologne.

Some will deem the restart of Germany’s top women’s league too great a risk. Not just from a public health point of view, but a personal one, too. A rapid turnaround means teams will have had only one week of full training before playing competitive games. That, it is felt, is not enough time. According to the AI data analytics company Zone7, eight players picking up injuries in the opening six men’s Bundesliga games was no accident. Men’s teams had only nine days to switch from individual training to high-intensity group work.

Even when international tournaments cut into pre-season, clubs will more often than not find 30 days to prepare their squads. When Zone7 looked at the effect changes in preseason length may have on injury risks within teams, 75% of those that had two years of data available demonstrated higher injury rates in the first half of the season when the preparation period was shorter.

Regardless of whether they should be playing competitively now, or with more time to ease players back in, the Frauen Bundesliga’s return alongside the men should be welcomed. It is also extremely embarrassing for the Football Association.

Many point to the cultural difference and the 51% ownership

model in Germany that keeps sporting hearts and interests above economic forces. But the return of women’s football and its growth is in the economic interests of clubs and leagues long term.

Additionally, just because the English game has decayed to a point where profit rules and all football outside the Premier League – men’s and women’s – is pushed aside, sacrificed supposedly for its own benefit but ultimately to protect short-term profits, does not mean we should accept it.

The Bundesliga is not a socialist paradise – clubs there have been hit financially amid this crisis, too. The Deutsche Fussbal Liga, which runs Germany’s leagues, was said to be facing a €770m (£691m) loss should this season not be seen out. Clubs will lose €91m (£81m) in match-day revenue with games played behind closed doors – in the 2018-19 that accounted for 12.9% of their total income. Werder Bremen have been forced into taking out a loan from a state-owned bank, and last month, Kicker magazine reported 13 of the 36 top clubs faced insolvency. Yet when discussing recovery, clubs dug deep.

Bayern Munich, Borussia Dortmund, RB Leipzig and Bayer Leverkusen all contributed €7.5m (£6.93m) while also giving up €12.5m (£11.2m) in TV rights payments to help build a €20m solidarity fund for the whole of German professional football, benefitting men’s Bundesliga 3 clubs and those in Frauen Bundesliga (clubs with parent teams in the men’s Bundesliga and mBundesliga 2 waived their shares). The DFB, German football’s governing body, unanimously agreed that the pot should be used to cover testing and its additional costs and lost income.

“We can only overcome this crisis together, when we act as one, because there is only one football,” the DFB president, Fritz Keller, said in a statement. “The Bundesliga clubs exemplify this cohesion in a brilliant manner with their financial support. It shows that we are fighting together for the good

of our football and that we won’t give up on any club.”

In England, the question put to professional football outside the Premier League is: can you afford to resume? The answer in the case of the Women’s Super League and Women’s Championship was no. There is no solidarity fund to assist with losses, let alone to cover the costs of restarting. The notion that you should help clubs equitably rather than equally, by financially assisting struggling clubs and not those with wealthy parent operations, on the assumption that it is good for the long-term health of the game, is seen as idealistic.

English football is crippled by conservatism, in sharp contrast to Germany, which has shown it values football beyond the elite, and the women’s game in particular.

In the US, with the new commissioner, Lisa Baird, at the helm, the NWSL could cover the costs of running the Challenge Cup in Utah through sponsorship and TV deals. P&G and Secret are sponsoring the event; CBS All Access will show the games, and they will all be made available worldwide via Twitch. The semi-finals and final are also sponsored by Budweiser, and the league has a new multi-year partnership with Verizon.

By working with the Utah Royals owner, Dell Loy Hansen, who furloughed staff when the crisis hit, the NWSL is hosting the tournament in a state with a low Covid-19 count and Hansen is assisting with providing teams with accommodation, training facilities and competition needs. Even, according to Equalizer Soccer, allowing clubs to borrow planes to travel to the tournament.

The NWSL players’ association has worked hard to have players’ concerns made central to planning, with contracts to be honoured even if players choose not to take part. Mothers will also be able to bring their children to games.

In Germany and the US, governing bodies are showing that if you are bold women’s football does not have to be a casualty of this crisis. Instead, it can be a pioneer.

## Fans allowed to attend Russian football matches next month

**MOSCOW, MAY 29 (AFP):** Russian authorities said that a small number of spectators would be allowed at stadiums when the country’s Premier League restarts its suspended season next month.

In mid-May, Russia’s football association said that the country’s Premier League would restart its suspended season from June 21 behind closed doors.

But on Thursday, the association said it had agreed on a compromise with the state consumer

health watchdog, adding spectators will be initially allowed to occupy 10 percent of stadiums’ seats.

“This is a safe number of fans if all safety measures are observed,” the association said, quoted by the country’s official anti-coronavirus portal.

Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Chernyshenko said fan support was important for players, calling it “a special emotional component of football.”

Due to the coronavirus outbreak football

matches have been suspended in Russia since March 17.

The Russian Premier League, the country’s top football division, has eight rounds of matches remaining in the season.

Russia has the world’s third largest number of confirmed cases at 379,051, behind the United States and Brazil.

On Tuesday, President Vladimir Putin said, citing experts, that the country had passed its peak of coronavirus infections.

## Ricciardo ‘in Ferrari talks’ before McLaren switch



**PARIS, MAY 29 (AFP):** Daniel Ricciardo said he had been talking to Ferrari about a dream drive with Formula One’s most famous team before penning a deal to switch to McLaren in 2021.

The 30-year-old Australian will instead leave Renault for McLaren from where Carlos Sainz has been signed to replace four-time world champion Sebastian Vettel who will leave Ferrari at the end of this season.

“There have been discussions already from a few years back. And that continued all the way through to now,” Ricciardo told CNN of his talks with the Italian team.

“So yeah, I won’t deny that. But obviously it’s never really come to fruition.”

He added: “I see how Carlos is a fit for the team. So I don’t really look at it like ‘why not me?’ I just look at it: Yeah, Carlos had a very strong 2019. Yeah, he’s a bit of hot property right now, and I guess it’s a good fit for where they are at.”

Ricciardo only joined Renault for the start of last season after five seasons with Red Bull.

However, it was a miserable campaign for the Australian who failed to secure a single podium.

He ended the championship down in ninth place, his worst finish since his Toro Rosso days in 2013.

Renault finished fifth in the constructors’ championship, 54 points behind McLaren.



## UN urges \$2.4 billion to help Yemen cope with war and virus

**UNITED NATIONS, MAY 29 (AP):** The U.N. humanitarian chief urgently appealed for 2.4 billion to help millions of people in Yemen cope with the conflict and COVID-19, saying programs are already being cut and the situation is alarming.

Mark Lowcock told a UN briefing on Thursday that the United Nations received 3.2 billion last year for Yemen because countries in the region including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates who are involved in the conflict stepped up.

This year, the U.N. has appealed for about 3.4 billion but as of Wednesday it had only received 516.6 million, just over 15%. The Saudis pledged 525 million in early April and Lowcock said he hopes it will quickly be turned into cash.

The United Nations and Saudi Arabia are co-hosting a video pledging conference for Yemen on Tuesday and Lowcock said he has been on the phone with Persian Gulf leaders in recent days but doesn't know what they're going to do. The collapse in oil prices because of the pandemic may be spurring internal discussions, he said.

Lowcock said he expects high-level representation at the conference, and asked: Is the world ready simply to watch Yemen fall off the cliff? Yemen's conflict started with Houthi Shiite rebels backed by Iran capturing the capital, Sanaa, in 2014.

The following year, a Saudi-led coalition backing the government intervened to battle the rebels and curb Iran's influence in what has turned into a stalemated regional proxy war. Since then, more than 100,000 people fighters and civilians have been killed.

Lowcock and the heads of 10 other U.N. agencies and several U.N. officials and humanitarian organizations issued a joint statement Thursday saying COVID-19 is spreading rapidly across the country already experiencing the world's largest humanitarian crisis.

Tragically, we do not have enough money to continue this work, they said. Of 41 major U.N. programs in Yemen, more than 30 will close in the next few weeks if we cannot secure additional funds. This means many more people will die, they warned.

The 17 signatories said they have the skills, staff and capacity to meet the difficult challenges of delivering aid in Yemen but no money and time is running out.

Muhammad Hadi, the World Food Program's regional director for the Middle East and North Africa, told the video briefing that the U.N. agency needs about 200 million a month to provide assistance to 12 million Yemenis. But unfortunately, they've had to start cutting back to try to stretch their money and the food they have in the country, he said.

# Flames engulf US police station as black rights unrest spreads

**F**lames ripped through a Minnesota police station and seven protesters were shot in Kentucky as unrest spread across the United States over the deaths of black people during police encounters.

Officers abandoned the building in the city of Minneapolis late on Thursday before demonstrators barged through barriers, breaking windows and chanting slogans. A fire broke out, which soon became an inferno that engulfed the structure.

The protests entered their fourth day on Friday and have spread beyond Minnesota, with protests breaking out in several states across the country, including Denver, Colorado and Phoenix.

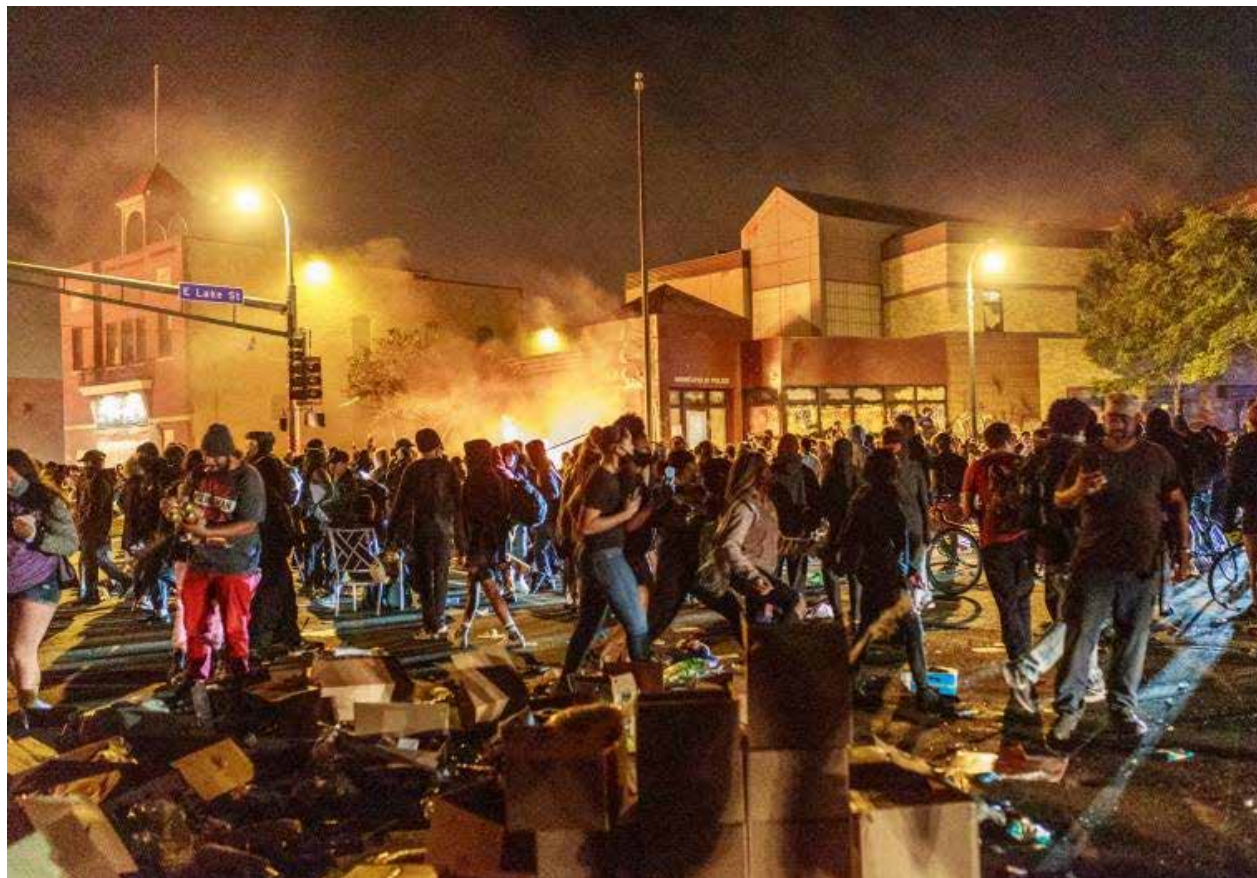
In Kentucky, seven people were hit by gunfire at a protest on Thursday over the death of Breonna Taylor -- a black woman who was shot after police entered her home in March, local media reported.

One of those wounded was in a critical condition, according to the Louisville Metro Police Department. It is not yet clear who fired the shots.

Police responded with a Twitter post asking the city to "please choose peace," alongside a video message from a family member of the woman killed. She asked those in the streets to "go home and be safe and be ready to keep fighting."

- 'Thugs' -

Thousands joined the protests in Minnesota, which were triggered by the Monday death of 46-year-old George Floyd after being arrested on suspicion of using a counterfeit banknote. A video taken by a by-



stander shows an officer kneeling on his neck as he is pinned to the ground. At one point Floyd is heard saying he cannot breathe.

As unrest spread, President Trump tweeted: "These THUGS are dishonouring the memory of George Floyd and I won't let that happen," in apparent reference to protesters in Minnesota, adding the state's governor has the backing of the military.

"Any difficulty and we will assume control but, when the looting starts, the shooting starts."

Twitter flagged the tweet for vio-

lating its rules on glorifying violence a few hours after it appeared.

Minnesota's governor Tim Walz earlier called up 500 of the state's National Guard, but after Trump tweeted he defended his decision not to put them on the streets as fire gripped the police station. "Bricks and mortar are not as important as life," Minneapolis mayor Jacob Frey said at a press conference, adding that officers had been deployed in the city to prevent looting.

He added that the "anger and frustration" on the streets must be

understood, but that the looting was unacceptable.

"Our communities cannot and will not tolerate it. These are businesses, these are community institutions that we need," Frey said.

The City of Minneapolis called for people in the third precinct -- where the police building is located -- to leave for their own safety, saying "explosive materials" could be inside and gas lines to the area had been cut.

Outbreaks of violence have gripped the city as tensions rose

since Floyd's killing.

On Wednesday, demonstrators clashed with law enforcement, looted stores and set fire to shops and a construction site. They were met with police tear gas and rubber bullets.

One person died of a gunshot wound, and police were reportedly investigating whether he was shot by a store owner.

- 'I have not slept' -

The Justice Department on Thursday promised to carry out a "robust" investigation into Floyd's death, saying they will make the case a top priority.

Democrats have also called for a probe into the deaths of two other black people -- Ahmaud Arbery, who was shot by two white men in the city of Brunswick in Georgia, and Breonna Taylor.

Floyd's family has demanded the officers present when he died face murder charges. All of them have been fired.

"You know, I want an arrest for all four of those officers tonight. A murder conviction for all four of those officers. I want the death penalty," Floyd's brother, Philonise Floyd, told CNN.

"I have not slept in four days, and those officers, they're at home sleeping," he said.

Two African American leaders of national stature, Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton, arrived in Minneapolis Thursday and urged more protests.

"We told the governor you must call murder a murder," Jackson told an audience at the Greater Friendship Missionary Baptist Church.

## Australian court rules queen's letters can be made public



**Canberra, May 29 (AP):** Australia's highest court ruled on Friday to make public letters between Queen Elizabeth II and her representative that would reveal what knowledge she had, if any, of the dismissal of an Australian government in 1975.

The High Court's majority decision in historian Jenny Hocking's appeal overturned lower court rulings that more than 200 letters between the monarch of Britain and Australia and Governor-General Sir John Kerr before he dismissed Prime Minister Gough Whitlam's government were personal and might never be made public.

The only-ever dismissal of an elected Australian government on the authority of a British

monarch created a crisis that spurred many to call for Australia to sever its constitutional ties with Britain and create a republic with an Australian president.

Kerr dismissed Whitlam's government and replaced him with opposition leader Malcolm Fraser as prime minister to resolve a month-old deadlock in Parliament. Fraser's coalition won an election weeks later.

The National Archives of Australia had held the correspondence, known as the Palace Letters, since 1978. As state records they should have been made public 31 years after they were created.

Under an agreement struck between Buckingham Palace and Government House, the gov-

ernor-general's official residence, months before Kerr resigned in 1978, the letters covering three tumultuous years of Australian politics were to remain secret until 2027. The private secretaries of both the sovereign and the governor-general in 2027 still could veto their release indefinitely under that agreement.

A Federal Court judge accepted the archives' argument that the letters were personal and confidential.

An appeals court upheld that ruling in a 2-1 decision.

The archives' lawyers argued the records were created with the strong conception that their character was private, and they were received by the archives under those conditions.

The convention across British Commonwealth nations is that communications between the queen and her representatives are personal, private and not accessible by the executive government, they argued.

The archives did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Friday.

Hocking, a Monash University academic and Whitlam biographer, was to hold a news conference later on Friday in Melbourne.

Buckingham Palace and Government House have previously declined The Associated Press' requests for comment on the case.

Hocking has been fighting to access the letters since 2016.

## Police across US speak out against Minneapolis custody

**LOS ANGELES, MAY 29 (AP):** Murder. Brutality. Reprehensible. Indefensible.

Police nationwide, in unequivocal and unprecedented language, have condemned the actions of Minneapolis police in the custody death of a handcuffed black man who cried for help as an officer knelt on his neck, pinning him to the pavement for at least eight minutes.

But some civil rights advocates say their denunciations are empty words without meaningful reform behind them.

Authorities say George Floyd was detained Monday because he matched the description of someone who tried to pay with a counterfeit bill at a convenience store, and the 46-year-old resisted arrest. A bystander's dis-

turbing video shows Officer Derek Chauvin, who is white, kneeling on Floyd's neck, even as Floyd begs for air and slowly stops talking and moving. There is no need to see more video, Chattanooga, Tennessee, Police Chief David Roddy tweeted Wednesday.

There no need to wait to see how 'it plays out'. There is no need to put a knee on someone's neck for NINE minutes. There IS a need to DO something. If you wear a badge and you don't have an issue with this ... turn it in.

The reaction from some law enforcement stands in stark contrast to their muted response or support for police after other in-custody fatalities. Sheriffs and police chiefs have strongly criticized the Minneapolis officer on social media and praised the city's

police chief for his quick dismissal of four officers at the scene. Some even called for them to be criminally charged. I am deeply disturbed by the video of Mr. Floyd being murdered in the street with other officers there letting it go on, Polk County, Georgia, Sheriff Johnny Moats wrote on Facebook.

I can assure everyone, me or any of my deputies will never treat anyone like that as long as I'm Sheriff. This kind of brutality is terrible and it needs to stop. All Officers involved need to be arrested and charged immediately. Praying for the family.

Typically, police call for patience and calm in the wake of a use of force. They are reluctant to weigh in on episodes involving another agency, often citing ongoing investigations or due process.

## China reports five asymptomatic COVID-19 cases

**By K J M VARMA BEIJING, MAY 29 (PTI):** China has reported five new asymptomatic COVID-19 cases, taking the total number of such infections to 409, while no new confirmed case was recorded in the country, health officials said on

Friday. No new suspected cases or deaths related to the disease were reported on Thursday, the National Health Commission said.

Five new asymptomatic cases were reported in the country on Thursday, it said. The 409 as-

ymptomatic cases, including 337 in the coronavirus first epicentre Wuhan, were still under medical observation.

Asymptomatic cases pose a problem as the patients test positive for the COVID-19 but develop no symptoms such as fever,

cough or sore throat.

However, they pose a risk of spreading the disease to others.

As of Thursday, China has a total of 82,995 confirmed COVID-19 cases and the death toll remained at 4,634, the NHC said.

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# CNN's Omar Jimenez Arrested on Live TV While Covering Minneapolis Protests

"A black reporter from CNN was arrested while legally covering the protests in Minneapolis. A white reporter also on the ground was not," the news network tweeted.

CNN reporter Omar Jimenez and his crew were on Friday arrested on live TV while covering protests in Minneapolis.

The arrests came amid continued protests in Minnesota – and other parts of the country – following the death of George Floyd, a black man, in police custody.

Jimenez "has been taken into police custody during a live broadcast at the site of the protests in Minneapolis, after clearly identifying himself to officers," CNN said on its website. "Jimenez's crew, including a producer and a camera operator, were also placed in handcuffs."

In a tweet, the news network, owned by AT&T's WarnerMedia, highlighted:

"A black reporter from CNN was arrested while legally covering the protests in Minneapolis. A white reporter also on the ground was not."

In an online post, the network added: "CNN's Josh Campbell, who also was in the area but not standing with the on-air crew, said he, too, was approached by police, but was allowed to remain." The post quotes Campbell as saying: "I identified myself ... they said, 'OK, you're permitted to be in the area.' I was treated much differently than [Jimenez] was."

In a CNN video of the arrest, the reporter is seen reporting about another arrest on the scene, saying: "We have got one person being arrested here," before telling his colleagues in the studio:

"We are speaking with state patrol now. Give us a second, guys." Jimenez then addresses police, saying: "We can move back to where you like here. We are live on the air at the moment. This is the four of us, we are one team. Just put us back where you want us. We are getting out of your way. Just let us know."

The reporter then continues his re-

action, using pepper spray and batons to disperse crowds near the police station. Police were seen shoving at least one person, while protesters responded by throwing projectiles at the officers as others fled the site."

Later Friday morning, CNN tweeted that Jimenez and his crew have been released. The network also reported



port, with one police officer putting his hand on Jimenez's arm. Another member of the police team then says to him: "You are under arrest," leading the reporter to ask "do you mind telling me why I am under arrest?" The police then handcuff Jimenez and lead him away.

Jimenez was arrested around 5 a.m. local time.

Jimenez said on CNN.com earlier in the night: "Dramatic scenes have unfolded in Minneapolis after the police arrived on the scene and clashed with protesters. It was the first time authorities had been seen on the scene in more than an hour. The police officers, some in riot gear, immediately launched into

that Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz told CNN Worldwide President Jeff Zucker that he deeply apologizes for what happened.

After his release, around 6 a.m. local time, Jimenez returned to the air and said he had been treated well after he was led away. "We're doing OK, now. There were a few uneasy moments there," Jimenez said.

The death of the unarmed Floyd led to the firing of four Minneapolis police officers. Floyd's family says they want murder charges against them.

Protesters in Minneapolis set a police precinct building on fire. Media reports said authorities arrived on the scene just after 3:30 a.m. local time.



**FUN AND GAMES!** American TV Star, Hannah Ann Sluss had fun with a water toy by the pool in Beverly Hills.

## Manushi joins hands with UNICEF to promote menstrual hygiene

**MUMBAI, MAY 29 (PTI):** Former Miss World Manushi Chhillar has been roped in by UNICEF to spread awareness on menstrual hygiene.

According to a press release issued by the model's team, she will be promoting the need to educate girls about maintaining hygiene, constructing adequate sanitation facilities and providing quick access to feminine hygiene products.

Manushi, who runs her own initiative on menstrual

hygiene Project Shakti' that works across several states in India, said it is important to raise awareness on the critical issue. Every young girl has the right to accurate information about her body. Without the right information, girls often don't know how to safely manage their period. There still is silence and misinformation. We have come a long way but a lot still needs to be done.

We all need to contribute towards raising awareness

on this. I'm proud and honoured to be associated with UNICEF for this novel initiative that aims at debunking misinformation, taboos and also raise awareness on this critical issue," she said in a statement.

On May 28, which is observed as the World Menstrual Hygiene Day, Manushi participated in UNICEF global initiative called the Red Dot Challenge -- a symbol adopted by the world body to depict menstrual cycle.

## Sonic the Hedgehog' sequel is in development

**LOS ANGELES, MAY 29 (PTI):** A sequel to Sonic the Hedgehog live-action movie is in the works, Paramount Pictures and Sega Sammy have confirmed.

According to Variety, the project is still in the early stages and no decisions have been made yet regarding casting or a production start date.

Sonic the Hedgehog director Jeff Fowles and screenwriters Pat Casey and Josh Miller are all returning for the sequel.

Fowles took to Twitter to confirm that he will be back to direct the sequel.

Round two with the blue! he wrote. Neal

H Moritz, Toby Ascher and Toru Nakahara are producing the film, while Hajime Satomi, Haruki Satomi and Tim Miller are attached as executive producers.

Based on the popular video game franchise from Sega, the first movie came out in February. It revolved around the world's speediest hedgehog as he accepts Earth as his new home. Ben Schwartz voiced for Sonic, while James Marsden essayed the role of his new best friend Tom. The duo team up to save the planet from the evil genius Dr. Robotnik, played by Jim Carrey, as he plans to rule the world.

## Let this one go: Jamie Foxx on Jimmy Fallon's blackface controversy



**LOS ANGELES, MAY 29 (PTI):** Oscar winner Jamie Foxx has defended popular TV host Jimmy Fallon who has landed in a controversy after his old blackface video resurfaced on social media.

Fallon, who host "The Tonight Show" on NBC, has apologised for the two-decade old clip from his "Saturday Night Live!" days where he is impersonating comedian Chris Rock using blackface, a type of makeup used by a non-black performer in an attempt to play a person of colour.

Foxx came out in the comedian's support as he commented on an Instagram post about the controversy by news outlet ENews.

"(Fallon) was doing an impression of Chris Rock. It wasn't blackface. We comedians I know it's a tough time right now. But this one is a stretch," the

52-year-old actor said. The "Just Mercy" star then referenced to his former sketch show "Living in Color", saying it involved "(playing) every race".

"Let this one go. We got bigger fish to fry," he added.

On Wednesday, Fallon apologised for making the "terrible decision" of wearing the blackface for the sketch.

"In 2000, while on 'SNL', I made a terrible decision to do an impersonation of Chris Rock while in blackface. There is no excuse for this.

"I am very sorry for making this unquestionably offensive decision and thank all of you for holding me accountable," Fallon, 45, said.

Fallon's infamous "SNL" sketch has resurfaced and criticised time and again on social media, but this is the first time the talk show host has addressed it.

## Chernobyl' director Johan Renck in talks to adapt novel The Magus'

**LOS ANGELES, MAY 29 (PTI):** Johan Renck, the Emmy-winning director of the hit HBO series Chernobyl, is in negotiation to adapt John Fowles' cult novel The Magus.

The TV miniseries is being backed by Pippa Harris and filmmaker Sam Mendes' banner Neal Street Productions. On Thursday Renck posted a picture of the 1965 novel's cover and wrote, Something is brewing.

Harris told Variety that the production house is in talks with Renck to direct the miniseries, and added she couldn't think of anyone better to shepherd John Fowles' extraordinary book to the screen.

Tom Edge, who wrote the screenplay for the film Judy, will pen the script. The Magus is set on a Greek island, where a British man Nicholas Urfe, a young English language teacher, finds himself caught in the mind games of the island's enigmatic owner. The book was previously adapted by Fowles himself in the late 1960s as a film, starring Anthony Quinn, Michael Caine and Candice Bergen.

**ARIES:** Oh hello, domestic bliss! This is a time of peace, love, and harmony in the Aries HQ. You thought this time together would be the reason everything falls apart, but it has brought you and your loved ones closer in a whole new way. There is a greater degree of acceptance—the willingness to love each other, flaws and all. For couples who have been quarantined away from each other however, this could be a confusing time.

Tip: Here's to the intoxicant called love.

**TAURUS:**

The past comes up in a big way every time planets go retrograde—and there's a four-planet retrograde taking place right now. Sometimes, this energy manifests quite literally with exes re-emerging. At other times, dated beliefs come up for re-examination. The temptation to go back to the old way of life will be strong because it's familiar, and familiarity is synonymous with comfort. But could this comfort be detrimental to your soul's growth?

Tip: Move forward, not backwards.

**GEMINI:**

This is a rather exhilarating time on the work and money front. The world may be on lockdown, but you are moving forward, attracting all the right opportunities, and gaining rewards and recognition for your work. But that's not the real reason for the mysterious smile on your face. It's the act of breaking past your own limitations that's making you feel like the most invincible version of yourself. In the realm of relationships, you could be yearning for freedom. No, that is not synonymous with being single. We're talking about mutual respect for each other's journey and the willingness to hold space for your partner to fly.

Tip: You're breaking past your own limitations.

**CANCER:**

The older we get, the more we become set in our ways, which in turn hinders growth and prevents us from experimenting with the new. How is this energy manifesting in your life, Cancer? Are you mildly OCD about the rules, or do you give yourself the permission to approach everything with a beginner's mind? Irrespective of what your modus operandi has been in the past, you are being asked to look at your life as if it were an improv comedy.

Tip: You're being asked to approach life as if it were an improv comedy.

**LEO:**

Maybe you're not tired because you are doing too much, but because you're doing too little of what brings you joy. How long are you going to sacrifice your own needs for the sake of others? Truth is, you will run out of fuel eventually, which in turn will affect your equilibrium. Today, you're being asked to redirect your energy towards yourself, so you can serve the world from a place of fullness. In the golden words of Esther Hicks, "The greatest gift you can give another person is the gift of your own happiness."

Tip: Redirect your energy towards yourself.

**VIRGO:**

The truth is, things are far from perfect in your Universe right now. But chasing solutions has never helped anybody find solutions, right? Sometimes you just have to breathe, step back, and let the Universe do its thing. In moments of stillness, you will find the answers you are seeking. In the mood to raise your vibrations? Turn to art and music therapy. 'Headphones in, world out' is a mantra that will serve you immensely.

Tip: Headphones in, world out.

**LIBRA:**

What if it is freedom, not just love, that makes the world go around? You've spent the better part of your life weighing the pros and cons, being affected by the judgements of others, and holding yourself back from expressing your true nature. But there's no fun in hiding behind masks, especially with the people you love. This period marks a new beginning for you—a new beginning in the realm of romance. Unleash your wild and free side, Libra. Tip: This is a time of freedom and sexual liberation.

**SCORPIO:**

Haters may call you a fake, but a part of you always knew the things that are unfolding in your reality now. Honour the gift of intuition, Scorpio. This is a time of enhancing your spiritual powers and perfecting the art of looking beyond the veil. Oh, the mysteries that await you, dear seeker! Some of you may feel guided to share this wisdom with others. Remember, you're simply a messenger.

Sagittarius:

Reading sacred texts, chanting mantras, practicing hatha yoga—that's the easy part. How you put this wisdom into practice, however, is what defines the quality of your life. Heaven and hell are not a faraway concept. They exist right here, right now, depending on where you are vibrating at. Come back to the anahata, or your heart space, Sagittarius. Practice kindness even when you want to punch somebody in the face. Trust that the good vibes you put into the cosmos will come to you manifold.

Tip: Practice kindness even when it is hard to.

**CAPRICORN:**

Social media doesn't have to be toxic. It all comes down to how consciously you are willing to consume the information that's

available. Curate your feed with awareness, Capricorn. Think motivational speakers, self-help experts, artists, DIY queens, home chefs, and fitness gurus. What if inculcating a holistic lifestyle is the key to getting through these tough times? If you have something worthwhile to say, don't shy away from sharing it. Staying true to yourself is key here. Nobody wants to see a VSCO-cam version of your reality.

Tip: Curate your social media feed consciously.

**AQUARIUS:**

The old you would have chosen the path of denial over confrontation. But the new you understands the need for truth and integrity in order to build your life on a steady foundation. Digging into your reserves of courage will help you act from a space of honesty despite the fears that are holding you back. Yes, there is a way to find a resolution without going to war, Aquarius. In the realm of work and money, you're being asked to realign yourself with that larger-than-life vision. There's nothing you cannot achieve once you set your mind to it.

Tip: Find the courage you need to stand in your truth.

**PISCES:**

Love, not money. Love, not power. Love, not fame. Where are you vibrating at, Pisces? It's time for a motivation check. This is the secret to taking your career to new heights. On the personal front, you're being asked to stop settling for less than what you deserve. Your heart is too beautiful and precious to be given away to the wrong people. As always, consider their actions before you consider their words. If you have a nagging feeling this isn't going anywhere, it's best to let go.

Tip: Let people meet you where you are.