



**DWAYNE JOHNSON SAYS  
HE IS PROUD OF DAUGHTER  
SIMONE FOR JOINING WWE**

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**COVID-19 HAS BLOWN AWAY  
THE MYTH ABOUT 'FIRST' AND  
'THIRD' WORLD COMPETENCE**

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**WILL CONTINUE SENDING MIGRANTS  
HOME UNTIL THE LAST ONE REUNITES  
WITH FAMILY: SONU SOOD**

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# SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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## Mother of 2 from Dentam passes away while returning from Gujarat

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 17 MAY:**

Chandra Subba, a mother of two hailing from Dentam in West Sikkim, passed away in Madhya Pradesh late Sunday evening, after taking ill en route and getting disembarked at Katni in MP.

Ms Subba was working in Vadodra, Gujarat, and was among 160 people from Sikkim who boarded a special train arranged to evacuate them to Sikkim.

She was travelling with her sister, and is reported to have taken ill overnight. By the time the train pulled into

Katni at around 5 in the morning, her health had deteriorated too much to make further travel advisable and she was disembarked and rushed to the district hospital there.

State Nodal Officer

**STOPPRESS:** As per the novel coronavirus test results released late Saturday evening by the District Hospital, Katni, both, the Late Chandra Subba and her sister have tested negative for nCoV.

for Evacuation, Rinzing Chewang Bhutia, in a video press briefing posted on Facebook today, informs that Ms Subba was diagnosed for Dengue at Katni and was also

suffering from acute dehydration. Her platelet-count was also very low and it was decided that she be shifted to Jabalpur Medical College which was better equipped to handle the complications

she had developed.

Unfortunately, she passed away while being taken to Jabalpur. The stress of the travel and taking care of her sister has also left Ms

Subba's sister fatigued and drained. She too has now been admitted to Jabalpur Medical College and receiving treatment there. Meanwhile, a COVID-19 test has been taken for both sisters and the results are awaited.

Secretary to the CM, SD Dhakal, informs that the State Government was in touch with the authorities in MP and Ms Subba's sister throughout and coordinating efforts to ensure the best treatment for them. Immediately upon learning of the situation, Rs 40,000 was deposited into her account to cover for any exigent expenses.

The State will also be bearing all costs for the funeral rites of the departed soul which are being overseen by the SDM-Jabalpur, it is informed.

Meanwhile, the Chief Minister has also mourned the death and conveyed his condolences to the bereaved family. He also announced an ex-gratia of Rs 2.5 lakh each for the departed mother's two children.

The State has also assured that the sister, who is under medical care in Jabalpur at present, will receive the best care and all required assistance from the State.

## India's COVID-19 death count rises by 120, record jump of nearly 5,000 new cases



**NEW DELHI, MAY 17 (PTI):** The death toll due to COVID-19 rose to 2,872 and the number of total positive cases climbed to 90,927 Sunday morning, registering an increase of 120 fatalities and a record jump of 4,987 new cases in 24 hours, since 8 AM Saturday, according to the Union Health Ministry.

The number of active COVID-19 cases stands at 53,946, while 34,108 people have recovered and one patient has migrated, it said. "Thus, around 37.51 per cent patients have recovered so far," a senior health ministry official said. Three states have reported over 10,000 cases so far with Maharashtra being the worst hit at 30,706 infections, followed by Gujarat (10,988) and Tamil Nadu 10,585.

The total confirmed cases include foreign nationals too who were tested in India. Of the 120 new deaths reported since Saturday morning, 67 were in Maharashtra, 19 in Gujarat, nine in Uttar Pradesh, seven in West Bengal, six in Delhi, four in Madhya Pradesh, three in Tamil Nadu and two in Haryana and one each from Andhra Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Rajasthan.

Of the total 2,872 fatalities, Maharashtra tops the tally with 1,135 fatalities, Gujarat comes second with 625 deaths, followed by Madhya Pradesh at 243, West Bengal at 232, Delhi at 129, Rajasthan at 126, Uttar Pradesh at 104, Tamil Nadu at 74 and Andhra Pradesh at 49. The death toll reached 36 in Karnataka, 34 Telangana and 32 in Punjab. Haryana has reported 13 fatalities due to the disease, Jammu and Kashmir has 12 deaths while Bihar has registered seven and Kerala has reported four deaths. Jharkhand, Chandigarh, Himachal Pradesh and Odisha have recorded three COVID-19 fatalities each, while Assam has reported two deaths. Meghalaya, Uttarakhand and Puducherry have reported one fatality each, according to the ministry data.

The ministry's website says 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 30,706, followed by Gujarat at 10,988, Tamil Nadu at 10,585, Delhi at 9,333, Rajasthan at 4,960, Madhya Pradesh at 4,789 and Uttar Pradesh at 4,258. The number of CO-

VID-19 cases has gone up to 2,576 in West Bengal, 2,355 in Andhra Pradesh and 1,946 in Punjab. It has risen to 1,509 in Telangana, 1,179 in Bihar, 1,121 in Jammu and Kashmir, 1,092 in Karnataka and 887 in Haryana. Odisha has reported 737 coronavirus infection cases so far, while Kerala has 587 cases. A total of 217 people have been infected with the virus in Jharkhand and 191 in Chandigarh. Tripura has reported 167 cases, Assam has 92 cases, Uttarakhand has 88, Himachal Pradesh has 78 cases, Chhattisgarh has 67 and Ladakh has registered 43 cases, so far. Thirty-three COVID-19 cases have been reported from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Goa have reported 17 COVID-19 cases, while Meghalaya and Puducherry have registered 13 cases each. Manipur has seven cases. Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh and Dadar and Nagar Haveli have reported a case each till now. "Our figures are being reconciled with the ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research)," the ministry said on its website. The state-wise distribution is subject to further verification and reconciliation, it said.

## Lockdown to continue till 31 May; Expected relaxations notified

**NEW DELHI, 17 MAY [PIB]:** Lockdown measures in place since March 24, 2020 have helped considerably in containing the spread of COVID-19. It has therefore been decided to further extend the lockdown till May 31, 2020.

Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Government of India (GoI) issued an order today under the Disaster Management (DM) Act, 2005, in this regard.

The salient features of the new guidelines are as follows:

**STATES TO DECIDE VARIOUS ZONES**

Under the new guidelines, States and Union Territories (UTs) will now delineate Red, Green and Orange zones taking into consideration the parameters shared by the Health Ministry.

The zones can be a district, or a municipal corporation/ municipality or even smaller administrative units such as subdivisions, etc, as decided by States and UTs.

Within the red and orange zones, containment and buffer zones will be demarcated by the local authorities, after taking into consideration the Health Ministry guidelines.

Within the containment zones, only essential activities shall be allowed. Strict perimeter control shall be maintained, and no movement of persons would be allowed, except for medical emergencies and for maintaining supply of essential goods and services. Buffer zones are areas adjoining each containment zone, where new *turn to pg 02*

## Kamarey to use lockdown hiatus to beautify



**SUMMIT REPORT  
RANGPO, 17 MAY:**

Kamarey under Budang Kamarey Gram Panchayat unit of Rhenock constituency has decided to beautify the village during this lockdown period.

Panchayat member, CP Bhattacharai, informs the initiative is moving

ahead on the slogan, "Build our own village" with the initial focus being on cleanliness.

He adds that the mission is being undertaken with due attention being paid to safety norms and social distancing rules.

Plantation and cleanliness drives and beautification efforts will be

supported by government and non-government organizations as well as social workers.

Roshan Mangar, President of Rangpo All Taxi Drivers Welfare Association, Rapden Thapa, Vice President, Suresh Chhetri, and Stand Secretary have already assured support.

## Reusing protective gear risks exposure to dangerous chemicals, experts warn

**HALLIE GOLDEN**

**SEATTLE, 17 MAY [THEGUARDIAN]:** Health workers in the US may be exposing themselves to dangerous chemicals by disinfecting and reusing their protective equipment, experts have warned.

Hospitals and other facilities have dealt with an extreme shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE), including N95 masks, gloves and gowns, by reusing equipment that would usually be discarded after use.

A range of practices to decontaminate equipment have been adopted, from storing equipment in paper bags for days, to using UV light and chemical disinfectants.

At Saint Catherine of Siena medical center, a hospital on Long Island, New York, healthcare workers reported spraying their reusable gowns with Virex II 256, a highly potent cleaner marketed for "hard, inanimate, nonporous surfaces" such as floors and walls.

In Colorado, health workers said they had been wiping down their face shields so frequently with the disinfectant CaviWipes that they became opaque.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offers guidance for healthcare practitioners reusing PPE

when there is a severe shortage, including potentially reusing cloth isolation gowns without laundering them and cleaning face shields with federally registered hospital disinfectants.

But Virex, CaviWipes and most products included on the Environmental Protection Agency's list of disinfectants for use against coronavirus have active ingredients that belong to a class of chemicals known as quaternary ammonium compounds, which release formaldehyde. Studies have shown these compounds can cause asthma, fertility issues and birth defects, and irritate the skin, eyes and lungs.

Ana Rule, director of the Exposure Assessment Lab at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, said these cleaners were most likely bought by the hospitals for very specific uses, such as sanitizing bed railings or other highly touched areas in isolation units.

She said: "Now these chemicals are being used everywhere. So you're increasing the risk and the exposure and the concentration because you're using them more broadly."

A spokesperson for Diversey, which makes Virex, said it does not recommend using it on porous fabric or soft surfaces.

The spokesperson said when Virex is used according to the instructions on the label, it is safe and effective.

KaVo Kerr, a manufacturer whose products include CaviWipes, said the cleaner has shown preliminary disinfectant success against the virus. Saint Catherine of Siena medical center did not respond to a request for comment.

Sarah Collins, an intensive care nurse at PeaceHealth Southwest medical center in Vancouver, Washington, said she and her colleagues have been wiping down the hoods of their powered air purifying respirators (PAPRs) every time they leave a potentially coronavirus-positive patient's room, with the disinfecting wipe SideKick or Super Sani-Cloth. She said auditing nurses check to make sure they are wiping the inside and outside of the hoods with these cleaners.

Collins said she and her colleagues noticed warnings on the labels, including "harmful if inhaled or absorbed through skin" and "do not get in eyes or on clothing", and became concerned.

She said: "A lot of us have felt like maybe our headaches and sore throats and fatigue have been caused by breathing in these harsh chemicals."

The hospital said in a statement the process was started in response to the shortages of PAPR hoods, and that the practice has involved drying them and checking the integrity of the equipment before putting them on.

The CDC described a similar type of disinfectant cleaning method on PAPRs as "generally effective for use during a pandemic", but cautioned that "chemical compatibility for PAPR components is not well understood". PAPR manufacturers strongly recommend avoiding quaternary ammonium compounds.

Using these disinfectants so frequently, especially inside the hoods, could pose acute and long-term health risks, according to Leslie Quirós-Alcalá, an assistant professor at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and an environmental epidemiologist.

"It's in the breathing zone. It's right there," she said. "It's prolonged periods because they're going to be there with patients for a while, so it is a concern."

A spokesperson for Stryker, the corporation whose products includes SideKick, emphasized the importance of customers following the product's instructions for use. Caitlin Stowe, of PDI Healthcare,

which produces Super Sani-Cloth, said some people can be sensitive to the chemicals in their products, and suggested wiping the PPE down with a paper towel to remove residual chemical.

These decontamination methods have been viewed very much as temporary measures designed to keep workers safe until cases subside and a vaccine is discovered. But it is unclear how long this will last.

Quirós-Alcalá said: "This is something we need to keep in mind, because we don't want to adopt practices for the long-term that may be detrimental to human health."

This issue extends beyond the cleaning methods used within the walls of these hospitals, with companies now offering cleaning services for PPE, in order to allow for a simpler and more centralized system of decontamination and reuse.

David Pratt, health and safety representative for the New York State Nurses Association, gave the example of Medline Industries, a healthcare company that has been decontaminating masks using ethylene oxide. The CDC and 3M have said this is not recommended, and the CDC referenced *turn to pg 02*



## GST compensation to states pending for Dec-March FY20

**NEW DELHI, MAY 17 (PTI):** Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday said GST compensation is due to all the states for the four-month period of December-March.

"We are periodically talking about it. GST dues are very clearly explained in the GST Council. It is not for selective states... All states' GST dues which we recognise for December, January, February, March have not been paid," Sitharaman told reporters here.

Under GST law, states are guaranteed to be paid for any loss of revenue in the first five years of the GST implementation from July 1, 2017. The shortfall is calculated assuming a 14 per cent annual growth in GST collections by states over the base year of 2015-16.

Under the GST structure, taxes are levied under 5, 12, 18 and 28 per cent slabs. On top of the



highest tax slab, a cess is levied on luxury, sin and demerit goods and the proceeds from the same are used to compensate states for any revenue loss. There were no differences between the Centre and states with regard to compensation payment in 2017-18, 2018-19 and in the first four months (April-July) of the previous fiscal (2019-20).

However, with revenue mop-up from compensation cess falling, the Centre held back fund transfer to states

beginning August. Following this, states raised the issue with the Centre and in December 2019, Rs 35,298 crore was released as compensation for August-September, while Rs 34,053 crore was released in two instalments in February and April as compensation for October-November.

The Centre has, so far, released over Rs 2.45 lakh crore as GST compensation to states since the implementation of the new indirect tax regime on July 1, 2017.

### Lockdown to ...

cases are more likely to appear. In the buffer zones, more caution needs to be exercised.

#### ACTIVITIES PROHIBITED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY

A limited number of activities will continue to remain prohibited throughout the country. These include

- all domestic and international air travel of passengers, except for domestic medical services, domestic air ambulance and for security purposes or purposes as permitted by MHA;
- metro rail services;
- running of schools, colleges, educational and training/coaching institutions;
- hotels, restaurants and other hospitality services, except for the running of canteens in bus depots, railway stations and airports;
- places of large public gatherings such as cinemas, shopping malls, gymnasiums entertainment parks, etc.;
- social, political, cultural and similar gatherings and other large congregations; and, access to religious places/places of worship for public.

However, online/ distance learning shall be permitted and encouraged; and, restaurants will be allowed to operate kitchens for home delivery of food items.

#### OPENING UP OF SPORTS ACTIVITIES

Sports complexes and stadia will be permitted to open only for sports activities. However, spectators will not be allowed in these complexes.

#### ACTIVITIES PERMITTED WITH RESTRICTIONS

In order to facilitate the movement of persons, various modes of transport have already been opened up. Movement of individuals by trains has been permitted earlier by MHA through an order dated 11.05.2020. Further, evacuation of foreign nationals from India, return of stranded Indian nationals from abroad, sign-on and sign-off of Indian seafarers, and intra-State and inter-State movement of stranded persons by bus and train, will continue to be allowed.

Inter-State movement of vehicles and buses has also been allowed with mutual consent of the concerned States/ UTs. Intra-State movement of vehicles and buses can be decided by the States and UTs.

#### NATIONAL DIRECTIVES FOR COVID-19 MANAGEMENT

The guidelines specify the National Directives for COVID-19 management, which shall apply to public places and work places.

Under these guidelines, wearing of face covers is compulsory; spitting will be punishable with fine as may be prescribed in accordance with its laws, rules or regulations by the State/ UT local authority; and social distancing is to be followed by all persons in public places and in transport. Marriage related gathering shall not have more than 50 guests. For funerals/ last rites, the maximum number of persons allowed has been kept at 20. Consumption of liquor, paan, gutkha and tobacco etc., is not allowed in public places.

The National Directives also stipulate additional requirements for work places. The practice of work from home (WfH) should be followed to the extent possible; and staggering of work hours should be adopted in respect of all offices and other establishments. There should be provision for thermal scanning, hand wash and sanitizers at all entry and exit points and common areas; and all work places and other sensitive locations are to be sanitized regularly. In work places, social distancing would also need to be ensured through adequate distance between workers, adequate gaps between shifts, staggering the lunch break of staff and so on.

#### STIPULATIONS REGARDING SHOPS AND MARKETS

Local authorities should ensure that shops and markets open with staggered timings, so as to ensure social distancing. All shops shall also have to ensure six feet distance (2 gaz ki doori) among customers and also not allow more than 5 persons at one time.

#### NIGHT CURFEW

Night Curfew shall continue to remain in force on the movement of individuals, for all non-essential activities, between 7 pm and 7 am.

#### PROTECTION FOR VULNERABLE PERSONS

Vulnerable persons, i.e., persons above 65 years of age, persons with co-morbidities, pregnant women, and children below the age of 10 years, shall stay at home, except for meeting essential requirements and for health purposes.

ALL ACTIVITIES TO BE PERMITTED other than the limited number of those that are prohibited or restricted

All other activities will be permitted except those which are specifically prohibited under these guidelines. However, in containment zones, only essential activities shall be allowed, as mentioned earlier.

#### STATES TO DECIDE ON ACTIVITIES WITHIN VARIOUS ZONES

States/ UTs, based on their assessment of the situation, may prohibit certain other activities in the various zones, or impose such restrictions as deemed necessary.

#### USE OF AAROGYA SETU

The Aarogya Setu mobile application is a powerful tool built by Government of India to facilitate quick identification of persons infected by COVID-19, or at risk of being infected, thus acting as a shield for individuals and the community. With a view to ensure safety in offices and work places, employers on best effort basis should ensure that the application is installed by all employees having compatible mobile phones.

District authorities have been asked to advise individuals to install the Aarogya Setu application on compatible mobile phones and regularly update their health status on the app. This will facilitate timely provision of medical attention to those individuals who are at risk. State/ UT Governments shall continue to strictly enforce the lockdown guidelines and they shall not dilute these guidelines issued under the Disaster Management Act, 2005, in any manner.

## Consumers footfall increase, average basket value goes up at retail stores in lockdown 3.0

**NEW DELHI, MAY 17 (PTI):** Leading retailers have witnessed an increase in number of footfalls along with a significant jump in average purchase value in the third phase of the lockdown.

According to industry players such as Metro Cash & Carry, Lots Wholesale Solutions, Future Group and V-Mart Retail, as restrictions were eased more stores could open thereby increasing customer walk-ins, availability of popular FMCG products and high-value items.

Some of the items that saw increased demand in the third phase of lockdown include dry fruits, frozen non-vegetarian products, personal care products - grooming, cold beverages and premium products.

Supply of these products was disrupted in the previous two phases of the lockdown imposed from March 25 to control the spread of coronavirus pandemic.

"The footfalls have gone up by a third over the previous lockdown as restrictions are getting eased especially in Karnataka, Delhi and Telangana," Metro Cash & Carry India MD & CEO Arvind Mediratta told PTI.

He said there are several factors which impact store walk-ins, operational timings of the store along-with other factors in that particular city that play a role in store footfalls.

Expressing similar views, Lots Wholesale Solutions Managing Director Tanit Chearavanont said as restrictions on movement are being eased, the number of footfalls is increasing in stores along with average purchase value.

"With every passing day and government providing some ease in movement, we have witnessed increased footfall at our stores largely from local kiranas and retailers during the lockdown and overall the average purchase value per customer has gone up," he said.

Value fashion and lifestyle products retailer V-Mart Retail said the number of its operational stores pan-India has gone up, so also the number of customers.

"Earlier, one store has an average visit of around 40-50 customers which now has gone up to 130 to 150 per day. The basket size has also increased as people still have some tendency to hoard," said V-Mart Retail Chairman and MD Lalit Agarwal.

According to him, in May and June, some marriages were scheduled. As restrictions were eased, low profile marriage happened in limited small groups and people have done some shoppings, which has turned the situation favourable.

According to Mediratta, in the third phase availability of

popular brands has increased and customers are returning back to them again preferring over the local and private labels.

"A major trend that we witnessed in the second phase was that customers were ready to switch to local brands in the same product category. If their favourite brands were not available, they were happy to transition to a private label brand," he said. "With the government easing out manufacturing and measures taken to open the economy, consumers have started to pick up brands again with availability improving and are demanding value added categories."

Future Group President Food & FMCG Kamaldeep Singh said that though the situation is still not close to normal but average purchase by a customer has gone up.

"Number of footfalls and shopping trips are still down but the average value of the bill is higher due to lesser number of visits by a customer," he said adding "customers are largely picking staples, food items and personal hygiene products".

However, Singh also added that customers have still not started picking personal care products like deodorant, skin care, vanity and beauty products. Walmart India, which operates Best Price cash & carry

stores, witnessed a spike on demand of staples and hygiene products and expects a pent-up demand in the non-essential categories, which was opened in the third phase of the lockdown.

"With non-essential categories opening up, we expect some pent up demand in small kitchen and home appliances like irons, kettles, pressure cookers, and fans," said Anuj Singh, Chief Merchandising Officer, Best Price Walmart India.

In the coming days retailers are hoping for a further easing of restriction as they continue to face some supply constraints as most of FMCG companies are not operating in full swing.

"We expect the government to ease restrictions in all the zones. The situation should normalise, and the demand & supply should become more consistent," said Chearavanont.

While Mediratta has suggested, the state authorities to work in unison with the central government so there is seamless functioning of businesses across sectors.

"The list of essential items should be further extended and all stores should be allowed to operate without any restrictions on timings," he added.

India is presently going through an unprecedented lockdown from March 25 to prevent the spread of the coronavirus with the third phase ending on Sunday.

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**What is Novel Coronavirus - nCoV?**

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

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Symptoms of nCoV</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fever</li> <li>● Difficulty in breathing</li> <li>● Dry Cough</li> <li>● Severe acute respiratory syndrome</li> <li>● Pneumonia - like symptoms</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Precautions to Prevent nCoV</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Wash your hands often with soap.</li> <li>● Use an alcohol based hand sanitizer</li> <li>● Observe good personal hygiene.</li> <li>● Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.</li> <li>● Avoid contact with people with possible symptoms.</li> <li>● Avoid contact with animals and consumption of undercooked meats.</li> <li>● Avoid travel to nCoV affected places.</li> <li>● Wear a mask if you have respiratory syndrome. and cover your mouth while coughing or sneezing.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Treatment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Treatment is symptomatic and supportive, based on the patient's clinical condition.</li> <li>● No vaccinations available as of now.</li> <li>● Visit Doctor in case symptoms detected.</li> </ul>	



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**WEST : 9583297809**  
**NORTH : 9641957468**  
**SOUTH : 7407691463**  
 New STNM  
**AMS : 9434711402**

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE**  
**GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM**

### Reusing protective...

the fact that this is carcinogenic and chronic inhalation has been linked to neurologic dysfunction.

"The idea that this would be used on these products that you put on your face afterwards is just outrageous," Pratt told the Guardian.

Medline did not respond to a request for comment.

In recent weeks, at least half a dozen practices for disinfecting N95 masks have also been shown to decrease the filtration efficiency and thus make it possible for viral particles to get through, according to Melissa J Perry, chair of environmental and occupational health at George Washington University. These include using quaternary ammonium compounds, as well as bleach and ethanol.

The only protocols that appear to safely disinfect these masks are hydrogen peroxide vapor, UV radiation and a 65-90C heat treatment, Perry said.

### KUTSE SHEGU

The kutse Shegu of Late Bhaichung Bhutia of Upper Chandmari below Enchey Monastery

TV. Tower "Vinakay Mission Hostel" who left for his heavenly abode on 2nd April 2020 falls on 20th May 2020. Due to the current COVID 19 situation and social distancing norms, the bereaved family would like to request all the family, friends and well wishers to pray for the departed soul in their own homes.



#### Chungden Bhutia (Wife)

6294475441

#### N.T Bhutia (Father-in-law)

9775821266

#### Tashi Tshering Bhutia (Brother)

9609850653/8918590228

#### Laden Bhutia (Sister in law)

9593785714/8918059921

## ~ 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 9593737387 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

### SHUTTER SHOT

Sikkim has proven itself to be the state of divinity and peace always and ever. Shriaadi Entertainments have come forward with a creative PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST to enhance the talent of photography in ourselves. The contest is also with an objective to set an example in the society of how a LOCKDOWN can be PRODUCTIVE!

For further details Like and Follow page Shriaadi Entertainments in Facebook and Instagram.

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# Covid-19 Impact on Sikkimese Economy

SD TSHERING

The outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic has affected political, social, economic, religious and financial structures of the whole world. The world's top-most economies such as the US, China, UK, Germany, France, Italy, Japan and many others are on the verge of collapse. Economists predict that the global economy could shrink by up to 1 per cent in 2020 due to this pandemic, a reversal from the previous forecast of 2.5 per cent growth.

The UN has warned that it may contract even further if restrictions on the economic activities are extended without adequate fiscal responses. Early estimates predict that, most major economies will lose at least 2.4 percent of the value of their gross domestic product (GDP) over 2020.

The economic impact of the 2019–20 corona virus pandemic in India has been largely disruptive. The World Bank and credit rating agencies have downgraded India's growth for fiscal year 2021 to the lowest figures since India's economic liberalization in the 1990s. As per the World Bank's latest assessment, India is expected to grow between 1.5 per cent to 2.8 per cent in the current year. The IMF had projected a GDP growth of 1.9 per cent for India in 2020. The Indian economy is likely to witness a sharp contraction of 4.5 per cent during Q4 FY20 and is expected to recover gradually, to post a GDP growth of just 2 per cent in FY21 as per assessment of the rating agencies.

However, the impact of the lockdown due to the pandemic on Sikkim GSDP will be minimal. The sectoral contribution to the state GSDP shows that the largest contributor to the state GSDP comes from the manufacturing sector which mainly comprises of hydel power projects and pharmaceutical companies which were unaffected by the lockdown.

The primary sector was not badly affected since Sikkim has very few cash crops and their production mainly remained unaffected. COVID-19 has disrupted some activities in agriculture and supply chains in the rest of the country. Preliminary reports show that the non-availability of migrant labor is interrupting some harvesting activities, particularly in northwest India where wheat and pulses are being harvested.

There are disruptions in supply chains because of transportation problems and other issues. In contrast to other states whic depend on agriculture, Sikkim does not depend on migrant labourers for agriculture. There have been some marketing difficulties for vegetables but this has been partly taken care of by the government and the traders. The flower trade was affected, but the volume marketed during the lockdown does not amount to a very high figure. Overall the primary sector is likely to lose around 4% in its contribution to the GSDP. One sector which was affected is the sector comprising Real estate, ownership of dwellings & BS which is likely to suffer a 11% contraction in its contribution to the GSDP with this sector losing over Rs133 crores due to the lockdown. The transport sector has also been hit financially and it is estimated that this sector suffered a loss of over Rs 55 crores. The lockdown of government offices has caused a financial loss of over Rs100 crores in salaries to employees during the lockdown. The impact of the lockdown is felt in all sectors but the shock is minimum. The overall impact on the GSDP growth is estimated around four percent,inspite of this downturn the GSDP growth will still be among the highest in the country.

India is big on cultural and historical tourism, attracting domestic and foreign nationals throughout the year. But with visas being suspended and tourist attractions being shut indefinitely, the whole tourism value chain, which includes hotels, restaurants, attractions, agents, and operators is expected to face losses worth thousands of crores. Experts believe the tourism industry is likely to take a massive hit, and it could end up crippling the industry for the foreseeable future. The Indian tourism industry is projected to book a revenue loss of Rs 1.25 trillion in calendar 2020 as a fall out of the shutdown of hotels and suspension in flight operations after the onset and spread of the corona virus pandemic.

Sikkim which depends heavily on tourism for employment and income to the general public is also badly affected by the lockdown. The tourist season which is mainly divided into summer and winter seasons has seen the summer period being fully wiped out. As most experts around the world predict that the corona pandemic will not ease till a vaccine is found. This will be further affect tourism sector. The

winter tourist season will likely see not many tourist due to the fear of the disease, leading to huge financial loss to the people depending on this sector. The outlook for the next year is also bleak. Unlike other sectors who can recover after the lockdown this sector cannot make up for the loss suffered during tour-

GSDP at Current Prices, Sectoral Contribution 2018-19**			
	Sectors	% contribution	Rs in lacs
1	Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	11.55	290372
1.1	Crops	9.79	246142
1.2	Livestock	1.47	36892
1.3	Forestry & logging	0.26	6550
1.4	Fishing	0.03	788
2	Mining & quarrying	0.07	1855
a	Total of Primary Sector	11.62	292228
3	Manufacturing	44.11	1109147
4	Electricity,gas and Water supply	12.94	325324
5	Construction	4.52	113593
b	Total of Secondary Sector	61.56	1548064
6	Trade,hotels and restaurants	4.41	110786
7	Transport,storage & communication	2.65	66538
7.1	Railways	0.00	0
7.2	Transport by other means	1.99	50121
7.3	Storage	0.00	0
7.4	Communication	0.65	16417
8	Banking & Insurance	1.31	32925
9	Real estate, ownership of dwellings & BS	4.30	108192
10	Public administration	5.92	148971
11	Other services	8.23	207060
c.	Total of Tertiary Sector	26.82	674471
12	Per Capita Income (in Rs.)		405842
13	GSDP growth		14.9

data source: DESM&E

ist seasons since their income is seasonal. The losses in the tourism sector has a wide effect on all income groups ranging from tourist guides to hotel owners. This sector will see a contribution loss of over 9% to the GSDP. It is estimated that the hospitality sector and allied services is likely to suffer a financial loss of over Rs 700 crores during the summer tourist season. Similar amount will be lost if the winter tourist season does not pick up. The tourism sector contributes a lot to employment and income, trickle down benefit of which reaches the bottom level of the society. A failure of the winter tourist season and the next years summer season will be a great set back for this sector resulting in loss of income and employment. Most hotels have been built on borrowed money and failure of a tourist season will result in default of loan payment since more lessee will either not renew their lease or be unable to pay the lease amount. A long depressed tourist inflow can have very serious consequences on financial health of this sector. The ability of this sector to bounce back was seen when the Gorkha land agitation disrupted the tourist inflow for more than two months but this time the disruption can be much longer and the consequences can be more serious due to the nature of the lockdown.

Since the tourism sector is the most promising sector for the state in terms of employment and income generation, it is important that the government extend a helping hand to support this segment of the economy. Unlike revenue rich states which are able to extend direct cash support the Sikkim government can provide indirect financial help by way of waiver of fee, taxes and charges on hotels including homestays, restaurants, taxis which would approximately come around Rupees 15 crores.

This pandemic has revealed the inherent weakness of our tourism sector showing the over dependence on outsiders in this sector. Most hotels are being run by outsiders since locals do not have the expertise and the confidence to run their own hotel. Due to the lack of proper marketing of hotels locals do not possess the skill and knowledge to attract customers. Most hotel owners prefer leasing their hotel so that some income is assured to pay the loans and earn some income. Majority of the manpower engaged in hotels is also non locals due to the reluctance of locals to work in hotels. Most taxi drivers and other related

trade connected to tourism are also dependent on non locals.

This reliance on outsiders results in large outflow of money outside the state. If the outflow of money is to be curbed and local employment generated the government will have to take several remedial mea-

Approximate Financial burden on waiver for one year for hotel and restaurants and taxi	In crores
Electricity charge	9.50
Water charge	00.11
Hotel License fee	00.15
Garbage fee	00.8
Bar license	2.5
Taxi token tax and fitness fee	1.50
Total	14.56

ITEMS	Approximate value in crores VALUE IN RS IN CRORES
Room rent loss for three months for hotels	378.00
Hotel/Restaurant staff salaries three months	27.00
Travel agency staff salaries three months	0.80
Travel agent commission loss three months	44.00
Taxi income loss three months	120.00
Lockdown loss to restaurants/eater-ies	121.00
Loss of lease amount for six months	63.00
Revenue loss from Nathula permits for three months	1.27

CATEGORY	NUMBERS
Hotels	630
Homestay	894
Hotels /homestay rooms	15647
Restaurants	1400
Hotel employees	15000
Registered travel agencies	1450
Registered guide/photographer	50
Data source: Tourism dept & DESM&E	

Marketing of hotels is the biggest weakness that the government would have to find a solution. The government will have to implement a marketing strategy for all hotels to assure the local hotel owners that their hotels will have passengers to fill the hotel rooms. Youths must be encouraged to take employment in the hospitality sector and free training be provided. The Institute of Hotel Management in Rumtek needs more attention and strengthening at the moment there are very few local students and majority are from outside.

The hotel industry may not return to business as usual in terms of hygiene, cleanliness and distancing. Hotel owners and operators will need to adapt to a new reality where a much larger percentage of guests are what would have formerly been referred to as germaphobes will now be the new normal and their need for better hygiene standards will have to be catered to. Cleanliness manager will have to be appointed for developing, implementing and updating a cleanliness plan. Hotels must make efforts to convince guests that a hotel is safe and clean. This would require all hotel owners to take steps being taken to sanitize or otherwise modify the hotel to minimize the chances of an outbreak or contagion event in the establishment. The plan should be updated regularly based on changing governmental reports, information or events in and around the hotel, and other relevant circumstances. In this effort the government will have to lend a helping hand to the hotel owners through grants of some incentives and soft loans to update their hotel functioning. Hygiene standards must also be applied to transport and restaurants to assure the visitors of their health safety. It is high time that the government draw up a long term tourism plan and implement it. There has been sporadic attempts to draw up a tourism plan with little intention to implement it. The post pandemic tourist sector all over the world will be very different and competitive. If Sikkim is unprepared for the change this sector will not revive. Special attention to development and strengthening of infrastructure like roads, water supply and electric-

ity supply especially in tourist spots have to be made immediately. Sanitation which will now be a big factor in attracting tourist will have to be in place through better sewerage system, waste disposal and toilet facilities at all tourist sites. Government must now spend more funds in marketing the state which at the

present is sadly missing. A long term marketing plan with sufficient funds for it must be made if Sikkim is to compete in the tourism sector of the world. To balance the need to protect the state from the corona virus pandemic and the desire to attract tourists, t he state can either make health certificate compulsory for tourist similar to some countries and states or implement a robust screening process at the borders.

The corona pandemic has forced every country to relook at their economy due to the impact of the disease and make changes to minimize the economic impact in future disasters. Sikkim like all Indian states will also need to make a detail evaluation of its economy to cope with the after effects of the pandemic. Presently the hydel power projects and pharmaceutical companies are the biggest contributor to the GSDP but their contribution in terms of revenue and employment generation to the state does not match their high input to the GSDP. This mismatch has artificially boosted the growth of state GSDP and has given Sikkim the highest per capita income in the country instilling a false scenario of growth

in the state. The state government will have to relook the industrialization policy keeping in view the revenue generation and employment generation of industries to be encouraged in the state. Agreements between the government and private parties need a serious scrutiny to prevent undue advantage to private parties when undertaking projects in the state.

Employment generation must be given importance in view of the state dependence on migrant workers in all sectors. The outflow of migrant workers is going to have serious consequences on the state economy and remedial measures must be planned to reduce the negative impact. A long term plan to wean away youths from government jobs and encourage them to enter the private sector must be drawn up immediately. Strengthening of polytechnics and introduction of vocational training required for skilled and semi skilled jobs in the state must be taken up urgently.

Dependence on migrant workers for skilled and semi skilled work must be targeted to be reduced in construction, hospitality, mechanical, trade etc. The agriculture sector which is one of the big contributors to the GSDP is lacking in manpower which has decelerated its growth; the need now in this sector is to make farming more profitable and attractive to youths or mechanization to reduce the requirement for manpower. Marketing of agriculture products must be given priority if agriculture income is to be raised. Services sector also offers plenty of opportunity to youths of Sikkim but they require the right skill and knowledge to succeed in this field, requisite training must be imparted to help the youth in this field. The time has come to look for out of the book solutions to boost the state economy by generating more revenue and income through additional employment opportunities. This pandemic effect on the economy is going to be long term and only those economies will come out unscathed which learn to adapt to the new environment.

## Reliance strikes 4th deal, sells 1.34 pc in Jio Platforms for 6,598.38 cr to General Atlantic

**NEW DELHI, MAY 17 (PTI):** Reliance Industries on Sunday announced the sale of 1.34 per cent stake in its digital unit to global equity firm General Atlantic for Rs 6,598.38 crore, the fourth deal in less than four weeks that will inject a combined Rs 67,194.75 crore in the oil-to-telecom conglomerate to help it pare debt.

“This investment values Jio Platforms at an equity value of Rs 4.91 lakh crore and an enterprise value of Rs 5.16 lakh crore. General Atlantic’s investment will translate into a 1.34 per cent equity stake

in Jio Platforms on a fully diluted basis,” the company said in a statement.

The deal follows Facebook picking up a 9.99 per cent stake in the firm that houses India’s youngest but largest telecom firm on April 22 for Rs 43,574 crore. Within days of that deal, Silver Lake - the world’s largest tech investor - bought a 1.15 per cent stake in Jio Platforms for Rs 5,665.75 crore. On May 8, US-based Vista Equity Partners bought 2.32 per cent stake in Jio Platforms for Rs 11,367 crore. “With this investment, Jio Platforms has raised Rs 67,194.75 crore

from leading technology investors, including Facebook, Silver Lake, Vista Equity Partners and General Atlantic in less than four weeks,” the statement said.

Strategic and financial investors are to form 20 per cent of Jio Platforms. Between the four deals, Reliance has sold 14.8 per cent of Jio Platforms and more such investments are likely in near future.

Ambani, 63, chairman and managing director of Reliance, had in August last year set a target of March 2021, to make his conglomerate net debt-free. But thanks

to the Facebook deal, a Rs 53,125 crore rights issue, private equity investments, and more stake sale to companies such as Saudi Aramco, the target is likely to be achieved by December.

At the end of March quarter, Reliance had an outstanding debt of Rs 3,36,294 crore and cash in hand of Rs 1,75,259 crore. After adjusting cash, the net debt came to Rs 1,61,035 crore. Of the outstanding debt, Rs 2,62,000 crore is on Reliance books and Rs 23,000 crore is with Jio. Jio Platforms, a wholly-owned subsidiary

of Reliance Industries Ltd, is a next-generation technology company. Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd, with 388 million mobile subscribers, will continue to be a wholly-owned subsidiary of Jio Platforms.

General Atlantic is a leading global growth equity firm with a 40-year track record of investing in the technology, consumer, financial services and healthcare sectors. It has a longstanding tradition of backing disruptive entrepreneurs and companies around the world, including Airbnb, Alibaba, Ant Financial, Box, Byte-

Dance, Facebook, Slack, Snapchat, Uber and other global technology leaders.

Mukesh Ambani, Chairman and Managing Director of Reliance Industries, said, “I have known General Atlantic for several decades and greatly admired it for its belief in India’s huge growth potential. We are excited to leverage General Atlantic’s proven global expertise and strategic insights across 40 years of technology investing for the benefit of Jio”.

Bill Ford, Chief Executive Officer of General Atlantic, said that

as long-term backers of global technology leaders and visionary entrepreneurs, GA could not be more excited about investing in Jio. “We share Mukesh’s conviction that digital connectivity has the potential to significantly accelerate the Indian economy and drive growth across the country. General Atlantic has a long track record working alongside founders to scale disruptive businesses, as Jio is doing at the forefront of the digital revolution in India,” Ford said.

Akash Ambani, Direc-

tor of Reliance Jio, said: “We are delighted that a renowned global investor like General Atlantic is partnering with us in our journey to digitally empower India and Indians”.

Jio is committed to make a digitally inclusive India that will provide immense opportunities to every Indian citizen especially to highly talented youth. General Atlantic’s endorsement and partnership energises Jio’s young team to set, and achieve, even more ambitious goals in our onward march, he noted.



## ‘Other Workers’ Have Taken the Lead

***So, while traditional occupations are supported, think for the “others” as well***

Some years, in fact, more than some years ago, a workshop/ seminar ambitiously titled, “Job Profile, Life Management, Skills Orientation Program for Educated Youth of Sikkim” travelled across the State for a week. It was an ambitious initiative given the number of commas dividing the many tasks it aimed to address apart from being a workshop and a seminar bundled into one. The basic idea was obviously to support the skill and capacity development initiative underway at the time and being earnestly enough pursued to still make the news occasionally. The idea was well placed though in that it was help the youth still in school zero in on their future prospects well in time. That special focus, however, did deliver better than the tokenism which has traditionally plagued departmental, especially HRDD, undertakings and that was unfortunate because agriculture, despite what the Organic enforcement might want us to believe, is no longer the highest employer in the State.

As per Census 2011, cultivators and agricultural labourers [as of 2011] make up 46.5% of the total workers in Sikkim. That is a substantial number, but a decade earlier, this segment made up a majority of the workers at 56.4% in 2001. Perhaps for the first time in Sikkim’s history, “other workers” now make a majority of the workforce at 51.8%, having grown from their proportion of 42% in 2001. Agriculture is not receiving any new hands, so in the seven years that have passed since the last head-count, the number of other workers could have grown substantially more. The definition of “other workers” as per the Census operation is very loose, it is anyone who is not a cultivator or an agricultural labourer or a household industry worker. Simply put, the aspiration to become farmers has dulled substantially in Sikkim, and even as this trend needs to be addressed more seriously, one needs to also address the counseling needs of an increasing number of young who aspire to join the “other workers” club in Sikkim. In that sense, the skill development effort mounted through the Livelihood Schools was a move well ahead of its time and one which should be refined and made more effective to meet the aspirations of Sikkim’s young; job profiling and skills orientation should hence deliver more lucidly.

Even as this happens, Sikkim needs to also address the falling proportion of farmers. It needs to recognize that enterprise is not developed to a level high enough to become a majority employer and agriculture deserves to be reinforced to provide the foundation for its economic plans. This is also important because projections for agriculture are ambitious in Sikkim with an intense Organic Mission underway here.

The setting is also perfect. Nature endows Sikkim as the land of bountiful, agriculture is a traditional occupation and organic farming is a well advised value addition for the farms here. What is however still a worrying reality is the lethargy that continues to define the Horticulture and Agriculture Departments and the inexcusable disinterest with which they engage with the farmers. And no, And no, enforcing the ban on non-organic produce does not count as engagement because engagement would require supporting organic farming (and there is a difference) which they have clearly not done a great job of.

Given the expansive presence of government in all sectors then, it is hardly surprising that agriculture, like any other private sector activity here, is yet to shine. Granted there have been flashes of excellence, but these are either individual achievements or targeted project interventions. The universal pursuit to grow more and grow relevant is not palpable yet. Not enough young are obviously taking to revamped traditional occupations and economies. The support mechanism has been instituted in most cases, but most are blowing bubbles because government officials continue to talk down to the stakeholders instead of deliberating with them to refine the State’s policy.

That said, the problem is also not only in the support that the State provides its farmers or entrepreneurs; it is also in the attitude of the farmers and the entrepreneurs themselves. They are, let’s accept it, simply not driven enough to realize that the market is thirsting for some local enterprise, but entrepreneurs refuse to display the motivation or the hunger to succeed. The State, if anything, is guilty of making the people lethargic. Locals, anywhere in the world, are rarely well disposed towards hard work. In Sikkim, the spoon-feeding by the State machinery makes hard work an even rarer commodity. The spoon however has rubbed thin and the sooner people realize this, the faster will Sikkim boom sustainably.



## After coronavirus: Global youth reveal that the social value of art has never mattered more

KATHLEEN GALLAGHER  
*theconversation.com*

Health and government officials around the globe are slowly and ever-so-tentatively moving to relax lockdowns due to coronavirus.

In Canada, where the possibility of health-care collapse seems to have been averted (for the time being), some are beginning to ask questions other than “when will the pandemic end?” Instead, they’re turning towards “how will we move forward?”

Young people have some answers that warrant our attention. Over the past five years, through my collaborative ethnographic research with 250 young people in drama classrooms in Canada, India, Taiwan, Greece and England, I have gained remarkable insight into these young people’s experiences and assessments of the world.

I found crisis after crisis being shouldered by young people. Through their theatre-making, they documented their concerns and hope, and they rallied around common purposes. They did this despite disagreement and difference.

Beyond simply creating art for art’s sake, or for school credits, many of the young people I encountered are building social movements and creative projects around a different vision for our planet. And they are calling us in. This is an unprecedented moment for intergenerational justice and we need to seize it.

### CRISES ARE CONNECTED

I have had an up-close look at how seemingly disparate crises around the globe are deeply connected through divisive systems that don’t acknowledge or respect youth concerns. I have also learned how young people are disproportionately affected by the misguided politics of a fractured world.

In England, young people were burdened by the divisive rhetoric of the Brexit campaign and its ensuing aftermath.

In India, young women were using their education to build solidarity in the face of dehumanizing gender oppression.

In Greece, young people were shouldering the weight of a decade-long economic crisis compounded by a horrifying refugee crisis.

In Taiwan, young people on the cusp of adulthood were trying to square the social pressures of traditional culture with their own ambitions in a far-from-hopeful economic landscape.

In Toronto, youth tried to understand why the

rhetoric of multiculturalism seemed both true and false, and why racism persists — and, in so doing, they spoke from perspectives grounded in their intersectional (white, racialized, sexual- and gender-diverse) identities.

They embraced the reality that everything in popular culture may enter a drama classroom. But they responded to current news stories — like the 2016 presidential debates in the United States — by saying that they had different and more pressing concerns, like mental health support and transphobia.

### HOPE THROUGH CREATIVE WORK

Today’s young people are a generation that has come of age during a host of global crises. Inequality, environmental destruction, systemic oppression of many kinds weigh heavily.

I found a youth cohort who, despite many not yet having the right to vote, have well-honed political capacities, are birthing countless global hashtag movements and inspiring generations of young and old.

These marginalized youth are aware that their communities have been living with and responding to catastrophic impacts of crises of injustice and inequalities long before now.

### PRACTISING HOPE

How do these youth live with their awareness of global injustices and what these imply for the years ahead? We learned some disturbing things: as young people age and move further away from their primary relationships (parents, teachers, schoolmates), they feel less optimistic about their personal futures.

But in terms of hope, we learned something very recognizable to many of us now: many young people practise hope, even when they feel hopeless. They do this both in social movements they participate in and in creative work they undertake with others.

This is something we can all learn from. In Canada, we are maintaining social distancing as a shared effort. Acting together by keeping apart is how we are flattening the curve, as all the experts continue to tell us.

We know that in communities around the world, government leadership matters enormously. But citizens, social trust and collective will matter at least as much.

### POLARIZATION

In this pandemic, institutions, like universities, businesses and individual citizens have stepped up remarkably in the interests of the common good and our shared fate.

However, Jennifer Welsh, Canada Research Chair in Global Governance and Security at McGill University, argues that the defining feature of the last decade is polarization, existing across many different liberal democracies and globally.

Along with this, the value of fairness has been deeply corroded because of growing inequality and persistent historic inequalities we have failed to address, like Indigenous sovereignty and land rights in Canada.

In the context of the rise of populist politicians and xenophobic policies globally, and also the rise of the most important progressive social movements in decades, my research has taught me that in this driven-apart, socio-economic landscape, the social value of art has never been more important.

People are making sense of the inexplicable or the feared through art, using online platforms for public learning. Art has become a point of contact, an urgent communication and a hope.

But some are still without shelter, without food, without community and without proper health care. The differences are stark.

### MOVING FORWARD

Arundhati Roy has imagined this pandemic as a kind of portal we are walking through: we can “walk through it lightly ... ready to imagine another world.” We can choose to be “ready to fight for it.”

It’s time to put global youth at the centre of our responses to crises. Otherwise, young people will inherit a planet devastated by our uncoordinated efforts to act, worsening a crisis of intergenerational equity.

We should of course develop a vaccine and, in Canada, stop underfunding our public health-care system. But we must also flatten the steep curves we have tolerated for too long. For a start, we could act on wealth disparity and social inequality.

But our response to the pandemic could also illuminate new responses to fundamental problems: disrespect for the diversity of life in all its forms and lack of consideration for future generations.

Youth expression through theatre and in social movements are valuable ways to learn how youth are experiencing, processing and communicating their understandings of the profound challenges our world faces. How powerfully our post-pandemic planning could shift if we changed who is at decision-making tables and listened to youth.

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## Why more must be done to fight bogus COVID-19 cure claims

CHIMARAOKE IZUGBARA  
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Fake and bogus cure claims are a longstanding, but neglected public health problem. Throughout recorded history, plagues have inspired anxiety and desperation. Time and again, this public nervousness has proved a fertile ground for false cures and claimants to thrive. In this sense, recent claims of COVID-19 cures and antidotes are no exception.

During the Spanish flu, cure claims generated a false sense of safety that drove hundreds to defy closures and isolation. In the US, scores of bogus remedies alleging to cure the flu were sold under upbeat labels that undermined preventive action. One ad boasted: “When Vick’s VapoRub is applied over the throat and chest, the medicated vapors loosen the phlegm, open the air passages and stimulate the mucus membrane to throw off the germs.”

Fake and bogus cures caused the death of many as HIV swept around the world. In Nigeria, for instance, as early as the 1990s, Jeremiah Abalaka, a surgeon with fringe training in immunology, startled the world with his HIV cure claim. Many of the HIV patients who flocked to his private clinic reportedly died, including dozens of soldiers referred for treatment by the Nigerian government.

More recently, during both the Ebola and SARS epidemics, fake cure claims also circulated freely, with lethal consequences. For example, salt solution, snake venom, vitamin C,

Nano Silver and some herbs were all touted as cures for Ebola. At least two people died in Nigeria and about 20 more were hospitalised after drinking excessive amounts of salt solution to prevent Ebola infection.

Sadly, history is repeating itself in the context of COVID-19. False claims range from US president Donald Trump’s touting of anti-malaria drug hydroxychloroquine as a miracle cure to Madagascar’s herbal “cure” promoted by President Andry Rajoelina.

In Ghana, a Pentecostal pastor launched and sold “Coronavirus Oil”, telling a packed church that it was effective against COVID-19. An American pastor also recently directed viewers to buy Optivida Silver Solution to prevent COVID-19. Its promoter had falsely claimed that the product was government-approved and has the ability to kill every pathogen it has ever been tested on, including SARS and HIV.

With growing global anxiety, many people are easy targets for cure scams and hucksters. Victims of fake cure claims are often among the world’s poorest and most vulnerable. Fighting these cure claims is integral to containing the COVID-19 pandemic.

Authorities across the world are working hard to ensure that correct information and messages on the pandemic reach everybody. But there is room to do more.

### WHY WE MUST ACT NOW

Cure claims are dangerous. They delay treatment-seeking and promote reckless behaviour that may result in deaths. At least 300 Iranians have died from methanol poisoning after

consuming alcohol to prevent COVID-19. Hours after Trump declared hydroxychloroquine as a miracle cure for COVID-19, people overdosed on it in Africa and Asia. In Arizona, a man died after reportedly treating himself with a COVID-19 home therapy derived from the same anti-malarial drug that the US president touted as a wonder drug.

Health literacy – the ability of patients to read, comprehend and act on medical instructions – remains weak in many contexts. Several millions of health-seekers around the world rely on informal or inexperienced sources for their health information needs. Hard-to-reach and vulnerable groups and communities must be targeted through bespoke health promotion strategies.

Online and traditional media offer immense potential to intensify public health education. They must maintain vigilance on COVID-19 cure scams and claimants as they emerge in diverse forms and places. However, merely identifying bogus COVID-19 cure claims or alerting the public about them is no longer enough.

Targeted seizure and destruction of unproven cures can deliver important results. In 2015, a global crackdown by Interpol seized nearly 21 million fake and illegal drugs, including fake cancer “cures”.

Governments must also implement community health outreach programmes that communicate clearly and accurately. Such programmes should have fit-for-purpose feedback systems to enable lay persons in multiple contexts to raise concerns,

ask questions and swiftly receive answers. One size will not fit all at this time. Part of the success recorded in Nigeria during the Ebola outbreak has been attributed to the use of different media, including government-sponsored TV and radio messages, town-criers, social media campaigns, and experts to communicate health information to its citizens.

Countries and national health bodies must integrate traditional healers, faith leaders and community principals in their COVID-19 response strategies. Several studies have documented proven strategies for effectively engaging lay and faith healers to offer correct support and information on epidemics. This is the time to bring these strategies to scale.

Robust mechanisms for holding scam COVID-19 cure claimants and hucksters accountable are also urgently needed. Currently, few countries have such mechanisms. But a good precedent exists in Australia, where a “healing church” that touted a bleach-based solution as a COVID-19 cure has been fined more than \$150,000. Politicians and other thought leaders must also realise that their utterances and actions during this pandemic will have far-reaching health, social and economic consequences.

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# 3,000 inmates released from West Bengal jails

**KOLKATA, MAY 17 (PTI):** The West Bengal government has released around 3,000 inmates on bail or parole to decongest correctional homes since the last week March in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak, an official said on Sunday.

The department of correctional services has also taken several measures to check coronavirus infection inside the jails of the state.

The official said there are around 60 correctional homes in West Bengal, housing nearly 25,000 inmates and of them, close to 7,000 are convicts while others are undertrials.

“So far, more than 3,000 inmates have been granted bail or parole. Out of whom, around 2,000 are under trial prisoners and the remaining are convicts. We have taken other measures such as ensuring that the inmates use protective gears and maintain social distancing norms in correctional homes,” the senior jail official said.



Earlier, the department also disallowed prison visits by family members.

“This decision of not allowing family members to meet the inmates has helped a lot in containing the situation.

Initially, the prisoners had protested against this decision, but later they accepted it,” Correctional Services Minister Ujjal Biswas said.

The decision had even led to clashes between inmates and guards at a jail in Kolkata in March, where prisoners pelted stones and set prison properties on fire.

The Calcutta High Court on March 24 formed a three-member panel to examine the situation in all correctional homes of West Bengal and prepare a report on the number of inmates who could be granted bail or parole to avoid crowding in jails, in view of the Covid-19 outbreak.

The department then prepared a list of inmates eligible for parole and bail and forwarded it to the court.

Inmates were released following the guideline laid down by the court, the official said.

The high court took up the issue suo motu following a Supreme Court direction, asking all state governments and Union territories to set up high-level committees to determine the class of prisoners who could be released on parole for four to six weeks.

The apex court had said prisoners convicted of or charged with offences having prison terms up to seven years can be given parole to decongest the jails.

According to the website of the West Bengal Correctional Services department, the state has six central correctional homes, 12 district correctional homes, three special correctional homes, two women's correctional homes, one open-air correctional home, and 33 subsidiary correctional homes.

The combined registered capacity of these facilities is 20,802 including 1,637 females.

## ‘Didi Kitchens’ extended till May 31 in Jharkhand

**RANCHI, MAY 17 (PTI):** The Jharkhand government on Sunday decided to extend till May 31 the ‘Didi Kitchens’ set up to feed the poor amid the coronavirus-triggered lockdown.

Over 7,000 ‘Didi Kitchens’ have so far served nutritious food to more than two crore needy people during the lockdown, Chief Minister Hemant Soren said.

‘Didi Kitchens’ are run by self-help groups with the state government’s assistance to provide free meals to the poor and destitute people.

Taking to Twitter, Soren said, “So, far 7000 Didi Kitchen have served nutritious food packets to more than two crore needy people (it has) discharged an important role in our battle against hunger. So the state government has taken a decision that Didi Kitchens across the state will function till May 31 to serve the people.”

The chief minister had earlier said that other states were adopting Jharkhand’s ‘Didi Kitchen’ concept to feed lakhs of people during the nationwide lockdown.

In another tweet, the chief minister said that Ranchi has emerged as a “role model” in the fight against novel coronavirus. “The entire credit for this goes to the District Administration of Ranchi, doctors, health workers, policemen, sanitation workers and selfless social organisations who are engaged in serving the people,” Soren tweeted.

Urging people “to maintain social distancing but keep hearts connected and united”, Soren said, “Ranchi has not only won the fight against Corona (sic), but has also set a unique example of social harmony.”

## Split classes, outdoor lessons: what Denmark can teach England about reopening schools after Covid-19



**RICHARD ORANGE LONDON, 17 MAY [THE-GUARDIAN]:** In the week leading up to the reopening of Denmark’s schools a month ago, Dorte Lange spent a lot of time on Skype. The vice-president of the Danish Union of Teachers was responsible for detailed negotiations with the education minister, the health authorities and other teaching unions. The aim was to make sure that everyone was happy with the safety measures put in place to ensure an orderly return of younger pupils to classrooms on 15 April.

“As unions, we were taken so much into account and we were consulted so much that we felt quite safe about this,” Lange says. “We said to our members that we think that we can actually trust the authorities and that it will be OK to go back.”

The Danish transition from lockdown to a reopening of schools has become the go-to model for Boris Johnson’s government as it seeks to coax teachers and unions into going back to work from next month.

“Schools have started to return in Denmark and have not seen a negative impact as a result of that,” the secretary of state for education, Gavin Williamson, told unions

last week. “This has reconfirmed this approach is the right approach.”

And, indeed, it has been – for Denmark. But does that mean it is necessarily the right one for Britain? Lange says: “The situation in society and with Covid-19 is totally different [in the two countries]. If you, in general, have the experience that you can trust the government and the authorities, then you are more likely to do so.”

The Danish reopening has, so far, been smooth. The country’s R number rose briefly in the two weeks after pupils up to the age of 11 returned, creeping up from 0.7 to 0.9, but it has since fallen back. On Friday, the country passed a major milestone: the first day without a death from coronavirus since March. There were just 137 people being treated in hospital for coronavirus.

The reopening of schools – which has seen classes split in two to keep two metres between each child, more lessons taught outside and a rigorous hand-sanitising regime – has not led to a spike in cases among staff. “We have seen very few incidents where teachers have become ill with coronavirus,” Lange says.

But as well as being one of the first countries

to reopen schools, Denmark was also one of the first to close them, with its prime minister, Mette Frederiksen, imposing a lockdown at least a week ahead of the UK.

On 13 March, the day the Cheltenham Festival drew nearly 70,000 people, Denmark closed its borders. It had ordered schools to close two days earlier, and on 17 March, it closed restaurants, bars and most shops, limiting gatherings to 10 people. So, by the time primary schools reopened, the pandemic was already under control, with 200 people being treated in intensive care with coronavirus – about 3.5 for every 100,000 citizens.

There is also a sharp contrast between the acrimonious handling of the negotiations in the UK and those that were held by Lange and others. While the UK government has been wary of sharing the scientific advice it receives, the process in Denmark began with the publication of a report from the country’s infectious diseases agency, SSI. This modelled the likely effect of reopening, based on the assumptions that children spread the infection at the same rate as adults and have no ability to socially distance.

SSI concluded that,

## AITA to nominate Ankita, Sharan for Arjuna award

**AMANPREET SINGH NEW DELHI, MAY 17 (PTI):** Asian Games medal winners Ankita Raina and Divij Sharan are set to be nominated for the Arjuna award by the national tennis federation, which plans to send former Davis Cup coach Nandan Bal’s name for the Dhyan Chand honour.

The 27-year-old Ankita had won a women’s singles bronze medal at the 2018 edition of the Asian Games and also dished out a strong performance in the Fed Cup, where she played a key role in India’s qualification to the World Group play-offs for the first time.

Delhi-lad Sharan had won gold medal in the men’s doubles event in Jakarta along with compatriot Rohan Bopanna. He also became India’s top doubles player in October 2019 before Bopanna took back the position.

The 34-year-old also won two ATP titles in the

2019 season -- Tata Open Maharashtra in Pune with Bopanna and at St. Petersburg with Igor Zelenay.

“They are eligible and most deserving this year for the Arjuna honour. We will recommend their nomination,” All India Tennis Association (AITA) Secretary General Hironmoy Chatterjee told PTI. Ankita grabbed the spotlight with her gritty performance during the 2018 Fed Cup where she remained unbeaten in singles.

Since then she has become India’s best singles player on the WTA and ITF circuit, winning six USD 25k level titles and also achieved a career-best singles rank of 160 in March this year.

At this year’s Fed Cup, Ankita played eight matches in five days, winning two singles and three crucial doubles games with the seasoned Sania Mirza to help India qualify for the play-offs for the first time. Bopanna was the last tennis player to get the Arjuna award in 2018.

The AITA is still deliberating whether Bal’s application be sent for Dronacharya award or Dhyan Chand award, which is meant to honour lifetime contributions.

“We are contemplating which category is better-suited for Nandan,” said Chatterjee. However, reliable sources in the All India Tennis Association (AITA) told PTI that Bal’s application will be sent for the Dhyan Chand honour.

Bal, 60, appeared in Davis Cup between 1980-83, playing two ties with a 2-1 win-loss record. He remained India’s Davis Cup coach for many years.

Till date, only three tennis players have got the Dhyan Chand honour -- Zeeshan Ali (2014), SP Misra (2015) and Nitin Kirtane (2019).

No tennis coach has ever got a Dronacharya award.

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## Book analyses 2019 Maharashtra assembly polls

**NEW DELHI, MAY 17 (PTI):** A new book takes a look at the 2019 Maharashtra assembly elections and the subsequent high-voltage drama that culminated in Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray becoming the state’s 18th chief minister.

“Checkmate: How the BJP Won and Lost Maharashtra” takes readers through the twists and turns of the dramatic political crisis that unfolded as Maharashtra waited for a chief minister.

With inside sources and private conversations, the book reveals the hitherto untold story of this political drama, with a comprehensive overview of the state’s politics in the last few decades. The book is written

by journalist Sudhir Suryanwanshi and published by Penguin Random House India.

Thackeray took oath as chief minister on November 28, 2019, nearly a month after the results of the assembly elections were declared.

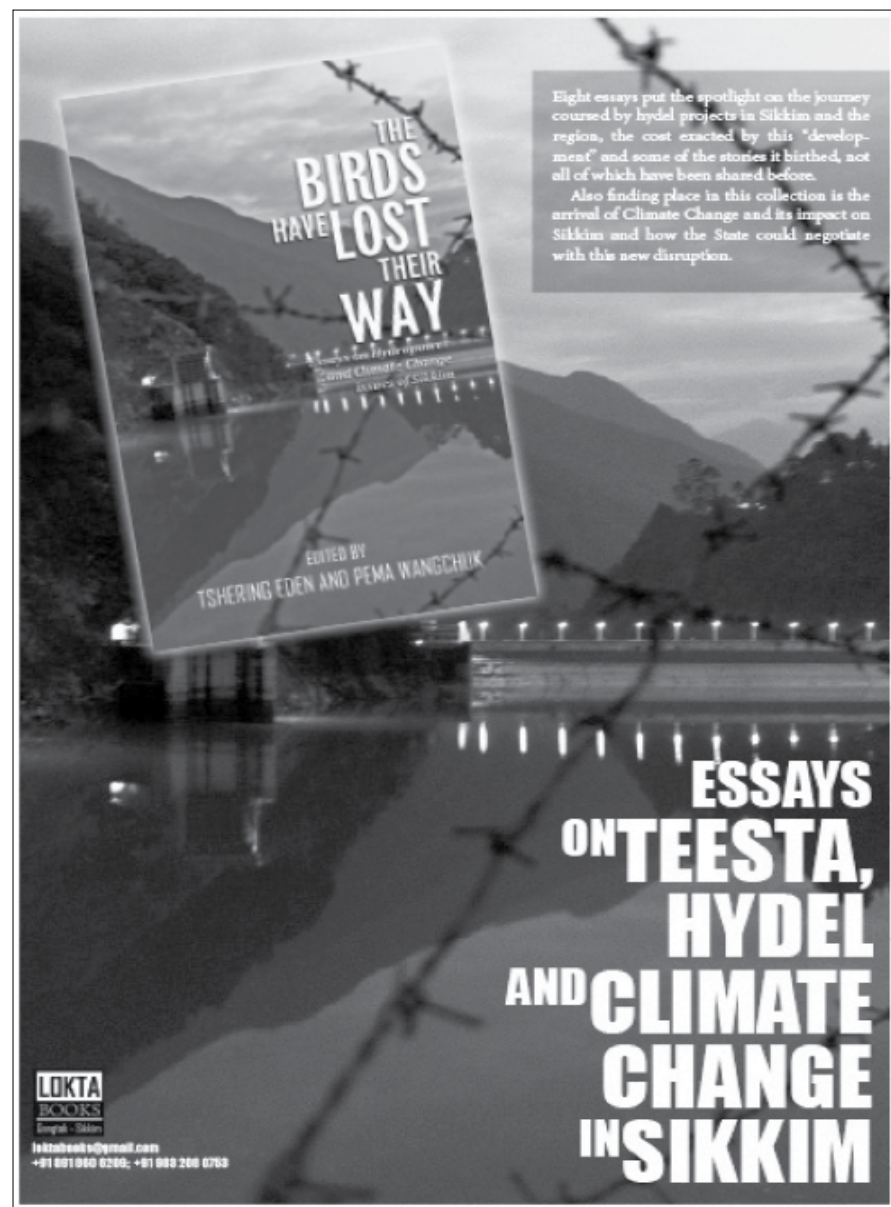
The Shiv Sena, the NCP and the Congress stitched an unlikely alliance and formed the government after the Sena fell out with pre-poll ally BJP over sharing the chief ministerial post. The BJP had emerged as the single largest party winning 105 seats, followed by the Shiv Sena, the NCP and the Congress with 56, 54 and 44 seats respectively.

Thackeray’s swearing-in came after days of

dramatic political developments, which included a three-day government formed by BJP’s Devendra Fadnavis with unexpected support from NCP leader Ajit Pawar, who has since returned to the Sharad Pawar-led party fold.

Around that time, a Twitter handle run by Suryanwanshi began to break stories day after day, offering precise updates and even predictions on Maharashtra politics.

“No one believed the news at the time. Many NCP leaders also called and told me that this was false but I stood firm on my reporting and it turned out to be true. I believe in my sources,” said Suryanwanshi.





*Availability of workforce biggest challenge for FMCG in scaling up production: GCPL*

**NEW DELHI, MAY 17 (PTI):** Workforce shortage continues to be the biggest challenge for FMCG firms and if it is not solved within two-to-three months, maintaining normal supply will be difficult going forward, a top official of Godrej Consumer Products Ltd (GCPL) said.

The company has also asked the government to find a way to bring back migrant labour by providing incentives and safe transportation.

He said that bringing migrant labour back to the cities is a critical challenge and they need to be provided with incentives and safe transportation mode.

The government can run public awareness campaigns to communicate to migrant workers that they are doing a national duty by returning to their jobs, said GCPL Managing Director and CEO Vivek Gambhir told PTI.

According to Gambhir, the shortage of labour is going to be the highest challenge which the industry will face while ramping-up supply chain operations.

We will be able to manage for about next two or three months with just ramping up our production. But beyond two-three months if we cannot find a way to get all the migrant labour back, then that is going to be a big challenge as far as normalising the supply chains for FMCG is concerned, he added.

He has also said that companies would have to learn to operate with reduced labour capacity and GCPL is mulling to outsource manufacturing of its range of products to a third-party vendor.

GCPL is currently operating at about 60-70 per cent production level with about 50 per cent workforce. Gambhir said he expects the government to ease restrictions to open the economy.

We would expect the government to take the right steps to ease the lockdown and open up the economy. Because the last thing we need in a country is while we are trying to flatten the curve, is to flatten the economy, he said. We do need to calibrate both the risks but we do need to keep open up the economy so that we can balance lives and livelihood.

GCPL, which owns popular brands as Cinthol, Protekt, Ezee, Hit and Good Knight, is expecting to reach 90 per cent production of the installed capacity by the June-end. The last 10 per cent, we really do not know about as of now. Also, just in case a factory falls into a red zone or a containment zone, then it has to be shut down for a limited amount of time. So, barring those kinds of unknowns which no one can predict, so we are hoping to get to 90 per cent by the end of June, he added.

When asked if, like other companies, GCPL is putting its capex and expansion plans on hold, Gambhir said: No, again it depends on the category. We do not have a blanket hold.

# Football has always adapted to hard times. Its return might help us feel less alone

**JONATHAN WILSON LONDON, 17 MAY [THEGUARDIAN]:** It is now 10 weeks since league football was last played in England, the longest suspension of the game since the inauguration of the League in 1888 (although there used to be a respectful pause for three months in the summer for cricket). Even during the wars, football did not stop for as long as this. As the Bundesliga resumes and the Premier League steps up its plans for a restart, it's worth considering why. Money may be a prime driving force now, but that hasn't always been the case; since it was invented there has been an urge to get football played.

On 1 September 1939, Germany invaded Poland. The following day, there was a full English league programme. A day later the United Kingdom declared war on Germany, large public gatherings were suspended and the season abandoned. Yet within two months, regional leagues had been established. Arsenal, for instance, hammered Sunderland 5-2 on 2 September and then beat Charlton 8-4 in their inaugural southern league fixture on 21 October. It is difficult to be sure of attendances, but in excess of 10,000 turned up for both their games against West Ham.

The War Cup final on 8 June 1940 – which kicked off at 6.30pm despite fears of bombing raids – drew 42,300 to Wembley, the restrictions on public gatherings long since lifted. The remarkable aspect of football in the second world war is how much of it there was. In Germany, they kept playing until the end of April 1945. In France, war champions were declared



each year, although the 1943-44 season was incomplete. The Netherlands missed only one season, Italy two.

Hungary was invaded twice, first by the Germans and then by the Soviets, and yet football never stopped. At times the juxtaposition of detail becomes absurd. On 6 December 1944, with Nazi-occupied Budapest under bombardment from the Red Army, the Újpest coach, Geza Kertesz, who was working with a resistance group that had been supplying details on troop movements to the United States, took a training session then held a press conference previewing the upcoming derby against Ferencváros. That evening he was arrested by local fascists and handed over to the Gestapo; two months later he was executed as the Germans pre-

pared to retreat. Which tell us what, exactly? First, that football is resilient. It adapts to circumstance and carries on, whether that means rejigging competitions and regulations, guest players or limited crowds. Second, and perhaps more pertinently, there has always been a demand for it, from both authorities and fans.

After the German invasion of Ukraine, a league was quickly established as part of a process of "normalisation" – which is what led ultimately to the "death match" between Start, a bakery side that featured a number of former Dynamo Kyiv players, and a team representing the Luftwaffe. The logic that encouraged the Hungarian authorities to keep football going is the same that led the British government to waive the restrictions on crowds so people could still

gather to watch football. And that is the impact football has on morale. This is not something to be treated glibly – and there is an obvious difference with wartime in the risk of the virus being transmitted by the act of playing. Danny Rose is right to fear players being forced back prematurely. But just because Dominic Raab says something doesn't necessarily make it superficial nonsense; it can also be glib for amateur virologists to dismiss out of hand the attempt to create a safe environment for football.

There was much discussion of a poll last week that suggested 73% of people did not anticipate their morale being lifted by the return of football. But 19% did, which seemed even more remarkable: one in five people – 13 million Britons – think they

will be happier with football to watch and, perhaps more important, discuss.

It may be that any football that is played ends up being tepid, that the sense of artificiality is overpowering, the absence of fans a huge turn-off. Once Liverpool have sealed their Premier League title, how engaging will the battle against relegation or for qualification to the Champions League be, particularly when it's far from clear if or in what form next season's Champions League will take place? On the other hand, the FA Cup may find itself reinvigorated.

And, of course, the how is hugely complex. But if the infection rate falls, if the resources are available and if a safe environment can be created, then why would football not be considering a resump-

tion? Every other industry is assessing how to restart as lockdown begins to ease: why not football?

The Bundesliga's return is a huge test. Borussia Dortmund's managing director, Carsten Cramer, has said the protocols to protect players went far beyond the safety measures in most other industries. There's no reason for the Premier League not to match those standards. But Cramer also noted that, on top of the human cost, "if we fail, the problems afterwards [for football] will be even bigger than before".

Football was right to stop when it did but it's right for it to consider when and how it may return. Judging precisely when the risk has been sufficiently minimised is clearly enormously difficult, there is every reason for extreme caution, and players need to be fully involved in the process, but that doesn't mean the assessment should be shirked. If the necessary threshold of safety can be achieved, the palliative effect of resumption is potentially huge. This is not just about the game or money.

CS Lewis observed that literature exists to remind us we are not alone. Football fulfils a similar function. It is the currency in which a vast amount of social interaction is conducted. Governments recognised that in times of crisis throughout the 20th century but football has never been bigger than it is now. After weeks of isolation, there has perhaps never been a time when it has been more important to remember we are not alone. Football can be an awful, self-interested, avaricious game at times but it can, perhaps, help with that.

## Adapt, play in empty stadiums and keep cricket in good state: Jimmy Neesham

**WELLINGTON, MAY 17 (PTI):** With cricket's finances taking a hit due to the COVID-19 pandemic, New Zealand all-rounder Jimmy Neesham says they will have to "adapt" to playing before empty stadiums to save the sport from financial ruin.

Cricket boards of England and Australia, which drive the sport's economy along with India, are fearing they could face a severe financial crisis due to postponement of events leading to slashing of revenues.

Elite-level cricketing action looks unlikely to resume anytime soon and the T20 World Cup, scheduled for October and November, is under a cloud of uncertainty.

"If the situation is that the only way to play

cricket is behind closed doors then I think it is something that we have to adapt to as players," Neesham told ESPNcricinfo.

Both Cricket Australia and England & Wales Cricket Board have felt the strain after the pandemic brought all cricket activities to a grinding halt.

In April, CA had announced retrenchment of 80 per cent of its staff, even as players from both countries braced up for pay cuts.

Considering the extraordinary situation, the 29-year-old Neesham said, "The reality is that it is a huge financial challenge for a lot of cricket boards to still run without any revenue coming in from games.

"So obviously we

want to try and keep the sport in as good a state as it can be in. If that means playing games behind closed doors, the guys just need to suck it up and get it done."

The New Zealander, however, added nothing can beat playing in front of fans.

"Certainly all things considered you would rather have fans in the ground. It adds a lot to the game and to the spectacle. But you want to adapt to the situation that is given to you," he said.

The pandemic, which originated in the Chinese city of Wuhan in Hubei province, has led to either cancellation or postponement of all sporting events worldwide, including the Tokyo Olympics.

## All league teams cleared to start group training in Spain

**MADRID, MAY 17 (AP):** All Spanish league clubs can begin group training sessions this week despite stricter lockdown restrictions remaining in place in parts of Spain because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Cities like Madrid and Barcelona have not been allowed to loosen confinement measures like most of the country, but teams such as Real Madrid and Barcelona have been given the go-ahead to move into the second phase of training.

The league has told clubs that on Monday all players can start small group sessions regardless of the lockdown phase in their regions. Players had only been allowed to train individually across Spain until now.

The Spanish government has been gradually easing lockdown restrictions that had been in



place since mid-March because of the pandemic, with different levels of clearances from region to region. Teams in Madrid and Barcelona theoretically would not be allowed to start training in groups if the government hadn't created exceptions.

Teams in regions with tighter restrictions will be allowed to practice with 10 players in the same session, while clubs in areas with fewer

restrictions can use up to 14 players. Teams in the latter regions also can make greater use of their facilities, reaching up to 50% of their capacity. The rest of the clubs can only use up to 30% of the facilities.

Group meetings between players and the coaching staff are also now allowed in some regions if distancing guidelines remain in place, and referees are now being allowed to train in sports

facilities.

The next training phase will allow for clubs to start full squad sessions.

Clubs and players have been asked to follow strict health safety guidelines during training. Players, club employees and everyone else involved in the training sessions have to be tested daily for COVID-19. Five players from teams in the first and second divisions tested positive before the individual practice sessions resumed.

The league wants to resume on June 12 with games in empty stadiums, though the media is expected to be allowed to cover the matches on site. The media has not been able to attend the practice sessions.

The Bundesliga this weekend became the first main soccer league to resume.

## Steyn claims umpire Gould denied him Tendulkar wicket fearing crowd backlash in Gwalior

**LONDON, MAY 17 (PTI):** South Africa pacer Dale Steyn has claimed that umpire Ian Gould had denied him Sachin Tendulkar's wicket when the batting great was on his way to a landmark ODI double ton in 2010 fearing backlash from the Indian crowd.

Steyn said that when the batsman was about

10 runs short of the magical figure, he had trapped Tendulkar in front of the wicket, but was denied by on-field umpire Gould.

"Tendulkar scored the first double hundred in ODI cricket, and it was against us in Gwalior. And I actually remember - I think I got him out lbw when he was about 190-odd. Ian

Gould was the umpire, and he gave him not out," Steyn said during a Sky Sports Cricket Podcast with England pacer James Anderson.

"And I was like, 'Why, why did you give him not out? That's so dead.' And he was like, 'Mate, look around - if I gave him out, I won't make it back to the hotel.'"

Tendulkar eventually went on to score the first double hundred in one-day internationals with his unbeaten 200, powering India to a mammoth 403 for three in the second ODI of the bilateral series.

India won the match by 153 runs after dismissing South Africa for 248 in 42.5 overs.



# Amazon hit from all sides as crisis highlights growing power

As Amazon becomes an increasingly important lifeline in the pandemic crisis, it is being hit with a wave of criticism from activists, politicians and others who question the tech giant's growing influence.

Amazon has become the most scrutinized company during the health emergency.

It has boosted its global workforce to nearly one million and dealt with protests over warehouse safety and reported deaths of several employees.

But Amazon has also pledged to spend at least \$4 billion in the current quarter -- its entire expected operating profit -- on coronavirus mitigation efforts, including relief contributions and funding research.

Amazon's AWS cloud computing unit, which powers big portions of the internet, is also a key element during the crisis with more people and companies working online.

Amazon's market value has hovered near record levels around \$1.2 trillion dollars as it reported rising revenues and lower profits in the past quarter.

"Its sheer size justifies the scrutiny," said Dania Rajendra of the activist group Athena, a coalition which is focused specifically on Amazon's corporate activity and treatment of workers.

Athena activists fret that Amazon, which also controls one of the major streaming television services, infiltrates so many aspects of people's lives.

Ranking many activists, the rise in Amazon's



shares has boosted the wealth of founder and chief executive Jeff Bezos to over \$140 billion even as the global economy has been battered by the virus outbreak.

Amazon has faced employee walkouts at several facilities over safety and hazard pay and has been accused of firing people for speaking out against the company.

"It's a minority going on strike but the sentiment represents thousands," said Steve Smith of the California Labor Federation.

While Amazon has boosted base pay to \$15 an hour, above the minimum wage required, and added bonuses during the pandemic, activists say it's insufficient, especially in high-cost states like California. "This

company can afford to make these jobs middle class jobs, good jobs," Smith said.

- Tensions in Washington -

The tensions have spilled over into the US capital Washington and elsewhere. US lawmakers leading antitrust investigations asked Bezos to respond to reports that the company improperly used data from third-party sellers to launch its own products, which the company has denied.

New York state Attorney General Letitia James called Amazon "disgraceful" for firing a warehouse employee who led a worker protest over safety. Amazon said the employee refused to quarantine after testing positive for COVID-19.

In a statement to AFP, Amazon defended its actions on workplace safety, social distancing

and noted that it is implementing its own employee testing program.

The company also disputed claims it was stifling employee speech.

Spokeswoman Lisa Levandowski said the employees in question were dismissed "not for talking publicly about working conditions or safety, but rather, for repeatedly violating internal policies."

Levandowski added that Amazon already provides what many unions have been seeking, including a high base wage, health benefits and career opportunities.

"She said the company seeks 'a great employment experience' along with offering 'a world-class customer experience (while) respecting rights to choose a union.'"

- Alternatives? - Analyst Patrick Moor-

head of Moor Insights & Strategy said Amazon is getting heightened scrutiny because of its growing global influence and because of the vast wealth of Bezos.

Moorhead said Amazon also brought on some of its woes with its highly public search for a second headquarters which highlighted tax breaks for the tech giant.

But Moorhead said Amazon is "not profiting" from the coronavirus crisis, and should be credited for some 150 measures taken including the pooling of high-performance computing for researchers.

"If you think about the alternative of shutting down Amazon, so many people wouldn't get the supplies that they need. You'd have a tremendous number of people unemployed," he said.

# Factory workers wary as Detroit's 'Big 3' begins to motor back up



Detroit's auto giants are keen to resume production this week, but there will be unease on assembly lines where social distancing is difficult and worries about the deadly coronavirus persist.

Motor City carmakers insist they are taking precautions to protect employees for the ramp-up that marks a key moment in the attempted relaunching of the US economy.

But not everyone is convinced.

"I am expecting a bumpy ride," said one United Auto Workers official, who asked for anonymity because he was not authorized to speak publicly.

The "Big Three," which have the experience of relaunching in Asia, have set their US restart for May 18.

That is the same day Tesla has been cleared by local regulators in California to resume full production following a faceoff between public health officials and brash Tesla boss Elon Musk that apparently was resolved with a compromise on enhanced safety measures.

Unlike California, Michigan has been the site of armed marches to the state capitol in protest over restrictions imposed by Democratic Governor Gretchen Whitmer. Under pressure from the state's automotive suppliers and carmakers, she modified her stay-at-home orders to allow for the resumption of manufacturing with social distancing.

After effectively shutting down in March to combat the deadly virus, US carmakers say they are now ready to get back to business.

"Above everything else, our top priority has always been to do what is

right for our employees," Fiat Chrysler CEO Mike Manley said in a statement this week.

"We have worked closely with the unions to establish protocols that will ensure our employees feel safe at work and that every step possible has been taken to protect them."

- Safeguarding plants -

The monumental tasks at FCA includes sanitizing 57 million square feet of production space and implementing new disinfection schedules to maintain hygiene. Some 4,700 work stations were modified to allow for social distancing.

Temperature checks and daily health self-screening are required for all employees and visitors; start times will be staggered; and break and lunch times will be altered to increase social distancing. Everyone will have to wear face masks and safety goggles, FCA officials said.

Manley said FCA was using what it has learned from opening plants in China and Italy as it resumes production in the US, Mexico and Canada.

General Motors and Ford have described similar measures.

Jim Glynn, a vice president for workplace safety at GM, said on a conference call that workers will follow a strict protocol each day beginning with filling out a questionnaire and having a temperature scan.

"We have not had one case of person-to-person spread among our employees" when the rules have been followed at GM's plants in Asia and at US plants now making medical equipment, Glynn said. However, none of the companies

will test employees regularly. Kiersten Robinson, Ford's chief human resources officer, said during a conference call there is not enough capacity for regular tests.

- Good enough? -

Lack of testing is an issue for the UAW, which has stopped short of endorsing the industry's return to work model. The union also pressed GM, Ford and FCA to relax their policies on absenteeism so workers will stay home or self-quarantine if they feel ill.

"While it is the companies that have the sole contractual right to determine the opening of plants, we have the contractual right to protect our members, and we will do so at all costs," said UAW President Rory Gamble.

"We have made it clear in our talks that we are asking for as much testing as possible at the current time."

Gamble has praised Whitmer's stay-at-home orders that have sparked gun-toting protests outside the state capitol building Michigan. The state has had about 50,000 confirmed coronavirus cases and nearly 4,800 fatalities.

The union's reticence is due in part to the fact more half of GM, Ford and FCA workers are over 50. Also, nearly three dozen auto workers have died from COVID-19, according to the UAW.

"I'm personally not ready to return to work and feel they are rushing to get us back into the plant to make a profit at the expense of those working there," said one anonymous worker in a Facebook post, adding that it is "almost impossible" to socially distance at an auto plant facing ambitious production targets.

## 11 firefighters injured in Los Angeles battling blaze

Eleven firefighters were injured, three of them critically, in downtown Los Angeles when a fire in a commercial smoke shop sparked a major explosion and spread to nearby structures on Saturday evening, officials said.

Crews had entered the building to battle what was initially thought to be a minor blaze when they noticed that the smoke pressure was escalating and decided to evacuate, Los Angeles Fire Department chief Ralph Terrazas told reporters.

He said the blast occurred as the firefighters were leaving the building from the roof and the ground floor.

"A witness account is that our firefighters came down the aerial ladder from the roof with their turnout coats on fire," Terrazas said.

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti said three firefighters had critical but not life-threatening injuries and another had serious injuries, while the remainder had varying degrees of burns.

"There are no symptoms of blast injuries but there's potential evidence of chemical inhalation," Garcetti said.

"Good news is, everybody's gonna make it," he added.

Terrazas said fire-

fighters saw butane canisters inside the building and outside on the street but it was unclear what caused the blaze.

"Everything is under investigation by our arson team, all I can say at this point is that the cause is under investigation," he said.

Some 230 responders battled the blaze as it spread to other buildings in the area before it was extinguished around two hours after it began.

Fire officials said the building where the blast occurred housed a business -- Smoke Totes Wholesale Distribution -- that sold smoking and vaping paraphernalia and supplied other businesses that make butane honey oil, a highly flammable resin used for inhaling marijuana.

Several storefronts in the area were blackened by the force of the blast while one fire truck had a scorched roof and was covered with debris.

Thick smoke from the blaze was visible from miles away.

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## COVID-19: Shrine in Japan offers solace to those at home

Tokyo, May 17 (AP): Shinto shrines, a go-to place for many Japanese to pray for good health and safety, have largely shuttered during the coronavirus pandemic.

But one Tokyo shrine went online for those seeking solace.

Onoterusaki Shrine in downtown Tokyo was livestreaming prayers on Twitter during a May 1-10 holiday, allowing those stuck at home to join rituals.

The shrine also accepted worshippers' messages, which were printed on a virtual wooden tablet and offered to Shinto gods to keep away evil spirits and the epidemic.

"I thought about how people can pray and have a peace of mind at a time everyone is feeling uneasy about all the news and going through major changes in their life but still cannot go out to pray. The idea is to provide a chance for people to pray from home," head priest Ryoki Ono said.

For Machi Zama, a freelance writer, that's just what she needed. Zama prayed for her friend who recently had surgery, and everyone else experiencing difficult times, as well as for an early end to the global pandemic.

Watching the priests perform the purification



rites, she felt as if she was at the shrine, Zama said. When one of the priests faced the screen and waved a religious paper streamer, she would bow. It was like her prayers were answered, she said.

Wherever you are, I think it's your feelings and thoughts, the wish to pray, that's what's important, Zama said. Whether online or offline, I don't think it matters.

For Ono, praying in the sacred shrine is still better. He said he hoped people will visit the shrine for a real experience when it reopens. The shrine ended the online prayers last Sunday to prepare for its upcoming annual festival.

Shinto is Japan's indigenous religion that dates back centuries and it literary means the way of kami, which refers to Shinto gods or spirits. It's a form of animism that believes in sacred spirits residing in living things and nature, including

wind, rain, mountains, trees, rivers and fertility.

Purification is key to Shinto rituals to keep away evil spirits. Worshipers can also make a wish for traffic safety, good health, success in business or exams, safe childbirth and many other things.

There are about 80,000 shrines in Japan. Revered as the most sacred is Ise Shrine in central Japan that venerates the sun goddess Amaterasu, the mythological ancestor of the emperor.

Not everyone in the conservative religion agrees with the departure from the traditional in-person prayers. Naomi Shiba tweeted six prayers at the online shrine, in the hopes of an early end to the pandemic, for her two sons to be able to resume their work and studies, and for herself to lose some weight.

Perhaps this is the way to do it in the current age, she said.

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**RICHIE RICH!** The model, Sofia Richie looks fab in a rust-colored top, Dior sunglasses and fuzzy slides as she leaves a friend's house in Los Angeles.

## Dwayne Johnson says he is proud of daughter Simone for joining WWE

**LOS ANGELES, MAY 17 (PTI):** Hollywood action star Dwayne Johnson says it's a proud moment for him to see his daughter Simone following in his footsteps and join WWE.

Johnson, who had a long career in professional wrestling before becoming a Hollywood star, said Simone, 18, will be the youngest signee in the history of WWE.

"She signed her contract with the WWE, it just blows my mind," Johnson told Jimmy Fallon via video chat on The Tonight Show.

"First of all, I mean, what an honour that my daughter wants to follow in my footsteps. But more importantly, follow in my footsteps sounds cliché, but she actually wants to blaze her own path, which is just so important. She wound up being the youngest signee in the history of the company, by the way, he added.

Johnson, who shares Simone with former spouse Dany Garcia, said his daughter started training at the age of 16.

"She was working her a\*\* off. Quietly,

under the radar, in the ring, getting thrown around, and all the bumps and bruises that go



with pro wrestling. And she hung in there, I'm very, very proud of her."

WWE had announced in February that Simone has officially signed with the company.

She is the fourth generation from her family to join pro-wrestling. Her father, under the name The Rock, was a 10-time world champion, while her late grandfather, Rocky Johnson, and her great-grandfather, High Chief Peter Maivia, were both inducted into the Hall of Fame.

## Will continue sending migrants home until the last one reunites with family: Sonu Sood

**MUMBAI, MAY 17 (PTI)** Actor Sonu Sood says he is pained by the plight of migrant workers who are unable to go back home amid the nationwide lockdown and he will do everything he can to arrange for transport for them.

On Saturday, Sonu arranged more buses for the migrants after obtaining special permissions from the government of Uttar Pradesh.

The actor had earlier organised multiple bus services for many such workers heading to Gulbarga, Karnataka from Maharashtra.

"It has been an extremely emotional journey for me as my heart pains to see these migrants staying away from their homes walking on streets.

"I will continue sending migrants home until the last migrant reunites with his family and loved ones. This is something really close to my heart and I will give it my all," Sood, 46, said in a statement.

As per arrangements, multiple buses left from Wadala and various parts of UP, including Lucknow, Hardoi, Pratapgarh and Siddharthnagar, as well as to states like Jharkhand and Bihar.

Previously, the actor also donated over 1,500 PPE kits to doctors across Punjab and provided his Mumbai hotel for the accommodation of the healthcare workers.



The "Happy New Year" actor was present to bid goodbye to these workers who were stranded in the city since the lockdown began on March 25.

Sood has also been feeding thousands of underprivileged people along with providing meal kits to migrants in the Bhiwandi area during the holy month of Ramzan.

## Fred Willard, 'Best in Show' and 'Modern Family' comedy star, has died

**F**red Willard, the comedic actor known for his roles in movies including "Best in Show" and "This is Spinal Tap" and TV sitcoms "Everybody Loves Raymond" and "Modern Family," has died.

The star died peacefully on Friday "at the fantastic age of 86 years old," his daughter, Hope Mulbarger, confirmed to CNN.

"He kept moving, working and making us happy until the very end. We loved him so very much! We will miss him forever," Mulbarger said.

His death comes nearly two years after the passing of his wife of 50 years, Mary Willard, who died in 2018 when she was 71 years old.

The four-time Emmy nominee, who grew up in Ohio, spread joy through his talent for making people laugh. His work included comedies like "A Mighty Wind" and "Waiting for Guffman," as well as off-Broadway productions including Jules Feiffer's "Little Murders," Dan Greenburg's "Arf and the Great Airplane Snatch," and Mary Willard's "Elvis and Juliet."

In a 2006 interview with Tad Friend of New Yorker Magazine, Willard described his understanding on death saying, "If it was up to me, nothing would ever change, no one would ever die. On the other hand," he added, "then no one could have babies, either, because it would get too crowded."

## 'Little Fires Everywhere' director Lynn Shelton dies at 54

**LOS ANGELES (AP):** Lynn Shelton, an independent filmmaker who directed "Humpday" and "Little Fires Everywhere," has died. She was 54.

Shelton's publicist, Adam Kersh, said in a statement Saturday that she died Friday in Los Angeles from an unidentified blood disorder.

Shelton had become the leading voice of the new American independent cinema movement. She caused waves with her low-budget films, then made splashes through her work on television including "Mad Men," "Fresh Off the Boat," "The Mindy Project" and "GLOW."

She directed four episodes of the Hulu miniseries "Little Fires Everywhere," starring Reese Witherspoon and Kerry Washington.

"We made so many things together," said Mark Duplass on Twitter. He was a frequent collaborator with Shelton, starring in her 2009 film "Humpday," which was a depiction of male sexuality through a female lens. The actor said he lost a "dear friend" and admired her

creativity.

"I wish we had made more," Duplass said. "Her boundless creative energy and infectious spirit were unrivaled. She made me better. We butted heads, made up, laughed, pushed each other. Like family. What a deep loss."

Shelton began her filmmaking career in her mid-30s after initially being an aspiring actor and photographer. She went on to write and direct eight feature films in the span of 14 years.

The statement said she had an "infectious laugh, was full of life and had an esprit de corps that touched many."

Ava DuVernay said Shelton changed her life after handing her an award at the Sundance Film Festival in 2012.

"She announced my name with pride," said DuVernay, who posted a photo on Twitter that included both filmmakers. "Handed it to me with love. Rooted for me long after. I can't believe I'm typing this. Rest In Peace, Beauty. Thank you for your films. And for your kindness."

## Tara Reid in negotiations to play Carole Baskin in 'Tiger King' film

**NEW YORK, MAY 17 (PTI):** Actor Tara Reid is in talks to star as Carole Baskin in the upcoming live-action movie adaptation of "Tiger King", the Netflix documentary series.

"Tiger King" is a true crime docu-series revolves around the life of Oklahoma zookeeper Joseph Exotic and the events that culminated in an alleged murder-for-hire plot against Baskin, the animal rights activist.

According to her manager and business partner, Philippe Ashfield, the "Sharknado" star is in touch with the producers of the anticipated film.

"We are in talks with the producers and she is being considered, that is all I can say at the moment as casting is on hold.

"Tara loves 'Tiger King' and found the documentary extremely interesting. She feels she could get into the character of Carole Baskin very well and she has a similar look to (Baskin)," Ashfield said in a statement to The Post.

There are currently several scripted "Tiger King" productions in the works - including a series starring Nicolas Cage as Exotic and another with Kate McKinnon as Baskin.

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**ARIES:**  
The process of transformation is both painful and confusing. Who are you if you are no longer the person you used to be? Let go of the need to cling onto the masks that provide a false sense of security. Let go of the need to have all the answers. Know that Spirit is protecting you right now and in this moment. You will soon find a way to cross the troubled waters looking like the most glorious and goddess-like version of yourself.  
Tip: Trust the process of transformation.

**Taurus:**  
It's true that you've been hurt, but how long are you going to carry this pain? Know that holding onto what no longer serves you will prove to be detrimental to your mental, emotional, and physical health. A simple meditation to clear the blocks: close your eyes, take a few deep breaths and return to your Zen space. Visualise a luminescent golden ball radiating from the centre of your heart, growing in size and pulsating with energy. Let the ball of light transmute the wounds into wisdom and help your heart chakra expand.  
Tip: Open your heart.

**GEMINI:**  
Dance, drama, and movement are second nature to you, Gemini. They are your prayer for the mysterious forces. An act of being present to the cosmic currents. Today, you're being asked to turn to the expressive art to communicate that which is unsaid within you. Don't have a practice of your own? Skip your regular workout in favour of something fun and upbeat. A virtual Bollywood or belly dancing class could be the answer.  
Tip: Dance like nobody's watching.

**CANCER:**  
It's true that certain things in our lives are predetermined. But don't forget the power of free will, which reminds us that the wheels of this chariot are in our hands. So stop playing tragedy queen and see how you can clear the blocks and bring about a monumental shift. The task at hand may be challenging, but it's not impossible.  
Tip: Face your fears.

**LEO:**  
It's been an especially demanding week in the Leo HQ and you're in no mood to engage with the outside world. Here are five ways to make the most of your #SelfCareSunday. 1: A ritualistic bath complete with salts and essential oils to wash your woes away. 2: A coffee date with your favourite self-help/spirituality book. 3: A bake-a-thon with you SO or flatmate. (Did somebody say banana bread?) 4: A virtual art therapy session. 5: A guided meditation that takes you to that special place. PS: Remember to keep your phone on flight mode for the better part of today.  
Tip: Hello #SelfCareMonday

**VIRGO:**  
Art is not just a form of expression, it's a vessel for inner alchemy. Today, you're in the mood to flow with the cosmic currents, to seduce the Muse, and to paint your innermost feelings onto the canvas. Stay in your magick. Create from a space of wholeness. Know that you are a unique individual and nobody else in the world can bring forth the same flavours as you onto the table. While you're at it, let go of the idea of perfection. The more you stay true to your soul essence, the more others will be able to connect with your creations.  
Tip: Stay in your magick.

**LIBRA:**  
"Exercises are like prose, whereas yoga is the poetry of movements. Once you understand the grammar of yoga; you can write your poetry of movements." An Amit Ray quote to inspire you to nama-slay on your mat today. The combination of conscious breathing with deliberate movement is sure to bring you back to your centre and help you experience inner stillness—if only for a few moments. Sign up for a virtual class or turn to the treasure trove available online.  
Tip: Experience inner stillness.

**SCORPIO:**  
Everybody can have their 15 seconds of fame. Oh hello, social media! But only a few people manage to leave a legacy behind, one that they will be remembered for long after they are gone. What are your dreams and desires, Scorpio? Do you want to take the fast road to success or build a strong foundation that will support your vision? The choice is and has always been yours. Remember, you are exactly where you are supposed to be. Let go of the need to compare your journey with that of others.  
Tip: With consistent effort towards your goals, you will be able to leave a legacy behind.

**SAGITTARIUS:**  
Sagittarius, you're in this world, but not of it. You are discovering that you are a multidimensional being, full of magical abilities that are waiting to be realised. You are in the process of aligning with your true path and uncovering the jewels Spirit has buried deep within you. The transformation may seem daunting at first. Roll with it anyway. Yes, that means you are allowed to take up "too much" space and be a sorcerer/ess in a world full of muggles.

Tip: You are coming into your magick.

**CAPRICORN:**  
A Ram Dass quote to awaken you, "The spiritual journey is individual, highly personal. Listen to your own truth." You are realising that the scriptures and sacred texts can only take you this far. There is nothing more profound than direct experience. So, commune with the divine forces in a way that feels authentic to you and know that you don't need an outsider to facilitate this connection. It's true that silence opens up the doorway. But your task today is to take that inner stillness into everything that you do.  
Tip: You have a direct connection with the divine.

**AQUARIUS:**  
You don't have to do this alone, Aquarius. Your soul crew is right here when you feel lost or confused. Trust that they will hold space for you to express what you are going through. In the mood to process your feelings before you reach out for support? Journaling is a wonderful tool at your disposal, one that will help you clear out the mental clutter.  
Tip: As Ernest Hemingway once said, "Write hard and clear about what hurts."

**PISCES:**  
They've left you on 'read' more than a few times and choose to reach out only when it's convenient for them. Could you be looking at this connection through rose-tinted glasses or making excuses for other people? Spoiler alert, Pisces: your delusional thinking is not serving you. Read the signs. Understand what they are revealing to you. You're better off redirecting your energy towards your own growth.  
Tip: Read the signs.