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Summit **TIMES**

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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11 more COVID patients recover, await confirmatory test

SIKKIM'S ACTIVE CASES COULD COME DOWN TO 38 TODAY

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 20 JUN:

For a second consecutive day, Sikkim reported no fresh cases of COVID-19 even as people are recovering from the virus on a fast clip. Today, 11 more patients tested negative for COVID and should they test negative again in a confirmatory test on Sunday, they will join the 16 patients discharged from hospital on Friday.

With this, the number of active cases in Sikkim will come down to 38. This will be a substantial recovery given that a total of 70 people have tested positive for COVID-19 in Sikkim thus far.

According to Health Secretary, Dr PT Bhutia, 427 tests were conducted on Friday and all returned



negative. Out of this set of 427, it is likely that 11 samples were of COVID patients admitted in hospitals here, said Dr Bhutia.

If they test negative again in the repeat test to be conducted within 24 hours, they will be discharged from the hospital.

Dr Bhutia also highlighted today that Sikkim has been lucky that none of its COVID patients have required either the ICU facilities or required to be put on ventilators and expressed hope that all

patients make similar recoveries and remain asymptomatic.

All the 70 people who have tested positive in Sikkim thus far have been stranded Sikkimese who tested positive on their return. A total of 7,260 stranded Sikkimese have been evacuated back to the State thus far.

Sikkim currently has COVID patients lodged in isolations wards established at STNM Hospital, Gangtok, and AYUSH Hospital Khyongsa. Of 49 active cases, 35 are at STNM Hospital and 14 at AYUSH Hospital.

A total of 8,894 people, most of them returnees and contacts of the 70 positive cases recorded thus far, have been tested for COVID [either TruNat or RT-PCR] thus far.

Kpg vehicles allowed to move through Reshi and Khamdong checkpoints

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 20 JUN:

The State government issued an order on Saturday allowing movement of West Bengal vehicles through Reshi and Khamdong checkpoints in East Sikkim.

The bridge over Rely Khola which connects Kagey, Lingzey, Lingseykha and some other areas in Kalimpong district had been damaged by rainfall and the Darjeeling MP, Raju Bista, had requested the Sikkim government to allow movement of Kalimpong vehicles through this area since they were otherwise completely cut-off.

The State government has allowed vehicular movement through the two checkpoints twice a day; 7:30am to 8am and from 4:30pm to 5 pm.

In case of medical emergencies, SDM Rongli will have to be informed prior to movement, the order details. Vehicles will not be allowed to stop anywhere inside Sikkim.

SDF CALLS ON GOVERNOR WITH MEMORANDUM AGAINST STATE GOVT

SKM leading Sikkim to a future of strife, Chamling alleges

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 20 JUN:

SDF president Pawan Chamling, today led a Sikkim Democratic Front delegation to meet the Governor and submit a memorandum highlighting prevailing issues of the State. The former Chief Minister was accompanied by party leaders KT Gyaltzen, DB Thapa, MK Subba, Acharya Tshering Lama, R Ongmu and Manita Pradhan.



Speaking to media persons after the meeting, Mr Chamling explained that being a responsible opposition party, SDF felt obliged to meet the Governor and submit a detailed ac-

count of the situation in Sikkim. He said that the Governor gave a patient hearing on issues placed by the SDF and assured to take them up seriously. **turn to pg02**

3 killed in road accident in West Sikkim

RUDRA KAUSHIK
GIALSHING, 20 JUN:

Three people lost their lives when the taxi they were travelling in fell off the road in West Sikkim on Saturday. One more person and the driver have been grievously injured.

The accident occurred at 10th mile of Zoom under Salghari Zoom constituency when the vehicle plunged almost 150 ft into a gorge.

Inglahang Subba of Siribadam, Bishnu Chettri and Tika Maya Subba lost their lives in the tragic accident. The vehicle was travelling from Dentam to Jorethang. Driver of the vehicle, Roshan Pradhan from Dentam who is said to be critical-



ly injured in the accident was taken to CRH Tadong, Gangtok while Narmaya Subba (passenger) who was also injured in the accident has been referred to Namchi district hospital for further treatment.

The bodies of the deceased were sent for post mortem to Gyalshing hospital.

Work begins to clear Tatopani landslide on Leghsip-Nayabazar road

RUDRA KAUSHIK
GIALSHING, 20 JUN:

Restoration work has begun on the Legship-Nayabazar road which was blocked near Tatopani by a massive landslide on Friday. The Roads & Bridges Department has deployed men and machines to

most difficult and risky jobs but we are working hard to get it cleared for traffic," an official on site said.

The road formation near Tatopani is vulnerable to landslides especially during monsoons and the recent back-cutting work for road ex-

through Reshi Rinchenpong road via Legship to reach their destinations.

Heavy vehicles cannot however access



the Reshi Rinchenpong road via Legship as the new road constructed through Legship is narrow, treacherous and

lacks carpeting.

Many drivers stranded at either side of the Legship Nayabazar road complained that there did not appear to be any urgency in restoring the road contending that deployment happened only around noon on Saturday even though the road has been closed since Friday evening.

"Had the road restoration work started early, traffic could have resumed earlier," a driver said.

Some drivers complained that they spent the entire night in their vehicles without any food or water.

6,000 Liters of milk headed for Sikkim Milk plants also curdled because of the delay.



the site, but it may still take some time before the stretch is cleared for traffic.

"Removal of boulders and slush from the road on a treacherous terrain is one of the

pansion has exposed it to even more collapses.

Commuters travelling through Jorethang to Geyzing and Yuksam Tashiding constituency are compelled to take the alternate route

SOLAR ECLIPSE THROUGH THE LENS OF SCIENCE

BUDDHA NATH SHARMA

A rare solstice Solar Eclipse is scheduled to occur on 21 June (Today). The eclipse is annular one, which means a "ring of fire" will be seen. Fortunately, the solar eclipse will fall over the Indian land as well. Some parts of India like Dehradun, Kurukshetra, Chamoli, Joshinath, Sirsa and Suratgarh are expected to see the "Bialeys Beads", which means that the sun is expected to appear as a "necklace of pearls" for the people viewing the eclipse from these regions. The eclipse will be partial for other parts of India including Sikkim. Sikkim might not be able to fully enjoy the beauty of this astronomical event due to the pertaining weather, where black clouds are lurking in the sky all through the day, these days.

The news of astronomical events like eclipses spread more with its astrological reasoning (restrictions on some "rashis" and exemptions to some, for example) rather than its concrete scientific explanations. A quick search in Google or YouTube will give us astrological significances of the event in a way more proportion than the science encircling the phenomenon. Superstitious beliefs, on a daily basis, are seen to influence people to turn blind eye to any reasoning and perform many horrible acts. Eclipses also present such opportunities in its name. For an instance, some people in rural part of Karnataka believe that burying the "disabled" kids' neck-deep during a solar eclipse will cure their disability. This was observed even during the last solar eclipse in December 2019. Many people, even the educated lot, still believe that having food during and after the eclipse is harmful. Some people empty their water storages after the eclipse is over. It is hard to believe that a nation which has reached many feats in astronomical explorations is still not able to illuminate a considerable part of its citizen from

the darkness of eclipse myths.

Sikkimese society has many deep rooted beliefs concerning eclipses. And potentially the most harmful among them is the notion that people belonging to some zodiac signs are favored in viewing the eclipse while others have potential harm. This leads to the "favored" people viewing the eclipses with naked eyes and the "unfavored" people getting restricted from observing the eclipse altogether. The educated people will have to seize this opportunity and tell the misinformed people that viewing the eclipse with naked eye is harmful for everyone, belonging to any zodiac sign.

Similarly, viewing it through black polymer, telescope, etc. is safe for everyone. The Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), Govt. of India has even issued an advisory regarding today's eclipse. It read "The eclipsed sun should not be viewed with the naked eye, even for a short time. It will cause permanent damage to the eyes, leading to blindness, even when the moon covers most part of the sun.... The safe technique to observe the solar eclipse is either by using a proper filter like aluminized Mylar, Black Polymer, Welding glass of shade number 14, or by making projection of Sun's image on a white board using a telescope".

The Eclipse is the "deepest" annular eclipse of this century for India and has kept a lot of people eagerly waiting to observe the same. The Eclipse is expected to begin at 9:56 am and last till 02:28 pm. The Solar eclipse of today is an opportunity (not to be missed) to learn and propagate the science behind these events. If we get lucky enough to have a clear sky, let's observe it with all the protective measures. If the fortune turns against us, there are a lot of sites which offer live stream of the eclipse from prime locations. Let's celebrate the spirit of science on the longest day of 2020.





"Yoga is good for community, immunity and unity. In the midst of Corona crisis, Yoga has assumed even greater importance as it helps strengthen the respiratory system."

Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

21st June 2020

International Day of Yoga (IDY)

Today, from your home, join this global pursuit of health and well-being.

Stand together in solidarity with the rest of the world at 7am today by joining the harmonious performance of Yoga from your home.



For guidance on harmonious performance of Yoga based on Common Yoga Protocol tune into any of the following channels of Doordarshan at 6:15am today:
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You may also join live on the Facebook handle of the Ministry of AYUSH- [facebook.com/moayush/](https://www.facebook.com/moayush/)

For more details about IDY- 2020 and CYP, check out: www.yoga.ayush.gov.in/yoga/
www.ayush.gov.in www.un.org/en/observances/yoga-day

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davp 17201/13/0004/2021

SKM stands with Centre in China face-off

SAGAR CHHETRI
GANGTOK, 20 JUN:

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha president, Chief Minister PS Tamang, participated in the all-party meeting convened by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday evening over video conferencing to discuss issues related to situation along the India-China border.

The CM asserted that the State government and the people of Sikkim are standing strong with the nation and will support every decision made by the Centre in the interest of the people of the country.

It is informed that the meeting was joined by chief ministers and lead-



ers of major political parties of the country.

Addressing a press conference here today, Press Advisor to the CM, CP Sharma, informed that the CM reiterated full support on behalf of Sikkim and its people

"On behalf of the people of Sikkim, the CM conveyed his heart-

felt condolences to all soldiers who sacrificed their lives for the country and assured to stand firm with the people of the India in every difficult situation," he informed.

He mentioned that the CM has also assured that the State will clear its roads for the Army in the event that a situation aris-

es on the borders here.

SKM party spokesperson, Jacob Khaling, who is also the Political Secretary to the CM, urged all political parties to rise above politics in the present situation and stand united with the people of India.

He mentioned that during the interaction,

the CM suggested that use of Chinese products be curtailed in the country and people give priority to local products. He added that this suggestion was welcomed and supported by everyone participating in the meeting.

Mr Khaling mentioned that in his address, the PM clarified that neither have Chinese soldiers intruded into Indian territory nor have they taken any posts of the Indian army.

Responding to media queries regarding the situation on the India-China border in Sikkim, he informed that there were no reports of any tension here.

Cleanliness drive at Singtam highway



YOGEN THATAL
SINGTAM, 20 JUN:

Golitar Samaj carried out a cleanliness drive at the highway below the District Hospital, Singtam, today. The drive was led by Bijay Pradhan. A JCV machine was also used to clear the drainage system.

Nagaland's COVID-19 tally crosses 200-mark

KOHHIMA, JUN 20 (PTI):

Three more persons tested positive for COVID-19 in Nagaland on Saturday, following which the total number of cases in the North-eastern state crossed the 200-mark, Health

Minister S Pangnyu Phom said.

The state has detected 201 cases so far and of them, 63 patients are undergoing treatment at present, he said.

Two of the new cases were detected among those at the Kohima

Quarantine Centre, while the other one was found in Dimapur Quarantine Centre, Phom said.

Dimapur has reported the most number of cases at 129, followed by Kohima (35), Mon (23), Peren (eight) and Tuensang (six).

Mexico virus cases, deaths continue high, reopening remote

MEXICO CITY, JUN 20 (AP):

The planned next stage of reopening of businesses in Mexico appeared to be put off once again Friday, as new confirmed cases and deaths continued at near-record levels.

The Health Department reported 5,030 new confirmed corona-

virus cases and 647 more deaths, both numbers down just slightly from Thursday.

The daily death toll has been hovering around 700 for much of this week, while the daily case load increase has hovered near 5,000. Mexico now has 170,485 confirmed cases and 20,394

deaths, though both numbers are considered undercounts due to extremely limited testing.

The country had been hoping to authorize a broad new round of openings for businesses like hotels, restaurants and shopping malls.

But authorities in Mexico City, which has

been hardest hit by the pandemic, said hospital occupancy and case numbers had not decreased to the point where reopening malls and street markets would be possible. The city has about 70% of its hospital beds occupied.

Last week, a half of Mexico's 32 states had

reached a level compatible with limited reopening, such 50% of hotel or restaurant capacity.

The few states where hotels did open actually resumed operations with lower occupancy rates, at around 30%.

This week, only one more state progressed to limited reopening status.

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UV-C sterilization systems provided to Sikkim hospitals

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 20 JUN:

Namchi, Gangtok and Namthang hospitals have got UV-C sterilization systems built by Engineer, Bikash Rai and his team of Bhasker Pradhan and Keshav Raj Pradhan in a joint venture with Alkem Laboratories, a press release informs.

The inauguration and giveaway program for the UV-C

sterilization systems were conducted on 19 June at Namchi in the presence of Transport Minister, Sanjit Kharel and DC South, Ragul K.

This UV-C technology has proven effective for prevention of transmission of viruses and bacteria and since it has been effective with viruses like SARS-1, MERS, H1N1, Influenza, etc., this system could help with COVID-19 as

well. This UV-C is being implemented throughout the world and the usage rate is exponentially growing now abroad and even in few metropolitan cities of our country, the release states.

Three types of machines were built by Bikash Rai and his team.

1. UVC Mobile Sterilization

Helps sterilization of the surfaces or OT instruments in hospitals within 45 minutes for 400sq.ft area.

2. UVC Air Sterilization Helps sterilization of the enclosed room/chamber within 30 mins.

3. UV Sanitizer Box Sanitizes any items of the hospital staffs within a minute (60sec). All of them use the same tech-

nology of UV-C irradiation and helps prevent communicable diseases like COVID-19.

Two UVC Mobile sterilization systems were made for Gangtok STNM hospital and Namchi hospital.

Three UVC Air sterilization systems were made for STNM, Namchi hospital and Namthang PHC. A UV sanitizer box was also made for STNM Gangtok.

SDF CALLS ON GOVERNOR...

The memorandum, Mr Chamling informs, argues that the 13-month-old Sikkim Krantikari Morcha government has been a total failure and has not delivered any of the promises made to the people before the elections.

He stated that the delegation also apprised the Governor about increase in violence, vandalism and attacks under the present government's watch in the State and that the police has been tardy and has not taken any action or proper investigation into complaints lodged by SDF, victims of violence or the lay people.

While responding to the recent comments by SKM spokesperson, Jacob Khaling, who has alleged that the attack on SDF spokesperson, JB Darnal, was staged by SDF, he invited Mr Khaling to make the arrests if he knows who attacked Mr Darnal or who ordered it. The police not making any arrests was proof that SKM was behind the attack and that its spokesperson was in the know, he said.

The SDF president alleged that the law and order situation has been deteriorating in Sikkim and democracy murdered.

He further alleged that there was no freedom of expression in the state and if the government begins protecting criminals and criminalizing the system, it will end up seeding terrorism in Sikkim like other North Eastern States.

He highlighted that SDF had kept Sikkim insurgency-free for 25 years but the SKM government was leading Sikkim towards a violent future.

Mr Chamling alleged that political terrorism and political criminalization started in the State with the formation of the SKM government and the system was backing excesses by those in office now.

He also saw victimization in the string of transfers of government employees despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Dharavi reports lowest new COVID-19 cases

MUMBAI, JUN 20 (PTI):

In a significant development, Dharavi slum in Mumbai, which was once a COVID-19 hotspot, on Saturday recorded only seven new cases, which is the lowest such rise in a single day, a Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) official said.

Dharavi's case count now stands at 2,158. The number of fatalities stands at 80 after one more person

succumbing to the infection in the last 24 hours.

Of the total 2,158 COVID-19 cases, 1,057 patients have already recovered and discharged from hospitals.

There has been a steady decline in the number of COVID-19 cases in Dharavi since the last four weeks, officials said, adding that the lowest tally of 10 was recorded on June 6.

Diesel price hits record high after rates hiked for 14th day in a row; petrol up 51 paise

NEW DELHI, JUN 20 (PTI): Diesel price on Saturday hit a record high after rates were hiked by 61 paise per litre while petrol price was up 51 paise, taking the cumulative increase in rates in two weeks to Rs 8.28 and Rs 7.62 respectively.

Petrol price in Delhi was hiked to Rs 78.88 per litre from Rs 78.37, while diesel rates were increased to Rs 77.67 a litre from Rs 77.06, according to a price notification of state oil marketing companies.

Rates have been increased across the country and vary from state to state depending on the incidence of local sales tax or VAT.

The 14th daily increase in rates since oil companies on June 7 restarted revising prices in line with costs after ending an 82-day hiatus in rate revision, has taken diesel prices to new high. Petrol price too is at a two-year high.

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

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

absorb another Re 1 a litre to help cut retail rates by Rs 2.50 a litre.

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

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

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

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

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

In 14 hikes, petrol price has gone up by Rs 7.62 per litre and diesel by Rs 8.28 a litre.

Woman shot dead by ex-boyfriend in Kolkata

KOLKATA, JUN 20 (PTI): A woman in her early twenties was shot dead allegedly by her former beau in the southern part of Kolkata on Saturday morning, police said.

The woman, identified as third-year col-

lege student Priyanka Purakayasta, was shot dead allegedly by another youngster, Jayanta Halder, in the Regent Park area, a senior officer said.

The accused had allegedly barged into the

victim's house around 8 am, shot her from a close range without provocation and then escaped, he said.

"Both were in a relationship but after coming to know that the man was married, the woman had

ceased all ties with him. This might have led to the killing," the officer said.

A manhunt has been launched to nab the accused and the woman's body has been sent for post-mortem examination, he added.

1,197 new coronavirus cases in Mumbai, 136 deaths

MUMBAI, JUNE 20 (PTI): 1,197 new coronavirus patients were reported in Mumbai on Saturday, taking the total cases in the city to 65,265.

In grim news, the financial capital of the country

also recorded 136 deaths due to the pandemic, which is the highest single-day figure, said a Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) release.

The death toll in the city thus rose to 3,559,

it said.

Out of 136 deaths, 75 deaths had occurred between June 16-19 and rest 61 before June 16, it said.

610 COVID-19 patients were discharged from city hospitals, tak-

ing the number of recovered patients to 32,867.

Mumbai now has 28,839 active COVID-19 cases. 801 new suspected patients were admitted in the hospitals in the past 24 hours.

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Flat Land no cutting required. Price 27 Lakhs
(negotiable).
Contact: 9800201335

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

LAND FOR SALE

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

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CM condoles road accident deaths

GANGTOK, 20 JUN (IPR): Chief Minister, Prem Singh Tamang has expressed his deep sympathies and sorrow for the deceased (Tika Maya Subba, W/O Nima Sherpa, and Bishnu Chettri, S/O CB Chettri of Denta, West Sikkim, and Ingla Hang Subba, S/O Paulman Subba of Sribadam, West Sikkim, who lost their lives in a tragic accident this morning.

Expressing his grief the Chief Minister has said that his heart and prayers go out to all the families affected by this tragic loss and have prayed for the departed souls.

The Chief Minister has also granted an ex-gratia of Rs. 5 lakh each to the next of kin of the deceased and Rs. 50,000 for the injured, Roshan Pradhan (Driver) and Nar Maya Subba who are currently admitted at Central Referral Hospital Manipal and Namchi District Hospital respectively.

CM's message on International Day of Yoga

GANGTOK, 20 JUN (IPR): Today we are observing the 6th International Day of Yoga and the theme for this year is "Yoga at home and Yoga with family". An initiative of the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi which was approved by the UN General Assembly in 2014 and has since been celebrated every year on 21 June.

Yoga is one of the oldest sciences of the world which originated in India. The word "Yoga" is derived from the Sanskrit word "Yuj" meaning "to join" or "unite". It embodies the unity of mind and body, thought and actions, restraint and fulfillment and a holistic approach to the health and wellbeing, a way of living that aims towards a harmony between mind and body.

It is a misconception that only saints and sages can lead a yogic life. Any individual can make his life pleasant by following the yogic way of life irrespective of his age, occupation, religion, sex,

caste and creed. Yoga is a disciplined practise to integrate into one's lifestyle which helps bust stress and anxiety through pranayamas, meditations and asanas especially during this time of pandemic when global health crisis has had a deep impact on the way we perceive the world around us and the change it has brought in our daily lives.

Thus, Yoga being an invaluable gift of India's ancient traditions, I am happy to see our people adopting it in their daily lives which require no equipment and can be practised in the comfort of our home.

Once again, on the occasion of International Yoga Day, I urge the people to adopt this practice to bring a positive change in their lifestyle leading to a healthy, wealthy and a harmonious society.

CM's message on International Day of Yoga Gangtok, 20 Jun (IPR):

Today we are observing the 6th International

Day of Yoga and the theme for this year is "Yoga at home and Yoga with family".

An initiative of the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi which was approved by the UN General Assembly in 2014 and has since been celebrated every year on 21 June.

Yoga is one of the oldest sciences of the world which originated in India. The word "Yoga" is derived from the Sanskrit word "Yuj" meaning "to join" or "unite". It embodies the unity of mind and body, thought and actions, restraint and fulfillment and a holistic approach to the health and wellbeing, a way of living that aims towards a harmony between mind and body.

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Governor's message on Int'l Day of Yoga

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 20 JUN: On the occasion of International Day of Yoga, Governor of Sikkim, Ganga Prasad has extended warm greetings and good wishes to the people of Sikkim, a Raj Bhavan press release informs.

In his message the Governor has said, "Yoga, our glorious tradition towards attainment of physical, mental and emotional wellbeing, is the most valuable gift to the world from our rich ancient heritage. Yoga signifies unity of mind and body, thought and action, restraint and fulfillment and establishes harmony between man and nature. Yoga is that Journey which takes you to your real Self, to your Soul, through your own Self."

Yoga has the power to embrace the human-kind in the true spirit "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" in our collective pursuit of establishing peace, harmony and brotherhood. The global community today has accepted Yoga as the most pragmatic medium towards a balanced and healthy lifestyle. Billions of people the world over have incorporated Yoga as a part of life.

The world today is grappling with deadly COVID-19 which has

shaken our conscience and has compelled us to change our lifestyle like never before. In this critical time, Yoga gives us the opportunity to revisit our goals and theme of this year's celebration "Yoga at Home, Yoga with Family" provides us the right orientation towards this goal. As we move away from the traditional way of celebrating Yoga Day with huge congregation and fanfare due to emerging public health scenario, it presents us the way towards realisation of self in the hind-sight.

International Day of Yoga presents the occasion for all organizations devoted to the promotion of Yoga to come forward and spread the message about the rewards of regular practice of yoga. Yoga professionals can play an important role in making the occasion an effective national movement for health and wellness. The time has also come to make extensive use of yoga as therapeutic alternative towards rebuilding immune system as the foundation of our physical and mental health.

Let us all rethink our approach towards Yoga and incorporate it in our daily health routine simultaneously reaching out to the people in a bid to induct them into the blissful world of yoga."

FC Goa rope in promising defender Sanson Pereira

MARGAO, JUN 20 (PTI): Indian Super League side FC Goa on Saturday announced the signing of promising 22-year-old defender Sanson Pereira from Salgaocar SC on a two year deal.

A left-back by trade, the youngster joins the Gaurs after impressing everyone with his performances for Salgaocar SC in the Goa Pro League.

"I am really excited. I am an FC Goa fan and it was always my dream to put on the colours, words can't describe how it feels to me," Pereira said.

"It is every Goan boys dream to play for FC Goa. And now it is a reality. I love their way of playing,

I feel that it suits me really well. I want to keep giving my all and become a regular in the team. I want to win everything with FC Goa."

Pereira has been with Salgaocar since getting selected for its under-14 side through a trial at his school. With the Greens, the Nuvem native went on to win the GFA U14 league and the GFA U18 league.

In the 2016-17 season, the youngster helped Salgaocar to win the Goa Professional League title in his very first season in the senior team. The next season he helped the club win the Goa Sevens.

In 2018-19, he again tasted silverware with the lifting of the Assam Gold Cup.

"Sanson was a player we had our eye on for the best part of the year. His consistent performances with Salgaocar left us with no doubt that he was a player that could do well at a higher level," FC Goa's Director of Football Ravi Puskur said.

"He's a player with an ability to endlessly run up and down the wing and is a composed presence on the ball. I'm confident Sanson will adapt well to our style of football and will make a real push to make the left back position his own.

Yoga demonstration by Inner Wheel Club



Over 11,500 stranded Mizos have returned to State since April

AIZAWL, JUN 20 (PTI): More than 11,500 residents of Mizoram, who were stranded in different parts of the country and abroad because of the COVID-19 induced lockdown, have returned to the state since April, an official said on Saturday.

More than 200 people are yet to return from Delhi, Chandigarh, Ludhiana and Arunachal Pradesh, he said.

The official, who is associated with a task group on migrant workers and stranded travellers, told PTI that a total of 11,541 people have come back from different parts of the country and abroad till date.

Of these, 34 were seafarers while one each has returned from Myanmar and Sweden.

Besides the 11,541 people, several others have also returned by flights between Thurs-

day and Saturday, who are yet to be recorded, he said.

According to the official, about 200 people from Delhi, Chandigarh and Ludhiana and 13 others from Arunachal Pradesh have reported that they are returning to the state.

The number could increase as stranded people are still submitting their names to the government seeking a safe return, he said.

Sixty-one residents of Bihar and Jharkhand were sent to their states on Saturday.

Mizoram reported a total of 140 COVID-19 cases, of which 139 were returnees, official sources said.

There are 131 active cases in the state, while nine people have recovered.

More than 7,400 people are currently under quarantine, sources said.

Staffer in Delhi minister's office dies of coronavirus

NEW DELHI, JUNE 20 (PTI): A stenographer in Delhi cabinet minister Rajendra Pal Gautam's office died due to coronavirus, an official said on Saturday.

Ashok Kumar (48), a resident of Ashok Vihar breathed his last at Rajiv Gandhi Super Specialty Hospital on Friday afternoon, the official said.

Kumar had a fever and was put on a ventilator two days ago.

His younger brother had died of the deadly infection on June 7, the official said.

Kumar's wife and son have also tested positive for coronavirus.

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PM has surrendered Indian territory to Chinese aggression: Rahul

NEW DELHI, JUN 20 (PTI): Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his remark that neither is anyone inside India's territory nor has any of its posts been captured, alleging that the PM has "surrendered" Indian territory to Chinese aggression.

In a statement on the all-party meeting called by Modi on Friday to discuss the situation at the India-China border, the government said, "At the outset, prime minister clarified that neither is anyone inside our territory nor is any of our post captured."

Tagging PM's remarks with his tweet, Gandhi said, "PM has surrendered Indian territory to Chinese aggression."

"If the land was Chinese: 1. Why were our soldiers killed? 2. Where

were they killed?" Gandhi said.

The categorical statement by the prime minister came in the wake of reports that Chinese military has transgressed into the Indian side of the Line of Actual Control, the de-facto border, in several areas of eastern Ladakh including Pangong Tso and Galwan Valley.

The prime minister's assertion came even as Congress president Sonia Gandhi, at the all-party meet, questioned the government's handling of the situation, asking if there was any intelligence failure, and seeking assurance that China will "revert" to its original position.

Rahul Gandhi on Friday accused senior ministers in the government of "lying" to protect the prime minister and that the Centre was "fast

asleep" while martyred jawans paid the price in Ladakh.

The former Congress chief also tagged a one-minute video of a jawan's father saying the Indian soldiers were unarmed when they were attacked by Chinese troops.

He has been questioning the government on the LAC standoff and asking how the Chinese occupied Indian territory and why Indian soldiers were sent "unarmed to martyrdom" in Ladakh.

Twenty Indian Army personnel, including a colonel, were killed in a clash with Chinese troops in the Galwan Valley in eastern Ladakh on Monday night, the biggest military confrontation in over five decades that has significantly escalated the already volatile border standoff in the region.

Tribals from Palghar to work at COVID-19 hospitals

PALGHAR, JUN 20 (PTI): As many as 30 tribals from Maharashtra's Palghar district will work in hospitals treating COVID-19 patients, an official said on Saturday.

At least 30 tribal volunteers, including six women, who are part of an NGO, have undergone basic training in nursing and will serve at different

hospitals amid the pandemic, the official said.

Considering the rise in COVID-19 cases, the volunteers will work at Golden Park Hospital at Vasai town in the district and civic-run Indira Gandhi Hospital at Mira-Bhayandar city of the neighbouring Thane district.

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RURAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM.

NOTICE

Despite repeated requests to collect the material from Rural Development Department stores, few beneficiaries /allotment order holders have still not lifted the materials allotted to them. Hence all such beneficiaries are once again requested to lift the materials from the concerned stores by 30th June 2020 positively failing which the allotment orders issued to them before 15/06/2020 will stand cancelled. After this due date, the remaining stock available in the stores will be allotted to the needy beneficiaries.

Issued with the approval of the competent authority.

Superintendent Engineer Rural Development Department Government of Sikkim.

What is Novel Coronavirus - nCoV?

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

Symptoms of nCoV

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

Precautions to Prevent nCoV

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

Treatment

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

If you seek help, you may call :
-Toll free no. 104
District surveillance Officer
EAST : 7029372100
WEST : 9593297809
NORTH : 9641957468
SOUTH : 7407691463
New STNM
AMS : 9434711402

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

Rediscover the Thrill of Competition

After employability, instill the desire to excel

Unemployment has a habit of remaining in the news. Or maybe because it is on everyone's minds, that it appears to be in frequent discussion as well and through that affiliation, also getting mentioned often in press releases and becoming standard fare in political pronouncements. Meanwhile, the State Government started with a youth-empowerment year a little over a decade ago and has since developed the initiative into skill development which now has a directorate of capacity building dedicated to it, an institute and livelihood schools in all territorial constituencies. Scholarships are on offer, as are attractive student loans. In a scenario such as this, the focus of those wishing to address the challenge of unemployment should be expending more energy on ensuring that the skill development initiative, the effort which makes the job-seekers employable, are more effectively carried out. Unfortunately, more energy has traditionally been directed at embarrassing the clutch of officers serving on service extensions. The aspiration for government employment is still so strong that these "extensions" still irk many even though their retirement will only open up a sliver of positions. But can one really blame the unemployed who still aspire for government employment at the cost of compromising their chances in private sector advancement or self-employment options? The salary differential is so staggering and the work ethic requirements so relaxed, that it is really unfair to shoo the youth away from government employment and have them pursue opportunities in the private sector.

But this, in a way, is a lost pursuit. There can never be enough government jobs for the youth hoping for employment and it is only a matter of time before government offices are slimmed down and openings shut even tighter. It goes without saying that when the crunch comes, the survival instinct will kick in and the youth of Sikkim will explore and attain new options and livelihoods. But why wait for resoluteness to evolve only when the going gets tough. Sikkim is undoubtedly among the few places which are lucky enough to have the chance of staving off tough times if they "get going" while the going is still good. Few regions have been as pampered and are as blessed with lucky breaks and opportunities as Sikkim is. For a State that has no political clout by way of parliamentary strength in Delhi, Sikkim has had a good run with the powers-that-be in getting its demands met and problems resolved even in these times of absolute "sevaks" when larger states have been cold shouldered. Many opportunities have been created and continue to be offered. Even a cursory listing of new investments in Sikkim will bear out that opportunities abound in a diverse range of activities, from trading to academics to white-collar jobs. What is now required is for these opportunities to be seized.

Unfortunately, this is where Sikkim is found lacking. Opportunities require hard work for success. It is this drive that Sikkim needs more of. The technical qualifications apart, every job requires only a few more qualities from prospective candidates - diligence, commitment to quality and a tenacity to compete. The faster Sikkim rediscovers these strengths, the sooner the opportunities will start delivering. The Livelihood Schools, apart from the subject-specific trainings they impart, should also include sessions on work-culture and introduce trainees to real achievers from around them and from elsewhere so that they complete their courses inspired to sweat it out, compete, stumble and stand up again.

WRITE US:

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

Marcus Rashford, Black Lives Matter and a British premier who is out of his league

CHRIS PORTER
THECONVERSATION.COM

It's only halfway through the year – and there has been precious little live sport to speak of in 2020 thanks to coronavirus – but already the odds are shortening on who will win one of the most prestigious titles in British sport: the BBC's Sports Personality of the Year. Marcus Rashford may be one of the brightest young talents to grace Manchester United's hallowed Old Trafford stadium, but it's not just his skill and eye for goal that are prompting pundits and fans alike to predict great things for the 22-year-old forward.

As the English Premier League resumes after a three-month hiatus, football fans across the country are keenly waiting to see how their teams will perform after such a prolonged period in isolation. But as players take to the pitch with the message "Black Lives Matter" emblazoned in place of their names on the backs of their shirts, much of the conversation revolves around how Rashford took on the country's government and won.

The young black player, one of five children raised by a single mother in a working-class Manchester suburb, forced Boris Johnson, the prime minister, to make an embarrassing U-turn on its decision not to provide Britain's poorest children with free school meals over the summer. As the face of the #maketheUturn campaign, Rashford is now a hero to the families of the 1.3 million children who would otherwise have gone without.

It's a tale that provides a glimpse into two particularly complex, intertwining and incendiary social characteristics in modern Britain: race and class.

GETTING THE BALL ROLLING

English football's so-called "Project Restart" is not without controversy – its roll-out comes amid concerns over what many fear is a premature reopening of social, cultural and economic life. The virus persists, as does continuing uncertainty around its spread, control and ongoing threat. In the UK, this is exacerbated by a lack of trust in official policy, thanks to what the majority of Britons see as the government's disastrous handling of the crisis.

Some footballers have expressed misgivings about returning to the

pitch, including a number of black and minority ethnic players mindful of the heightened dangers linked to ethnicity with this virus. While the Premier League has invested in testing and safety apparatus that partially alleviate such concerns, ongoing shortages in such protections outside of football's elite bubble – including much-heralded "key workers" in hospitals and care homes – provides a jarring context.

It's difficult to overstate the social and cultural importance of football in Britain. Described romantically as "the people's game", football is both a product and reflection of wider social forces. We need only look at the past week to see how football retains deep roots in the national consciousness.

CULTURE WARS

The week before Project Restart got underway with the first games in the Premier League, groups of football fans descended on London, ostensibly to defend public monuments, such as the statue of Winston Churchill in Parliament Square, from what they feared was the destructive intent of Black Lives Matter protesters.

Though football in the UK has its sectarian divides and distinct national allegiances, English football culture has traditionally tended to shy away from overtly political affiliations or rhetoric. Likewise, the players, seemingly well-schooled in saying as little as possible of substance, have not been known for opinions that veer too far outside football matters.

But, in recent years, the political powder kegs of terrorism, immigration, austerity and Brexit have provided the context for right-wing, nationalist and populist movements to make inroads into football supporter culture. The English Defence League (EDL) and more recently, the Football Lads Alliance (FLA) have been able to draw support from clubs throughout the country, turning out in large numbers for marches and protests ostensibly aimed at defending English or British culture from perceived threats, often connected to what they see as "liberal" policies on immigration and multiculturalism.

On June 13, protesting fans – along with far-right political agitators and some military veterans – mobilised in London and other cities

with a stated aim of defending historical statues and war memorials following the recent toppling by Black Lives Matter protesters of the statue of a 17th-century slave-trader. The FLA, according to reports, seemed to come off worse in clashes with police, Black Lives Matter protesters and also, it should be noted, other groups of football fans.

That the Black Lives Matter protests and counter-demonstrations erupted during the uneven and contested easing of lockdown restrictions provides a complicated context. It is widely understood that the coronavirus and its economic impacts have and will continue to hit the poorest hardest. The isolation, fear and frustrations of recent months undoubtedly played a key role in fomenting the outpourings of collectively expressed anger and protest, in whatever direction they were aimed.

An unmistakable feature of the protests globally was their multiracial character, revealing not just a show of solidarity towards the victims of racial injustice, but also class-based solidarity between people of all ethnicities. That combination of race and class, when mixed with national identity, can be beautiful or ugly, often finding expression through cultural forms such as football.

FORCING A U-TURN

The restarting of Premier League football in the UK sits alongside a poorly planned and widely resisted attempt to reopen schools to enable a mass return to work, which has exacerbated class divisions. Wealthier white-collar workers tend to be able to work at home, to flexible hours and avoid the risk of crowded public transport. Meanwhile those on the frontline – in NHS, care homes, factories, public transport and other lower-paid jobs facing a greater risk of infection – include a disproportionate number of ethnic minority workers.

While recovering from a pre-lockdown back injury, Rashford took careful notice of the problems faced in the community where he grew up. Wythenshawe in south Manchester was originally built in the 1920s as a rehousing overspill to cater for the "slum clearances" of the city's terraced housing. Once known as the "largest council estate in Europe", it today includes wards that regularly

rate among the most deprived in the country.

Rashford had already earned praise for his work with homeless people and for learning sign language in preparation for judging a poetry competition for deaf children, even before campaigning to provide affordable food for children in poverty. The footballer joined with the charity FareShare, raising more than £20 million to help provide three million meals for vulnerable people.

When the government announced that it would end its scheme to provide children stranded at home during the coronavirus pandemic with vouchers to the value of the free lunches they would otherwise have received at school, Rashford wrote an open letter to the government to ask it to reconsider. Johnson initially rejected Rashford's plea but, following a further appeal by the player amid increasing media and intra-party pressure, Johnson eventually announced his policy U-turn.

Rashford might bear comparison with the London-based rapper Stormzy, as well as fellow footballer Raheem Sterling who has led a powerful anti-racism campaign in support of Black Lives Matter.

All three have used their considerable talent – football in Rashford and Sterling's case and music in Stormzy's – as both a way out of poverty and a means to raise social issues by exploiting their public platforms. In Rashford's case it is notable that his focus appears to stretch beyond race and towards addressing more cross-cutting class-based inequalities.

When the first matches in English football's return kicked off on June 17, the players – with "Black Lives Matter" written across their backs – took the knee in symbolic protest of persisting inequalities and structural racism.

Rashford's leadership has for many filled a vacuum left by the government's handling of the pandemic and highlighted at best an indifference to issues of race and class. It will also of course make a material difference to people in real need. It was, as football pundits are so fond of saying, a "result".

[the writer is Senior Lecturer in Sociology, Manchester Metropolitan University]

Coronavirus: Scientists uncover why some people lose their sense of smell

SIMON GANE & JANE PARKER
THECONVERSATION.COM

From the first reports coming out of Wuhan, Iran and later Italy, we knew that losing your sense of smell (anosmia) was a significant symptom of the disease. Now, after months of reports, both anecdotal and more rigorous clinical findings, we think we have a model for how this virus may cause smell loss.

One of the most common causes of smell loss is a viral infection, such as the common cold, sinus or other upper respiratory tract infections. Those coronaviruses that don't cause deadly diseases, such as COVID-19, Sars and Mers, are one of the causes of the common cold and have been known to cause smell loss. In most of these cases, sense of smell returns when symptoms clear, as smell loss is simply the result of a blocked nose, which prevents aroma molecules reaching olfactory receptors in the nose. In some cases, smell loss can persist for months and years.

For the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2), however, the pattern of smell loss is different. Many people with COVID-19 reported a sudden loss of sense of smell and then a sudden and full return to a normal sense of smell in a week or two.

Interestingly, many of these people said their nose was clear, so smell loss cannot be attributed to a blocked nose. For others, smell loss was prolonged and several weeks later they still had no sense of smell. Any theory of anosmia in COVID-19 has to account for both of these patterns.

This sudden return of a normal sense of smell suggests an obstructive smell loss in which the aroma molecules cannot reach the receptors in the nose (the same type of loss one gets with a clothes peg on the nose).

Now that we have CT scans of the noses and si-

nuses of people with COVID-19 smell loss, we can see that the part of the nose that does the smelling, the olfactory cleft, is blocked with swollen soft tissue and mucus – known as a cleft syndrome. The rest of the nose and sinuses look normal and patients have no problem breathing through their nose.

We know that the way SARS-CoV-2 infects the body is by attaching to ACE2 receptors on the surface of cells that line the upper respiratory tract. A protein called TMPRSS2 then helps the virus invade the cell. Once inside the cell, the virus can replicate, triggering the immune system's inflammatory response. This is the starting point for the havoc and destruction that this virus causes once in the body.

Initially, we thought that the virus might be infecting and destroying the olfactory neurons. These are the cells that transmit the signal from the aroma molecule in your nose to the area in the brain where these signals get interpreted as "smell".

However, an international collaboration showed recently that the ACE2 proteins the virus needs to invade the cells were not found on the olfactory neurons. But they were found on cells called "sustentacular cells", which support the olfactory neurons.

We expect that these support cells are likely to be the ones that are damaged by the virus, and the immune response would cause swelling of the area but leave the olfactory neurons intact. When the immune system has dealt with the virus, the swelling subsides and the aroma molecules have a clear route to their undamaged receptors and the sense of smell returns to normal.

So why does smell not return in some cases? This is more theoretical but follows from what we

know about inflammation in other systems. Inflammation is the body's response to damage and results in the release of chemicals that destroy the tissues involved.

When this inflammation is severe, other nearby cells start to be damaged or destroyed by this "splash damage". We believe that accounts for the second stage, where the olfactory neurons are damaged.

Recovery of smell is much slower because the olfactory neurons need time to regenerate from the supply of stem cells within the lining of the nose. Initial recovery is often associated with distortion of the sense of smell known as parosmia, where things don't smell like they used to. For many parosmics, for instance, the smell of coffee is often described as burnt, chemical, dirty and reminiscent of sewage.

PHYSIOTHERAPY FOR THE NOSE

Olfaction has been called the Cinderella of the senses because of its neglect by scientific research. But it has come to the forefront in this pandemic. The silver lining is that we will learn a lot about how viruses are involved in smell loss from this. But what hope is there for people with a loss of smell now? The good news is that the olfactory neurons can regenerate. They're regrowing in almost all of us, all of the time. We can harness that regeneration and guide it with "physiotherapy for the nose": smell training. There is solid evidence that many forms of smell loss are helped by this repeated, mindful exposure to a fixed set of odorants every day and no reason to think it won't work in COVID-19 smell loss.

[Simon Gane is Consultant Rhinologist and ENT surgeon, City, University of London; Jane Parker is Associate Professor, Flavour Chemistry, University of Reading]

COVID-19 cases in Assam cross 5,000-mark; 102 new patients found

GUWAHATI, JUN 19 (PTI): Assam breached the 5,000-mark in the number of COVID-19 cases with 102 more people testing positive on Friday, the state's Health and Family Welfare Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

With these, the total number of cases in Assam reached 5,006 from 4,904 on Thursday. The state has 1,928 active cases, Sarma said in a tweet.

"Alert ~ 102 new

#COVID19+ cases detected... Over 61% of the total patients are back home. The remaining shall soon go back. Our testing continues," he added.

During the day, 218 people were discharged from various hospitals across the state after they tested negative for COVID-19, Sarma informed in a series of tweets.

"Today our discharge numbers cross 3000! So heartening to see so many people going back

to their homes," he added.

So far, nine patients have died due to the deadly disease, while 3,066 have been cured and were discharged from hospitals, Sarma said.

Besides, three more patients have migrated to other states, the Minister informed.

Sarma also said in a separate tweet that the Jalukbari Ayurvedic College in Guwahati has been renovated into a

full-fledged 110-bedded COVID-19 hospital.

He also said: "This pandemic has exposed us to new set of challenges. We need to upgrade our learnings as we begin to comprehend the virus better. We shall soon have a lab at MMCH to study #coronavirus and #COVID19."

Sarma said the state conducted over 12,000 tests for COVID-19 during the last 24 hours.

"My salute to the Team for having covered

over 12,000 more tests, taking our #COVID19 testing figures for today to 2,58,797. It was 2,46,590 on June 18," he added.

After inter-state movement through road, rail and air communication was allowed during the lockdown period, Assam saw manifold spike in COVID-19 cases. To screen all the people coming from outside the state, the government has imposed a mandatory institutional quarantine policy for everyone, barring some exceptions.

Assam govt warns against fake news

GUWAHATI, JUN 19 (PTI): Taking note of the increasing number of news portals, the Assam government on Friday said actions will be taken if any such website is found to be spreading fake and fabricated news to mislead the public.

Assam Chief Secretary Kumar Sanjay Krishna held a discussion on the rapid increase of news websites in the state with Commissioner and Secretary of Information and Public Relations Department Preetom Saikia and Director Anupam Choudhury.

"It has come to the notice of the government that most of the times, some news web portals have been involved in disseminating fake, false and fabricated news, which have misled the general public," an official statement said.

There is a huge possibility of these fake news having an adverse effect, particularly on the upcoming generation, it added.

"False information and fake news circulated in news web portals and social media may always cause harm to

our society. Moreover, it is also observed that social media platforms are being exploited by many for the purpose of vested interest and spreading false and fake news," the statement said.

The chief secretary directed the authorities concerned to keep a strict vigil on such news websites and social media platforms.

"The Chief Secretary also directed to take immediate action under the cybercrime laws against such news web portals and social media users," the statement said.

BJP clinches lone Rajya Sabha seat in Manipur

IMPHAL, JUN 19 (PTI): BJP candidate Leisemba Sanajaoba won the election to the lone Rajya Sabha seat in Manipur on Friday, defeating the Congress nominee in a high-voltage political drama amid the changing electoral equations in the state.

Sanajaoba, the titular king of Manipur, received 28 votes, according to Returning Officer M Ramani Devi.

Congress candidate T Mangi Babu got 24 votes, she said.

The win will be a major boost to the ruling BJP-led coalition in the state which was on a sticky wicket after the rebellion of nine MLAs, including Deputy Chief Minister Y Joykumar.

Of the nine, BJP MLAs S Subhashchandra Singh, TT Haokip and Samuel Jendai who resigned from the primary membership of the party and the assembly could not cast their votes.

Four National People's Party (NPP) ministers, who had withdrawn their support from the ruling coalition, have exercised their franchise.

Apart from Joykumar,



the other three are Tribal and Hills Area Development Minister N Kayishii, Youth Affairs and Sports Minister Letpao Haokip, and Health and Family Welfare Minister L Jayanta Kumar Singh.

Lone Trinamool Congress MLA T Robindro Singh, who also pulled out of the N Biren Singh-led dispensation, was also not allowed to cast his vote. He lodged a complaint to the Election Commission in this regard.

In his complaint, Singh said he was disqualified by the Speaker under the 10th schedule on Thursday "without following the due process".

He claimed he was

not given any notice to put forward his defense.

Three Congress defectors -- Ksh Biren Singh, S Bira Singh, Surchandra Singh -- were not allowed to cast their votes as cases are pending against them. However, the other four defectors could vote.

One recently disqualified MLA was also barred from taking part in the voting process.

Manipur has 60 assembly seats.

Chief Minister N Biren Singh congratulated Sanajaoba on winning the election.

After being handed over the election certificate by the Returning Officer in the night, Sanajaoba returned to the royal palace where he

was accorded a grand welcome by his supporters.

Meanwhile, senior Congress leaders Ajay Maken and Gaurav Gogoi who reached Imphal in the evening to take stock of the developing political situation in the state were quarantined at two separate hotels following COVID-19 guidelines, sources in their party said.

Led by former Chief Minister O Ibobi Singh, the Congress, which stepped up efforts to oust the BJP-led government, again reached out to Governor Najma Haptulla in the evening.

Congress-led Secular People's Front (SPF), which was formed amid

the changing political landscape in the state, has already urged the Governor to call special assembly session for taking up a no-confidence motion and invite them to form the new government in Manipur.

Among those who withdrew support from the government is Independent MLA Shahabuddin.

Congratulating the chief minister and his party colleagues for the victory, BJP general secretary Ram Madhav said the party's win in the Rajya Sabha election should put to rest all speculation about the Manipur government's stability and future.

"Congress party couldnt win d RS seat in Manipur. Yet went to governor claiming they have majority in Assembly. Their leader Ajay Maken and MP Gaurav Gogoi entered Manipur disregarding Corona guidelines. They have been promptly quarantined by d state health authorities," he tweeted.

The voting for the Rajya Sabha seat started at 9 am and concluded at 4 pm following all COVID-19-related guidelines.

10 fresh COVID-19 cases in Mizoram; count rises to 140

AIZAWL, JUN 20 (PTI): Ten more people, including an eight-year-old boy, have tested positive for coronavirus in Mizoram, taking the state's tally to 140, officials said on Saturday.

Four of the new patients are from Mamit district while three are from Champhai, two from Serchhip and one from Khawzawl district, a report released by the state Information and Public Relations Department said.

Seven of the new patients had returned

from Maharashtra and three had returned from Delhi, it said.

Apart from the eight-year-old boy, the remaining nine patients are aged between 21 and 46, the report said.

Nine of the patients are asymptomatic. One has developed coronavirus symptoms and has been admitted to a dedicated COVID-19 Health Centre, it said.

Of the 140 total cases, 131 are active while nine people have recovered.

Mizoram had report-



ed its first COVID-19 case on March 24 and the patient, a 52-year-old pastor who had travelled to the Netherlands, was

cured of the disease on May 9.

The northeastern state next reported 12 COVID-19 cases on June

1. Since then, the state has witnessed a spike in the number of cases, taking the count from one to 140 in just three weeks.

Sourav Ganguly's kin test positive for COVID-19

KOLKATA, JUN 19 (PTI): Family members of Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) secretary Snehashish Ganguly tested positive for COVID-19, the state health department said on Friday.

The wife of Snehashish, the elder brother of BCCI president Sourav Ganguly, was found to be positive for the disease, a senior official said.

The mother-in-law and father-in-law of Snehashish also tested positive for the disease last week, he said.

Besides, a domestic help at Snehashish's Mo-



minpur home where he was living recently was also found to be positive, he added. They are all undergoing treatment at

a private nursing home in the city and are stable.

Snehashish, a former Ranji cricketer, has tested negative for COVID-19

and advised home isolation, the official said.

"All the four complained of some health issues, which were sim-

ilar to the symptoms of COVID-19 when they were staying at another residence and not at Ganguly's ancestral house in Behala. After testing positive, all the four were shifted to a private nursing home," a senior official of the department said.

They will be tested again on Saturday and further decisions on their treatment will be taken, nursing home sources said.

"Whether they will be discharged or not, depends on the result of the tests," they said.

Drugs worth Rs 4.5 crore seized, 3 arrested in Odisha



BHUBANESWAR, JUN 20 (PTI): More than four kg of brown sugar worth Rs 4.5 crore was seized here and three people were arrested, police said on Saturday. Director General of Police Abhay said that acting on a tip-off, Odisha Police Special Task Force personnel raided a place in Rasulgarh area, and

seized 4.5 kg of brown sugar and arrested three people on Friday night.

"This is the biggest ever seizure of brown sugar by any agency of the Odisha Police," he said.

Those arrested have been identified as Debashish Behera, Sheikh Kausar Ali and Prabir Kumar Singh, all residents of

Balasore district, the officer said. The STF alone has seized 12.25 kg of brown sugar and arrested 39 drug peddlers this year, the officer said.

The total seizure of brown sugar by the STF this year is more than the cumulative seizure made by the Odisha Police in the last six years, he added.

Ganguly's foundation offers help to COVID-19 warriors

KOLKATA, JUN 20 (PTI): Indian cricket board president Sourav Ganguly's foundation has joined hands with chocolate and chewing gum manufacturing giant Mars Wrigley to support frontline doctors, health care providers and caregivers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Health care workers have been on the frontline of the current crisis to ensure safety and wellbeing of others. In an effort to appreciate and acknowledge



their relentless spirit and hard work, Sourav Ganguly, president of BCCI, handed over a token of gratitude including Mars Wrigley products to the West Bengal Doctors Forum," a media statement said.

Chocolates were also distributed to the entire

COVID department of Medica Super Specialty Hospital.

"At Mars Wrigley, the purpose is to create beautiful moments to make the world smile. This small gesture to the everyday heroes was a collective way to say, 'Thank You'," it added.

Eight essays put the spotlight on the journey course by hydel projects in Sikkim and the region, the cost exacted by this "development" and some of the stories it birthed, not all of which have been shared before.

Also finding place in this collection is the arrival of Climate Change and its impact on Sikkim and how the State could negotiate with this new disruption.

EDITED BY TSHERING EDEN AND PEMA WANGCHUK

ESSAYS ON TEESTA, HYDEL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN SIKKIM

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NASCAR Cup race will run at Texas with fans in the stands



FORT WORTH (USA), JUN 20 (AP): Texas Motor Speedway plans to open its massive grandstands to thousands of fans for a rescheduled NASCAR Cup Series race next month.

Gov Greg Abbott on Friday approved a plan submitted by the track to allow spectators for the race on July 19. The governor had previously said that outdoor sporting events could be held with 50 per cent capacity.

Track President Eddie Gossage said it was still too early to know how many fans would be able to attend the race at the 1 1/2-mile track that has a capacity of about 135,000, including suites and the grandstands that stretch about 2/3 of a mile from end to end.

"We don't know, because it depends," Gossage said.

With social distancing protocols in place, the speedway first has to reassign seating for people who had already purchased tickets for the race that was originally scheduled for March 29 before NASCAR paused its season due to the coronavirus. Gossage described that process as like doing a jigsaw puzzle. There are already 25,000-30,000 tickets out for the race, though fans can still request credit for future tickets or refunds.

"If everybody responds and wants to be seated two by two, that requires a lot more empty seats between them. If it's groups of fours and sixes and eights, and things like that, then it's a little denser," he said.

"So I don't know how many it will be. And we're not focused on any number. We're just wanting to seat everybody properly, socially distanced apart so that everybody is safe and has a good time."

There were no fans when IndyCar opened its delayed season at Texas two weeks ago in what initially was supposed to be the midpoint of a 17-race season for the open-wheel series. No spectators will be allowed at the NASCAR Xfinity and Truck Series races at Texas the day before the Cup race.

NASCAR is set to allow up to 30,000 fans at Bristol for its All-Star race four days before the Cup race in Texas. A recent spike in COVID-19 cases in North Carolina sparked the move of that race from Charlotte Motor Speedway.

About 1,000 fans, mostly military personnel, were allowed for the Cup race last weekend at Homestead-Miami Speedway. About 5,000 fans are expected Sunday at Talladega Superspeedway in Alabama.

The announcement about fans in Texas comes as the state continues to see rising numbers of new coronavirus cases and hospitalizations since Memorial Day. A record 3,148 COVID-19 hospitalizations were reported in Texas on Friday, more than double the number in hospitals over the holiday weekend. The reported 3,454 new cases were down slightly from the single-day record 3,516 set Thursday.

"Texans are eager for sporting and entertainment events to return, and this is a great step towards that goal," Abbott said.

"As we continue to open Texas, it is essential that we do so in a way that keeps Texans safe and limits the spread of COVID-19. Texas Motor Speedway has put a tremendous amount of work, time, and energy into ensuring that this race meets all the necessary safety and health standards, and I applaud them for this effort."

Along with social distancing in the grandstands and concession lines, there will be enhanced cleaning and sanitation in high-touch, high-traffic public areas and more hand sanitizer stations. Masks will be encouraged. While there will be no fans or camping on the infield, camping will be allowed outside the track. Fans won't be allowed to bring their coolers inside.

The track is going to 100 per cent digital ticketing for the first time since it opened in 1997, and won't be selling tickets on race day. All purchases, such as concessions and merchandise, will be cashless transactions.

Gossage said the track is following the guidance of the state, adding that the size of the speedway and being outdoors provides "a whole lot of space there for a lot of people to safely do this."

Barca held 0-0 at Sevilla, gives Madrid chance to pull level

Barcelona, Jun 20 (AP): Barcelona was held at Sevilla to 0-0 for its first stumble since the resumption of play in the Spanish league following a three-month stoppage for the COVID-19 pandemic.

The slip gives Real Madrid the chance to pull level atop the Spanish league with Barcelona. Madrid trails Barcelona by three points before it visits Real Sociedad on Sunday to complete round 30 of 38. Madrid holds the head-to-head goal difference with Barcelona in the case of a tie.

Barcelona defender Gerard Pique said the two points the defending champions left in Sevilla on Friday could be decisive.

"It is going to be difficult to win this league because we depend on the results of others now, and I don't think Madrid is going to drop many points," Pique said.

"We lost a chance today. And seeing how we have played (...), it is going to be difficult."

Coach Quique Setien, however, said the fight was far from over.

"We knew beforehand that it would be difficult to win all the games left, practically impossible, and that this was one of the toughest matches we faced," Setien said.

"It is frustration of the moment. (...) I am sure (Pique) will feel different tomorrow, and I am sure that Madrid will drop points, too. We



have to be optimistic."

Lionel Messi went closest to breaking the stalemate when his first-half free kick was cleared on the line by defender Jules Kounde, leaving the Argentina star on 699 career goals for club and country.

Barcelona's all-time leading scorer was stifled by Sevilla's defense anchored by former Manchester City midfielder Fernando.

Messi had scored in the previous two matches both Barcelona wins since the league resumed. Sevilla, which played without its normally very loud fans at its Sanchez Pizjuñ Stadium as mandated by health officials in all league games, remained in third place at 10 points behind Madrid.

MISSED CHANCES Luis Suarez, who benefited from the long league stoppage to recover from right knee surgery, was back in Barcelona's starting lineup after Setien used him as a substitute in the last two matches. He had little impact on the match

until he missed a clear chance with three minutes left, sending Jordi Alba's cross over the bar when he was unmarked in the box.

Barcelona had a promising start. Messi's side attacked Sevilla's area in waves and with the hosts clearly rushing their passes and easily turning the ball over again and again.

Messi was denied a goal from a dipping free kick in the 21st. Kounde raced back from the defensive barrier to protect his post, where he headed Messi's goal-bound shot that looked beyond the reach of goalkeeper Tomas Vaculik over the bar.

Julen Lopetegui, however, settled his team down during the mandatory cooling break on the half-hour mark and Sevilla tilted the action the other way.

The end of the first half got testy after Sevilla's Diego Carlos fouled Suarez. Messi pushed Carlos when they bumped chests, and Carlos took a tum-

ble. But the bookings went to Fernando and Sergio Busquets for a separate tussle.

It was Barcelona's turn to look shaken after halftime when it had to rely on Marc-Andre Ter Stegen to keep the game scoreless. The German goalkeeper blocked a powerful strike by Lucas Ocampos and denied Munir El Haddadi from culminating a counter-attack in the 55th and 57th.

EYEING EUROPE

Villarreal moved into contention for a top-four finish and a Champions League berth after it won at Granada 1-0 thanks to Gerard Moreno's early strike. A third straight victory left Villarreal in seventh place but just two points out of fourth.

FIGHT AT BOTTOM

Leganés snatched a 1-1 draw at Mallorca in a match between two teams in the relegation zone. Both goals came from free kicks, with Salva Sevilla putting Mallorca early and scar Rodriguez equalizing with three minutes left.

Labuschagne extends contract with Glamorgan

LONDON, JUN 20 (PTI): Star Australia batsman Marnus Labuschagne has extended his contract with English county side Glamorgan until the end of 2022 season, the club said in a statement.

The 25-year-old right-handed batsman had initially signed a two-year deal for the 2020 and 2021 seasons but, with the county season delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been agreed that he will not come to Wales for the 2020 season.

"Glamorgan Cricket are delighted to announce that Marnus Labuschagne has agreed to a new deal that will see him extend his contract until the end of the 2022

season," the country said in a statement posted in its website.

In his debut county season in 2019, Labuschagne scored 1,114 runs at an average of over 65 with five centuries and as many half-centuries.

The prolific county campaign earned him a place in the Ashes squad, where he became the first concussion substitute in Test cricket history and helped Australia retain the Ashes.

For his spectacular performances both for Glamorgan and Australia, Labuschagne was named as one of the five Wisden Cricketers' of the Year.

"It was an easy decision to extend my contract for another year

and commit to Glamorgan and Wales long term," Labuschagne said on extending his deal at Glamorgan.

"I was gutted not to be returning to Glamorgan for the 2020 season after I loved my first year here, so I'm delighted to be re-committing myself to the club for the next couple of years."

Glamorgan's Director of Cricket, Mark Wallace, said,

"It's a sign of Marnus' character that he had no hesitation in extending his deal, and that he's been keen to do so since we realised that he wouldn't be able to come over and

play for us in 2020.

"He's committed to what we are trying to achieve here at the Club, and it's a sign that we are heading in the right direction when one of the best players in world cricket is committed to returning to and staying with your club."



Bengaluru FC sign Brazilian striker Cleiton Silva

BENGALURU, JUN 20 (PTI): Bengaluru FC (BFC) have signed Brazilian striker Cleiton Silva for a one-year deal, the ISL club said in a statement on Saturday.

As per the agreement, BFC have the option of extending Silva's contract for another year.

The 33-year-old, who started his career with Brazilian side Madureira, moved to Thailand where he spent the better part of the decade playing for Muangthong United and Suphamburi, apart from stints in Mexico and China.

Silva, who also operates on the wing, became the first foreign player to reach the 100-goal mark in Thailand and finished top scorer of the Thai



League 1 for two seasons. He also tops the charts of the all-time leading scorers of the League.

His biggest success came at Muangthong where he racked up 57 goals in 79 appearances and won three major trophies in as many seasons at the club.

The Brazilian, who was in talks with the Blues last season before the deal didn't materialise, said he was glad

making my way to Bengaluru and am excited to meet my new teammates, the fans and embrace the city," said Silva.

Silva, thus, became BFC's first new foreign signing of the season after the club had handed extended deals with Juan Gonzalez, Dimas Delgado and Erik Paartalu.

Bengaluru FC coach Carles Cuadrat said Silva's addition was an important one, given his penchant for scoring.

"Cleiton has a proven track-record when it comes to scoring and this is an area we needed to strengthen on the squad. The goals aside, he even has an eye for a quality final pass and we're looking forward to working with him," he said.

Man United clinches 1-1 draw at Tottenham on EPL return



LONDON, JUN 20 (AP): Paul Pogba made an immediate impact on his return from surgery, earning a penalty converted by Bruno Fernandes that recovered for Manchester United a 1-1 draw at Tottenham in the English Premier League.

While the teams have endured three months without games in the pandemic, Pogba hasn't played since December. And he entered only in the 63rd minute at an empty Tottenham Stadium on Friday with the hosts leading from Steven Bergwijn's first-half strike through goalkeeper David de Gea.

But Pogba, whose United future has been mired in uncertainty, helped to inject some attacking dynamism United had been missing.

Pogba was bundled off the ball by Eric Dier and Fernandes netted his third penalty since joining United in January.

United was denied a second penalty when VAR overturned the decision to penalize Dier for another foul this time on Fernandes.

United is three points behind fourth-placed Chelsea having played an extra game.

But fifth place will clinch a Champions League spot if second-placed Manchester City's two-year ban from Europe is upheld next month for breaking financial rules. Tottenham remained four points behind United.

The start of the game saw players immediately take a knee as part of the Black Lives Matter protests.

Rohit only needs to see out first half hour in Australia to be successful: Nasser Hussain

KOLKATA, JUN 19 (PTI): Former England captain Nasser Hussain has backed the supremely gifted Rohit Sharma to come good as a Test opener on India's tour of Australia later this year, provided he sees out the first 30 minutes of the day. Rohit, who had scored three hundreds including a double ton against South Africa at home in his debut series as Test opener last October, had missed on two games in New Zealand due to a calf injury.

The Australia tour will be his first big test as an opener in the longest format. "If Rohit Sharma is not a Test match opener, I've been watching a different game... If you go and ask fellow cricketers who your favourite players, a lot of them will say Rohit Sharma," Hussain said in chat show on Sony Ten's 'Pit Stop'.

"Fellow cricketers watch Rohit Sharma and say this bloke seems to have so much time to bat."

Rohit, who has become an ODI great, has only played 32 Tests. Hussain advised caution to Rohit at the start of the innings. "Test match cricket at the top of the order is about having a technique as well. You have to cover your off stump, like Virat did in England against Anderson, the way he left him outside after all his problems of the previous tour, that is a Test match cricketer. "And that's the only thing Rohit has to do when he goes away from home and when is moving around. He has to just spend half an hour and say to the bowler you can have this half hour I'm going to leave you, I'm going to take the slip cordon out of play."

India are scheduled to play four Tests in Australia.

The cricketer-turned-commentator remembered the 2018

Edgbaston Test where India had dropped their premier No 3 Pujara and went on to lose the match by 31 runs, saying Kohli and Co will need to be spot on team selection Down Under.

"I think India need to select well because they have so many great batsmen so it's very easy that when Rohit doesn't do anything for two games, Prithvi Shaw will get in, and when he doesn't do well, someone else will get in..."

"Select, stick by them and give them a long run. They are very fine players and eventually if you don't get runs in Australia then you've got a problem because like I say it is a good place to bat you will find out who your Test match players in Australia."

India will also play a day-night Test on the tour, at the Adelaide Oval from December 11-15.

"Australia in general is a very good place to bat and the one game where it might do a little bit is the day-night Test. So if you get an opportunity of it moving around, you better make sure you use it."

"Probably since the Kolkata follow-on Test (at Eden Gardens in 2001) all these years ago, India-Australia has become an iconic series. Also because of IPL, and the sides knowing each other so well, and the clashes between them it's become a real watchable series."

"Australia have gone on to No 1 in the Test rankings after the sandpaper gate scandal. I think it will be an incredibly watchable series."

Hussain also spoke about the ban on use of saliva on ball in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic.

"Cricketers would have trained their brain for like 20 years... It's like getting in a car abroad and the indicators and steering wheel are on the wrong side. It's just what you've trained the brain to do for a number of years, and it's going to be difficult to retrain the brain."

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Trump intends to nominate Indian American to IDFC Board

WASHINGTON, JUN 20 (PTI): US President Donald Trump on Friday announced his intention to nominate Indian American Deven Parekh as a member of the Board of Directors of the International Development Finance Corporation.

The nomination of Parekh, who is the managing director at software investment firm Insight Partners will be for a period of three years.

Parekh previously served on the Overseas Private Investment Corporation board from 2016 to 2018 and was a member of the advisory board of the United States Export-Import Bank from 2010 to 2012.

A leading Indian American global venture capitalist, Parekh received his BS in Economics from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania.

Last month, he co-hosted a virtual fund raiser for former vice president Joe Biden, who is the Democratic presidential nominee against Trump.

Parekh was a major fund raiser also for former President Barack Obama.

He held a number of positions at Berenson Minella & Company between 1992 and 2000, including those of principal and vice president. Previously, from 1991 to 1992, he was a financial analyst for the Blackstone Group.

As managing director at Insight Partners, Parekh manages investments in application software, data and consumer internet businesses globally. He has actively worked for investments in Europe, Israel, China, India, Latin America, and Russia. In India, among others, he has invested in BharatPe.

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Amid protests for racial justice, Juneteenth gets new renown

DETROIT, JUN 20 (AP): Protesters marched over the Brooklyn Bridge, chanted We want justice now! near St. Louis' Gateway Arch, prayed in Atlanta and paused for a moment of silence at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial in Washington, as Americans marked Juneteenth Friday with new urgency amid protests to demand racial justice.

The holiday, which commemorates the emancipation of enslaved African Americans, is usually celebrated with parades and festivals but became a day of protest this year in the wake of nationwide demonstrations set off by George Floyd's killing at the hands of police in Minneapolis.

In addition to the traditional cookouts and readings of the Emancipation Proclamation the Civil War-era order that declared all slaves free in Confederate territory Americans were marching, holding sit-ins or car caravan protests.

Thousands of people gathered at a religious rally in Atlanta. Hundreds of people of all backgrounds marched from St. Louis' Old Courthouse, where the Dred Scott case played out, a pivotal one that led to freeing those enslaved.

Protesters and revelers held signs and pushed baby strollers in Dallas, danced to a marching band in Chicago, and, in Detroit, registered people to vote and encouraged them to participate

in the Census.

Now we have the attention of the world, and we are not going to let this slide, said Charity Dean, director of Detroit's office of Civil Rights, Inclusion and Opportunity, who spoke during an event that called for an end to police brutality and racial equality, and which drew hundreds of people.

Events marking Juneteenth were planned in every major American city on Friday, although some were being held virtually due to the coronavirus pandemic. At some events, like in Chicago and New York, participants packed together, though many wore masks; at others, masks were scarce, though.

In Nashville, Tennessee, about two dozen Black men, most wearing suits, quietly stood arm in arm Friday morning in front of the city's criminal courts. Behind them was a statue of Justice Adolpho Birch, the first African American to serve as chief justice of the Tennessee Supreme Court.

If you were uncomfortable standing out here in a suit, imagine how you would feel with



a knee to your neck, said Phillip McGee, one of the demonstrators, referring to Floyd, a Black man who died after a white police officer pressed a knee into his neck for several minutes.

Former President Abraham Lincoln first issued the Emancipation Proclamation on Sept. 22, 1862, and it became effective the following Jan. 1. But it wasn't enforced in many places until after the Civil War ended in April 1865. Word didn't reach the last enslaved Black people until June 19 of that year, when Union soldiers brought the news of freedom to Galveston, Texas.

Most states and the District of Columbia now recognize Juneteenth, which is a blend of the words June and 19th, as a state holiday or day of recognition, like Flag Day. But in the wake of protests of Floyd's killing this year and against a backdrop of the coronavirus pandemic that has disproportionately harmed Black communities, more Americans especially white Americans are becoming familiar with the holiday and commemorating it.

Black people came here against their will and made America what it is today, said New York-

er Jacqueline Forbes, a Jamaican immigrant, who marched on the Brooklyn Bridge. This is something we need to celebrate. Some places that didn't already mark Juneteenth as a paid holiday moved in recent days to do so, including New York state and Huntington, West Virginia.

In Tennessee, Republican Gov. Bill Lee signed a proclamation Friday to recognize Juneteenth Day. The move came the week after Republican lawmakers voted to keep in place a day commemorating Confederate general and early Ku Klux Klan leader Nathan Bedford Forrest but remove the governor's responsibility to sign the annual proclamation for it.

The growing recognition of Juneteenth comes as protests have started to yield concrete results, including reforms to policing in several places.

In addition, amid longstanding demands to remove symbols and names associated with slavery and oppression, some are coming down. Hundreds gathered Thursday night in an Atlanta suburb to watch a crane remove a Confederate monument that had stood in the town square since 1908. A Louisiana tourist commission abandoned a 19-year-old promotion touting New Orleans Plantation Country, saying it will focus instead on the region's whole story, including the cruel history of slavery on plantations.

In Portland, protesters who took to the streets for the 22nd consecutive night Thursday tore down a statue of George Washington that was erected in the 1920s.

In Portland, pro-

testers who took to the streets for the 22nd consecutive night Thursday tore down a statue of George Washington that was erected in the 1920s.

In addition to big marches, smaller events were also held. In Louisiana, community and environmental groups won a court fight to hold a Juneteenth ceremony at a site archaeologists have described as probably a cemetery for enslaved African Americans.

Philadelphians staged impromptu celebrations after the city's parade and festival were canceled because of the virus outbreak, and St. Petersburg, Florida, unveiled of a block-long, colorful mural that said Black Lives Matter.

We know our lives matter. You don't have to tell us that. We're trying to tell the world that," said Plum Howlett, a tattoo artist who painted part of the mural.

President Donald Trump issued a message for Juneteenth in which he noted the unimaginable injustice of slavery and the incomparable joy that must have attended emancipation. It is both a remembrance of a blight on our history and a celebration of our Nation's unsurpassed ability to triumph over darkness, Trump added.

Trump had originally planned a rally in Tulsa, Oklahoma, on Friday, but changed the date to Saturday amid an uproar about his appearance on a date of such significance.

Europe is building defenses against Chinese takeovers of key industries

LONDON: The European Union is drawing up new rules to prevent companies subsidized by countries such as China and the United States from taking over its industrial champions or winning public contracts.

In a proposal unveiled on Wednesday, the European Commission argues that it needs new powers to prevent unfair competition in its massive unified market and to preserve the bloc's "strategic autonomy."

"We need the right tools to ensure that foreign subsidies do not distort our market, just as we do with national subsidies," Margrethe Vestager, the Commission official in charge of competition and digital policy, said in a statement.



The EU executive branch is seeking the authority to scrutinize companies that may be using subsidies from foreign governments to undercut competitors in the bloc. It would also review acquisitions of EU companies by foreign rivals.

If a foreign buyer is found to unfairly benefit from subsidies, it could be forced to pay back the money or sell assets to satisfy European authorities.

In some cases, the European Union could block the purchase entirely.

The Commission also plans to prevent public contracts from being awarded to foreign companies that take government subsidies and then bid on public procurement contracts at below market rates.

"The EU is amongst the most open economies in the world, attracting

high levels of investment from our trading partners. However, our openness is increasingly being challenged through foreign trade practices, including subsidies that distort the level playing field for companies in the EU," said EU trade commissioner Phil Hogan.

The new rules would apply to all foreign firms, including US companies that may be bargain hunting during the economic crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic. But observers say the proposal's main target is China.

Chinese state-owned companies have come under increased scrutiny in Europe following efforts by Beijing to extend its influence deep into the continent through

infrastructure projects such as the massive Belt and Road Initiative.

The pandemic has meanwhile led to new worries about protecting Europe's health care, medical supply and pharmaceutical sectors from foreign takeovers, in order to ensure adequate capacity to confront future outbreaks of the novel coronavirus or other diseases. Collapsing stock prices has made companies in other sectors vulnerable, too.

The Commission's proposal will enter a public consultation period until September 23, with the goal of introducing new legislation in 2021.

Japan's economy reopening cautiously, balancing health risks

TOKYO, JUN 20 (AP): The roller coasters are back running in Tokyo but with requests to not scream. Restaurants are offering more take-out and outdoor seating. Major retailer Uniqlo's new cool and dry mask, three for 990 yen (9), sold out Friday shortly after it was put on the shelves.

Japan's economy is opening cautiously, with social-distancing restrictions amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The delicate new normal balancing act playing out around the world is precarious but imperative for Japan, whose long stagnant economy sorely needs tourism, exports and thriving small businesses to avoid sliding deeper into recession.

Yoshimasa Maruyama, chief market economist at SMBC Nikko Securities, said although Japan's coronavirus restrictions were never as strict as the lockdowns in the U.S., Europe and some other parts of Asia, the damage was still considerable.

Japan's economy was already hurting from a tax increase last year. Then auto exports to the U.S. and Europe plunged when the coronavirus hit. Consumer spending is unlikely to recover quickly.

Americans may feel happy and go splurging after the lockdown is lifted. But the Japanese mind set tends to become even more cautious about spending because of uncertainties about the future, Maruyama said.

A return to pre-pandemic levels of economic activity is not expected for Japan until 2023, a year after a likely recovery in the U.S., he said.

Although shuttered businesses are opening again, fewer seats are allowed at theaters, events and hostess and host bars. Masked clerks peer from behind plastic curtains at stores where temperatures are checked and hands disinfected at the entrance. Professional baseball is playing to empty stands.

Masks, worn by many Japanese already anyway due to a near national allergy to cedar pollen, are the dress code everywhere.

Japan's exports and imports have plunged. The world's third largest economy has contracted for two straight quarters

and is already officially in recession.

The Tokyo Olympics, the big symbol of hope for the economy, has been postponed until next year, costing billions of dollars to the capital, although the exact amount has not been disclosed.

The government has announced 230 trillion yen (2 trillion) in stimulus, including help for local businesses and cash handouts of 100,000 yen (930) per adult to coax consumers into spending.

With about 1,000 coronavirus-related deaths, Japan has been spared the massive fatalities that have swept Italy, Spain, the U.S., Brazil and Russia. But critics fear the government's push to relax precautions is about choosing the economy over health concerns.

That includes reviving moribund tourism. The government is considering reopening travel to and from countries where coronavirus cases are relatively limited and comparable to Japan's, such as Australia, New Zealand, Vietnam and Thailand.

The 1,700 visitors to Japan in May was a decrease of 99.9% from the year before, according to the Japan National Tourism Organization, and the lowest figure since the government began keeping track in 1964.

In recent years Japan has attracted about 30 million visitors from abroad, mostly from South Korea and China.

Travel within Japan was temporarily curtailed under a government emergency to curb the spread of the virus but is now encouraged. The government is giving out discount coupons to use at tourist spots.

Jazz clubs and other entertainment places were already struggling and the pandemic will likely lead many people to turn to recordings and other, safer ways to enjoy music instead, said American saxophonist Marshall McDonald.

The music business, which was on life support, will never be back. Japan is risking lives opening music places now, said McDonald, who played for years with the Count Basie Orchestra and lives half the year in Japan.

Still, after being stuck at home many Japanese have been hankering to get outside and have some fun.

Secret Cold War past of a Spanish tourist hotspot

(CNN) — It's March 23, 1959. The radio waves crackle and broadcast begins: "Govorit Radio Svoboda" (Говорит Радио Свобода - "This is Radio Liberty speaking...")

From the other side of the Iron Curtain, the radio broadcasts of US-funded Radio Liberty reached deep inside the Soviet Union. This was an opening line destined to enter Cold War folklore.

What most of those clandestinely tuning in could not possible imagine is the unlikely location those broadcasts were coming from.

This quiet beach resort of Platja de Pals, Spain, tucked between the Mediterranean Sea

and the greenery of pine groves and rice paddies, makes for an unlikely Cold War front line, but this is exactly the role it played for nearly half a century.

At this spot, some 150 kilometers north of Barcelona, Catalonia's rugged Costa Brava opens up into a large bay lined by a long sandy beach, the perfect location for what was to be one of the most powerful broadcasting stations in the world.

Strategic location In the mid-1950s, and after nearly two decades of international isolation for Francisco Franco's Spanish dictatorship, the increasing

tensions of the Cold War provided the background for a rapprochement between Spain and the United States.

In this new Cold War context, Washington took an interest in Spain's strategic location. General Franco, himself a staunch anti-communist, was happy to oblige. In a landmark deal, the United States was provided with a string of bases on Spanish soil, while Franco's dictatorship would see its relations with the West restored.

The setup of Radio Liberty's broadcast station in Pals was a side effect of this new geostrategic reality.

From 1959 to 2006, this beach was home to 13 massive antennas (the largest of them 168 meters high, or more than half the size of the Eiffel Tower). This spot was favored not only because of the availability of space -- the antennas were laid out in a mile-long line parallel to the shore -- but also because it provided direct, unimpeded access to the sea. A physical phenomenon called tropospheric propagation makes it possible for radio waves to travel further over water.

Beachside broadcast The Pals station was part of the larger Radio Liberty network that was

headquartered in Munich. Content was also produced in West Germany, translated into the different languages of the Soviet Union, and then sent to Pals for broadcasting.

At its peak, some 120 people worked at the site, some American, but also quite a few locals. The radio station, though, physically cut off from its surroundings, was a mysterious off-bounds world. Yet, at the same time, Radio Liberty's towering antennas, that were brightly illuminated at night, were always a looming presence for the many holidaymakers flocking to the nearby beaches each summer.

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Praise for Begum in Gulabo Sitabo' makes me happy: Farrukh Jafar

NEW DELHI, JUN 20 (PTI): At 88, actor Farrukh Jafar, whose scene-stealing turn as Fatto Begum in Gulabo Sitabo is the highlight of the movie, has retained her childlike enthusiasm and love for camera, which she considers as the secret behind her acting.

I never feel nervous in doing any role. I only see the camera and my role and nothing else. That's my secret, the actor told PTI over phone from Lucknow.

Jafar plays the 95-year-old wife to Amitabh Bachchan's 78-year-old Mirza who is awaiting his Begum's death to finally own Fatima Mahal, the derelict mansion at the centre of the conflict in the movie streaming on Amazon Prime Video.

Begum, with her quick repartees and a fondness for Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, keeps a tight control over Mirza and is responsible for the film's surprise twist in the final moments.

Jafar said director Shoojit Sircar and writer Juhi Chaturvedi came to her home in Lucknow to offer her the part.

I am a big Amitabh Bachchan fan. I was like Wah! I will get to work with a superstar. I had his romantic image as the star of Silsila, a tall and handsome guy but in this film his get-up was ugly. He was playing Mirza with a fat nose and big beard, she said.

Shoojit told me Please forget that he is Amitabh Bachchan. He is the greedy, old Mirza and you are his wife, Fatto Begum'. I immediately understood what he meant.

The actor said she had hoped to talk to Bachchan on the sets but the actor would disappear after doing his scenes.

One of the first radio announcers of Vividh Bharti Lucknow in 1963, Jafar made her acting debut with 1981 movie Umrao Jaan where she played Rekha's mother.

After her debut, roles in TV shows beckoned but it was Shah Rukh Khan-starrer 2004 film Swades that gave her a memorable second innings in Bollywood.

In 2010, she starred in Peepli Live where her expletive-laden rants as the bidi-smoking mother-in-law made her an instant hit.

She followed it up with roles in Salman Khan-starrer Sultan, Aamir Khan-starrer Secret Superstar and Peepli Live co-star Nawazuddin Siddiqui's Photograph.



FRESH AIR! Actress, Ali Larter ripped her face mask off as she left Whole Foods in Brentwood, California.

Small town stories have strong relatability factor with masses: Jitendra Kumar



MUMBAI, JUN 20 (PTI): Actor Jitendra Kumar believes small town stories in cinema are popular these days as they resonate strongly with the audiences.

After his feature debut in Ayushmann Khurrana-starrer "Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan" (2019), Jitendra was seen in Amazon Prime Video series "Panchayat".

The actor now stars in "Chaman Bahaar", a Netflix film from debutant filmmaker Apurva Dhar Badgaiyann.

Jitendra said as an artiste, his priority is to stay close to reality while portraying his characters.

"As an artist, when I take up anything, my priority is to make it as authentic as possible for my viewers. Be it a boy from a small town or a big city, every character I play, I want to connect with the audience.

"I invest good time in preparation for my character before the shoot begins. Manner-

ism, body language, thought process, how a certain person would present himself. I like to learn the nuances which fill in the gaps of me and the character," Kumar said in a statement.

"Chaman Bahaar" is a slice-of-life tale about Billu (Kumar), a paan shop owner, who is smitten with a young girl, living across the street but is unable to strike a conversation let alone profess his love.

"Every actor wants to be part of stories which have maximum connect with the audience. Small town stories and the characters coming out of it have a very strong relatability factor with the masses. It is not restricted to just the metros.

"Also, when we play such characters, it acts as a bridge between different cultures which is a very interesting experience," Jitendra said.

The actor described "Chaman Bahaar" as an "entertaining love story" that throws light on "different shades of love"

"It's a story which will leave a smile on your face. For me, it has been such a fun experience to play this character in the film," he added.

The movie has seen positive reviews from the critics since its debut on Netflix on Friday.

"I am grateful to everyone for liking my performance. I have always believed and stressed on the importance of being relatable as a character.

"Billu as a character is very close to my heart and I can't express enough joy that get when I see that he has been loved by so many people," he added.

ARIES: Everything is in retrograde, Aries, including planets we'd never heard of before! It's but natural that the past would come up, and in your case, it's asking for 'reconciliation'. Just because they're not toxic doesn't mean they're a good match for you. Questions you want to ask yourself before you give in: Do they challenge me to be a better version of myself? Would they support my growth and meet me halfway? Don't let convenience be the reason you settle.

TAURUS: Ready for some truth tea, Taurus? You've been playing the blame game for some time now, and no, it isn't helping you solve your problems. It is, in fact, keeping you stuck in the realm of lower vibrations. It's true that things didn't turn out the way you would have liked them to, but then again, the Universe isn't obliged to make us feel comfortable at all times.

GEMINI: If the law of karma is to be believed, then every action we take has repercussions. Where are you vibrating at, Gemini? What are the seeds you are planting in your destiny? Remember, heaven and hell are not faraway concepts.

CANCER: It's true that certain things in our life are predetermined. Who can negate the role of destiny, right? But, is

everything scripted to the T, or do we have space to negotiate and be co-authors of the manuscript? If Victor E Frankl's words are anything to go by, "Between stimulus and response, there is a space. And in that space is our power to choose our response.

LEO: We can't always alleviate the troubles of others, but we can show up for them with compassion in our hearts and the willingness to listen to what they have to say. Give your tribe the gift of your presence, Leo, a gift that's so rare and precious these days. Acts of kindness is another love language that you can consider today. It's never about the grand gestures, it's about the small, simple things that show how much you care.

VIRGO: Yves Saint Laurent famously said, "Fashion fades, style is eternal"—a quote that accurately describes where you are in your evolution. It's not always about wearing what's hot and trending. It's about expressing your innermost self through the art of clothing, and you seem to be perfecting this art as the days go by. Today, you're in the mood to play dress up, for the joy of it, and not to prove anything to anybody else. Society's standards be damned. You love yourself the way you are and will not apologise for taking up 'too much' space.

Tip: You're in the mood to play dress up and express

your innermost self.

LIBRA: From honey and milk masks to dead sea salt scrubs, the ancient Egyptians had their beauty regimen down pat, and today, you're in the mood to seek inspiration from our ancestors. It's true that you have experienced guilt around self-care in the past, but you're beginning to realise how the world works inside out, instead of the other way around.

SCORPIO: Small talk be damned. You're in the mood for raw and honest conversations. Nurture the ties that allow you to be vulnerable—the ties that make you feel seen and heard. If this means thoroughly editing your friend list, so be it. One-sided relationships just don't cut it anymore. Today, you're in the mood to express yourself through the written word as well. Maybe you want to narrate an untold story.

SAGITTARIUS: Why are we so obsessed with to-do lists? Life is not a productivity test. Get off the metaphorical treadmill and listen to what your body is telling you. Slowing down has been the collective message for some time now.

CAPRICORN: An important part of the growth and evolution process is acknowledging that you are not the same per-

Robert Pattinson looks amazing as Batman: Peter Sarsgaard



LOS ANGELES, JUN 20 (PTI): Actor Peter Sarsgaard says Robert Pattinson is an interesting performer and that makes him a perfect choice for Batman.

In Matt Reeves-directed The Batman, Pattinson stars as the DC superhero, while Sarsgaard plays Gil Colson, a Gotham City district attorney.

"He looks amazing. I have to say, he really, really does. The work he was doing was really cool. I really dug his Batman, and I can't wait to see it (on-screen).

I think he's a very interesting actor, and... I loved him in the Safdie brothers movie ('Good Time') that he did. And I actually really liked this one he just did... the comedy movie with Willem Dafoe. 'The Lighthouse'. He's just an interesting, interesting actor, the 49-year-old actor told The Hollywood Reporter.

Production on the project had to be shut down in March due to the coronavirus pandemic and Sarsgaard said he can't wait to get back to work.

'God, I'm just hoping that we can go back soon and finish shooting it. It's much harder with a big movie - to get back to it and finish it. There's hundreds of people on set at any given time.

It's just so hard to understand how we do it, and so, I just want to get back to do it. It's hard to even think about anything else with it other than, like... I'm about 80 per cent done with my part, so I would just like to do the last 20 per cent.'

The Batman, also featuring Andy Serkis, Zoe Kravitz, Colin Farrell, Paul Dano and Jeffrey Wright, is scheduled to hit the theatres on October 1, 2021.

Kenya Barris, Pharrell developing Juneteenth musical movie at Netflix

LOS ANGELES, JUN 20 (PTI): Netflix is in discussions with "Blackish" creator Kenya Barris and musician Pharrell Williams for a musical film about Juneteenth.

In the US, Juneteenth is a holiday marking the emancipation of those who had been enslaved in the country. It is celebrated on June 19 every year.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, the musical will be produced by Williams with partner Mimi Valdes, alongside Barris, who will produce through his production company Khalabo Ink Society.

Details about storyline are under wraps. However, the film is a separate project to the live musical that the duo had announced in 2018.

Heather Locklear is engaged to longtime boyfriend Chris Heisser

LOS ANGELES, JUN 20 (PTI): "Melrose Place" star Heather Locklear and boyfriend Chris Heisser are engaged.

Locklear, 58, and Heisser are high school sweethearts who rekindled their romance years ago.

A source close to the couple told People magazine that they have been engaged since the end of April, "as they were celebrating her year of sobriety".

"Her family, her parents, her siblings, and her daughter are all supporting her and excited for her," the source added.

In April, Locklear celebrated a year of sobriety after a tumultuous two years that saw her being hospitalised, sued, placed into a psychiatric hold as well as doing a stint in outpatient drug rehab after many personal tribulations.

The actor was previously married to musician Tommy Lee from 1986 to 1993 and guitarist Richie Sambora, from 1994 to 2007. She shares her daughter, 22-year-old Ava, with Sambora.

