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# SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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## 6 more test positive, Sikkim now has 10 active COVID cases

**SAGAR CHETTRI  
GANGTOK, 09 JUNE:**  
Six new COVID-19 positive cases were detected in the State on Tuesday, taking the number of active cases in Sikkim up to 10. Only yesterday, confirmation had arrived that three patients had recovered from the virus. All the positive cases are asymptomatic and require only observation at present and not any medical intervention Health Department Director General and Secretary, Dr PT Bhutia, informs.



sopani in South Sikkim.

Of the six new cases, four are from West Sikkim and one each from South and East districts. All of them are recent returnees and were currently lodged in facility quarantine centres.

Addressing a press conference here today, Dr Bhutia informed that among the six new cases was an 18-year-old returnee from Chennai. She had arrived in the State on 30 May and was placed at the facility quarantine at CCCT, Chi-

He informed that the patient was immediately shifted to STNM Hospital last night itself. Although no one else at the facility quarantine at CCCT has tested positive, no new persons will be admitted there for now.

The Secretary also informed that a 28-year-old Siliguri returnee from East Sikkim has also tested positive. He informed that she was in Siliguri for the past two months and had returned with three others

of her family on 27 May and was lodged in the facility quarantine at HPI, Majhitar.

It is informed that she returned with 10 others in an SNT bus from Siliguri, all of whom are also in quarantine at present and while some of them have already tested negative, reports for a few other contacts are still awaited.

Dr Bhutia informed that the patient was sharing a room in the facility quarantine with three family members.

There were a total of 35 people lodged at the facility and only she has tested positive.

He added that nine others were lodged at the said quarantine centre after she was placed there and that they were also being screened for the virus.

Similarly, Secretary informed that four persons from a facility quarantine at Kyongsa in Gyalshing were detected positive for COVID-19. He detailed that a 33-year-old and her 44-year-old

husband, a 23-year-old male and a 42-year-old female from West Sikkim have tested positive there.

He informed that while the couple returned from Siliguri on an SNT bus from Siliguri along with one Chandigarh returnee and seven Delhi returnees, the 23-year-old travelled with seven Delhi returnees and two Uttar Pradesh returnees from Siliguri to Melli and the 42-year-old lady arrived in another STN bus.

He added that the contact tracing of all four patients was underway and that all the positive cases have been kept in isolation.

All of Sikkim's ten active cases are asymptomatic at present, the doctor informed while reassuring Sikkim that the health infrastructure was adequately prepared for every eventuality. He also appealed on the people not to panic or fall for the many irresponsible rumors in circulation.

## Negligence by NBMCH in reporting positive cases, says Health Dept

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 09 JUN:**  
Health Secretary, Dr PT Bhutia today informed that the Health Department has written to the Head of the Department of Microbiology of North Bengal Medical College & Hospital, Siliguri [NBMCH] as well as Chief Secretary, Government of West Bengal, Principal Secretary, Government of West Bengal, Secretary, Ministry of Health, New Delhi, regarding negligence in reporting COVID positive cases.

He informed that NBMCH had not im-

mediately reported the test results of two women of South Sikkim even though they had reported the results to ICMR. Vigilant staff of IDSP of the State Health Department noticed names and registration numbers of these two women in the ICMR Portal where they were reported as positive for COVID-19, he stated.

"We feel that it is negligence on their part. We acknowledge that they have huge loads following rising number of cases in their State. But they should inform us im-

mediately in case of positive reports," he expressed.

It may be mentioned that the two women were declared COVID positive after they had completed 14 days quarantine and were sent for home quarantine. This had resulted in various sections of the public expressing concern about the women testing positive after being sent for home quarantine.

The Health Secretary informed that the last samples were sent to NBMCH from Sikkim on 28 May.

## Govt announces fresh guidelines for phased reopening

*Inter-district movement from 18 Jun, restaurants to resume dine-in service, gyms to open*

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 09 JUN:**  
The State Government issued fresh guidelines today for phased reopening allowing more relaxations to business establishments and public in general.

As per the new guidelines, hotels and restaurants will be allowed to open from 10 June 2020 on 50% room/seating capacity. Restaurants will be allowed to remain

open only till 8 pm and Standard Operating Procedures as notified by the Union Health Ministry will have to be followed.

Gyms will also open from 10 June 2020 from 7 am to 6 pm on the condition that they will have only 50% occupancy at any given time. Shops have been allowed to remain open for an hour longer, from 8 am to 6 pm.

Inter-district movement of people and vehicles will resume from 18 June 2020 following odd-even rule and capacity stipulations while no vehicular movement allowed from 9pm to 7am.

Inter-state movement of goods will also be allowed for all vehicles except light transport vehicles.

## India's virus count over 2.6 lakh, daily spike inching close to 10,000-mark

**NEW DELHI, JUN 9 (PTI):** A record rise in COVID-19 cases in India for the seventh consecutive day has pushed the tally to over 2.6 lakh on Tuesday, with the daily nationwide spike in coronavirus cases inching close to 10,000. The rise in cases comes at a time when the country has stepped out of a 75-day coronavirus lockdown with malls, religious places and offices opening in several parts of the country under strict conditions.

Since the onset of June, the country has also been witnessing over 200 COVID-19 fatalities each day that has taken the country's death toll to 7,466. India is the fifth worst-hit nation by the COVID-19 pandemic after the US, Brazil, Russia and the UK, according to the Johns Hopkins University data. Several states like Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Assam, Haryana, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh and Tripura among others have been showing a spurt in cases.

A total 266 new COVID-19 fatalities and 9,987 cases have been reported in the last 24 hours till Tuesday 8 am, according to the Union Health Ministry data. The country has registered over 9,000 coronavirus infection cases for the sixth day in a row taking the country tally to 2,66,598. The number of active novel coronavirus cases stands at 1,29,917, while 1,29,214 people have recovered and one patient has migrated, according to the Health Ministry data updated till 8 am.

"Thus, 48.47 per cent patients have recovered so far," a ministry official said. According to the ICMR, a total of 49,16,116 samples have been tested as on 9 am, Tuesday, with 1,41,682 samples been tested in the last 24 hours.

Out of the total 7,466 fatalities reported till Tuesday 8 am, Maharashtra tops the tally with 3,169 deaths followed by Gujarat with 1,280 deaths, Delhi with 874, Madhya Pradesh with 414, West Bengal with 405, Tamil Nadu with 286, Uttar Pradesh with 283, Rajasthan with 246 and Telangana with 137 deaths. The death toll reached 75 in Andhra Pradesh, 64 in Karnataka and 53 in Punjab. Jammu and Kashmir has reported 45 fatalities due to the coronavirus disease, while 39 deaths have been reported from Haryana, 31 from Bihar, 16 from Kerala, 13 from Uttarakhand, nine from Odisha and seven from Jharkhand.

Himachal Pradesh and Chandigarh have registered five COVID-19 fatalities each and Assam and Chhattisgarh have recorded four deaths each so far.

Meghalaya and Ladakh have reported one COVID-19 fatality each, according to ministry data.

*turn to pg 02*

## Sikkim's first COVID patient has not tested negative yet: Health Secy

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 09 JUN:**  
Health Secretary, Dr PT Bhutia, today explained that the first COVID patient of Sikkim has not yet tested negative although his viral load is very low.

Summit Times had earlier erroneously interpreted Dr Bhutia's Health Bulletin of 08 June to report that the first COVID patient was among the three who had tested negative on Monday.

In a press conference held today, Dr Bhutia informed that among the three who tested negative are the two women from South Sikkim whose test results had come from Siliguri after they had completed 14 days of quarantine and a returnee from Mumbai.

This third patient was one of the primary

contacts of the Mumbai returnee whose COVID positive status had been confirmed from a test conducted in Mumbai itself, confirmation of which was received only after he had boarded the SNT Bus from NJP.

While the first Mumbai returnee was found to be COVID-positive on 04 June, his primary contact who had also returned from Mumbai, was found to be positive as well on 06 June. Dr Bhutia informs that this patient had developed mild symptoms and although he had tested positive, his viral load was found to have been very low even on 06 June. Yesterday came confirmation that he had overcome COVID completely.

Today the Secretary also informed that the first COVID patient of the

State is keeping in good health and although he is still positive, the viral load has fallen so low that it does not carry any risk of transmission. However, as a precaution he will be discharged only after he recovers completely and tests negative.

Regarding the SummitTimes report, it should be clarified that Health officials had earlier informed that the State's first COVID patient's viral load was very low three days back. So, when the Health Bulletin informed that a third person to test negative for COVID, and mentioned that his viral load was earlier very low, the inference one drew was that the Health Secretary was speaking about the first patient. Summit Times regrets the error in the report.

## ASDSO reiterates demand for financial assistance for students

**RUDRA KAUSHIK  
GYALSHING, 08 JUN:**

The All Sikkim Democratic Students' Organization [ASDSO] has demanded a financial relief package for students so that they can clear at least their rent dues pending for the past three months for many of them.

Addressing a press conference here today, ASDSO members reiterated these demands insisting that they were 'genuine and pro student.'

Accusing the state government of being 'hypocritical' in its dealing with student issues and demands, ASDSO has warned of a statewide movement if it continues to ignore the demands of the students.

They alleged that despite the demands having been placed with the state government and the Education



department several times, there has been no response from the concerned authorities.

They informed that ASDSO had apprised the Education Minister about the plight of the students and even peti-

tioned the Chief Minister on the matter.

While the Education Department had assured to look into the demands, it has not made any announcements thus far, the ASDSO members added.

Prabin Upreti of ASDSO stressed

that financial assistance was desperately required by students, especially those hailing from underprivileged families in the current pandemic times when their families are also in economic distress.

"The economic stress caused due to prolonged lockdown may compel the students to leave their studies midway. It would have been a great help to the students if the state government released economic package for the students in this hour of depression. We are hopeful that the state government will come to our rescue," he said.

"When arranging two meals a day is becoming difficult, how can the parents provide monthly rent for their children studying in the towns," another member said.

*turn to pg 02*



*Another locust attack likely in a few weeks:*

*Officials*

**JAIPUR, JUN 9 (PTI):** Centre's Locust Warning Organization will press into service 25 drones and buy 60 more vehicle-mounted insecticide spraying machines to counter the attack of locust swarms in the near future, an official said on Tuesday. Authorities are worried that millions of locusts may enter India along with monsoon winds from the Arabian Sea to destroy kharif crops.

"The locust swarms may attack in late June and early July. There is every possibility that locust swarms will come towards India from African countries along with monsoon winds rising from the Arabian Sea," K L Gurjar, Deputy Director of the Faridabad-based Locust Warning Organisation (LWO), told PTI.

He said the summer and rainy weather is favourable for locusts and they move from one place to another during this time, travelling 150 km in a day.

India faced a locust attack last month and the swarms reached Jaipur for the first time. Swarms of locusts travelled through several areas of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh amid their worst invasion in years.

The swarms entered Rajasthan in April from Pakistan and then spread to areas across the western states, helped by strong winds.

Gurjar said the LWO is making full preparations at its level. For the first time, a team of 25 drones is being prepared to fight the locust swarm, which will be ready in a day or two. It will be used for spraying insecticides. Apart from this, the organization will get 60 more vehicle-mounted sprayers by the end of this month. State Agriculture Commissioner Dr Omprakash told PTI that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations is predicting that grasshoppers will come so "we have made full preparations".

Around 800 tractor-mounted sprayers were already being used, and now the district collectors have been authorized to take into service more such vehicles as per the requirement.

He said there is no dearth of resources to counter attack locust swarms. The state government has already given about Rs 6.5 crore to the districts. The department has asked for around Rs 4 crore additionally. The government has decided to purchase 100 fire fighting vehicles from the Disaster Relief Fund (SDRF), which can also be used for locust control.

In a meeting with Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot recently, State Agriculture Minister Lalchand Kataria said a large number of locust swarms could come to Rajasthan in the coming days. He said swarms are breeding in African countries.

A large number of these swarms are expected to reach Rajasthan. In such a situation, a district-wise strategy will have to be made to deal with them, Kataria said.

# Vehicle disinfection bay installed at Toong check-post

**MANGAN, 09 JUN [IPR]:** Roads & Bridges Minister Samdup Lepcha today inaugurated a vehicle disinfection bay at Toong checkpost in North Sikkim. He was accompanied by DC-North, Tenzing T Kaleon and SP Ongmu Bhutia.

As informed by SDM-Chungthang, Subash Ghirmerey, and ASP-Chungthang LB Chettri, Chungthang sub-division had taken the initiative to install the vehicle disinfection bay.

Thermal scanning shall be done 24x7 by the health workers and all the updates will be recorded, they added.

Today onwards, this innovative system will be used to sanitise all vehicles (Army and local) entering Chungthang, Lachen and Lachung. Earlier, vehicle disinfection was done manually.

It is learnt that the skeleton frame (structure) of the newly constructed vehicle disinfection bay was sponsored and prepared by Teesta

Urja. Similarly, spray nozzle and pump were provided by Sikkim State Disaster Management Authority and covering plastic by the Horticulture Department, Mangan.

Kesang Lachungpa of Lachung Dzumsa and Cho Bandu Lachenpa provided financial assistance to procure disinfecting chemicals. The vehicle disinfection bay was officially handed over to the IC Toong check post and it will be kept operational 24x7.

Minister Lepcha mentioned that this innovative system has been installed with the aim to help the state government in its fight against the novel coronavirus pandemic. He also informed how a similar disinfection system has been installed at the Rang-Rang check post.

He requested all district officers to work in tandem with the government to ensure better results for the welfare of the people of the state.



## SPCC boycotts Economic Revival Committee meeting

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 09 JUN:**

Sikkim Pradesh Congress Committee did not participate in the meeting of Economic Revival Committee held on Tuesday. The party decided not to participate in the meeting as there is a no clarity about the Economic Revival Committee.

The meeting, which should fall under the Finance Department, has been called by the Election Department and groups have been given

different timings for the meeting, the party has said.

How can the Election Department call a meeting on a matter related to the Finance Department, the party has questioned. The release states that it is not good for the state government to stir the decorum of the administration.

SPCC has further said that it would be appropriate for all groups and organizations to be called together for the meeting.

## One Nation, One Ration Card does not violate 371F: BJP Sikkim

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 09 JUN:**

Bharatiya Janata Party Sikkim Pradesh has expressed that the BJP government at the Centre has taken a historic and pro-people initiative of 'One Nation, One Ration Card' scheme to provide food grains to eligible beneficiaries from any Fair Price Shop in the country using the same ration card. The party states that the government plans to implement the scheme in the entire country by March next

year and the scheme has been extended to Sikkim from 01 June along with Odisha and Mizoram.

A BJP press release states that some political parties and individuals have been giving baseless statements on the initiative of the Centre by wrongfully calling it a violation of Article 371F.

Connecting the scheme with Article 371F without any base in order to mislead people is totally condemnable, the party has said.

## Petrol price hiked for third day in a row

**NEW DELHI, JUN 9 (PTI):**

Petrol price on Tuesday was hiked by 54 paise per litre and diesel by 58 paise a litre - the third straight daily increase in rates after oil PSUs ended an 82-day hiatus in rate revision.

Petrol price in Delhi was hiked to Rs 73.00 per litre from 72.46, while diesel rates were increased to Rs 71.17 a litre from Rs 70.59, according to a price notification of state oil marketing companies. This is the third daily increase in rates in a row. Oil companies had on Sunday restarted revising prices in line with costs, after ending an 82-day hiatus.

Prices were raised by 60 paise per litre each on both petrol and diesel on Sunday as well as on Monday. In all, petrol price has gone up by Rs 1.74 per

litre and diesel by Rs 1.78 a litre in three days. Oil PSUs - Indian Oil Corp (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corp Ltd (HPCL) - had put daily price revisions on hold soon after the government on March 14, hiked excise duty on petrol and diesel by Rs 3 per litre each.

Oil companies did not pass on that excise duty hike, as well as the May 6 increase in tax on petrol by Rs 10 per litre and Rs 13 a litre hike on diesel by setting them off against the decline in retail prices that should have effected to reflect international oil rates falling to two-decade low.

International rates have since rebounded and oil companies having exhausted all the margin are now passing on the increase to customers, an industry official said.

## HSP places suggestions to ERC

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 09 JUN:**

Hamro Sikkim Party has placed various suggestions to the Economic Revival Committee in a letter submitted today.

In the letter, HSP has said that the economic revival during a pandemic should be used as an opportunity for Sikkim to redefine its approach

to economic growth and bring in reforms focusing on our existing strengths and untapped potential.

"The State has to mitigate the immediate crisis along with building a resilient economy for future. The policies must aim for qualitative changes keeping sustainability all the time in our minds and should start working at a great speed,"

the letter reads.

The aims and objectives of the ERC should be reviving economy not only by supporting and strengthening the existing system (short term goals) but also building/reconstructing a sustainable, resilient, vibrant, inclusive, transparent economic framework at a great speed, the party has said.

## Mercury rises in north India; monsoon advances further

**NEW DELHI, JUN 9 (PTI):** Temperatures in several places in north India, including Delhi, increased by a few notches on Tuesday, even as the southwest monsoon further advanced into more parts of west central and north Bay of Bengal.

The mercury in the national capital was above the 40 degrees Celsius-mark. The Safdarjung Observatory, which provides representative figures for the city, recorded a maximum of 40.6 degrees Celsius. On Monday, it recorded a high of 37.6 degrees Celsius.

The weather stations at Palam and Lodhi Road recorded their respective maximum temperatures at 42 and 39.9 degrees Celsius.

Humidity levels oscillated between 38 and 86 per cent in Delhi.

The maximum temperatures in Haryana and Punjab rose by a few notches but the mercury settled near or below the normal limits at most places.

Chandigarh, the common capital of the two states, recorded a high of 37.6 degrees Celsius, a notch below normal, according to the Meteorological (MeT) department here.

In Haryana, Ambala's maximum settled at 39.3 degrees Celsius, which was within the normal limits, while Karnal recorded a high of 37.4 degrees Celsius, two notches below normal.

Hisar had a hot day at 42 degrees Celsius but it was within the normal limits. Narnaul, which received light rainfall during the day, registered a high of 33.5 degrees Celsius, nine notches below normal.

Ludhiana in Punjab registered a maximum of 38.2 degrees Celsius, a notch below normal, while Patiala recorded a high of 38.7 degrees Celsius, also a notch below normal limits.

Amritsar recorded a maximum temperature of 35.2 degrees Celsius, five notches below normal limits.

The mercury continued to remain above the 40 degrees Celsius-mark in several parts of Uttar Pradesh, the MeT office said.

Jhansi registered the highest temperature in the state with 42.5 degrees Celsius, it said.

The maximum temperature in Lucknow was 39.9 degrees Celsius and the minimum was 27.4 degrees, the department said.

The mercury rose to 42 degrees Celsius in Allahabad, followed by 41.6 degrees in Agra, 41.5 degrees in Kanpur and 41.2 degrees Hamirpur.

Aligarh registered a maximum temperature of 40.8 degrees Celsius, while it was 40.3 degrees in Fursatganj and 40.1 degrees in Varanasi. Orail in Jalaun district and Sultanpur recorded a maximum of 40 degrees Celsius.

The weather will most likely remain dry over the state, it added.

Several places in Rajasthan witnessed a rise in maximum temperature on Tuesday, and Sriganganagar turned out to be the hottest place in the state recording 43.3 degrees Celsius, a MeT department official said.

Bikaner recorded 43.2 degree Celsius, followed by Churu (43), Jaisalmer (42.8), Barmer (41.7), Kota (41.3), Jaipur (41), and Jodhpur (40.7).

Ajmer recorded a high of 39.6 degrees Celsius. Dabok received 0.55 mm rainfall on Tuesday and recorded a maximum of 38 degrees Celsius.

The MeT department has forecast thunderstorm/ lightning accompanied with gusty winds (with 30-40 kmph speed) to occur at isolated places in east Rajasthan.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) in its All-India Weather Forecast Bulletin said conditions are becoming favourable for further advance of southwest monsoon into more parts of the country.

It said that "southwest monsoon has further advanced into some more parts of west central and north Bay of Bengal, today".

"Conditions are becoming favourable for further advance of southwest monsoon into some more parts of central Arabian Sea, Goa, some parts of Maharashtra, some more parts of Karnataka and Rayalaseema, remaining parts of Tamil Nadu, some parts of Telangana and coastal Andhra Pradesh..." during the next 48 hours, it said.

## Indian football domestic season to begin on August 1

**New Delhi, Jun 9 (PTI):** Indian football's domestic season will begin from August 1 when the transfer window opens, two months later than normal times due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a circular sent on Tuesday to all the state units, the AIFF said it has got clearance from the world body FIFA to hold the season from August 1, 2020 to May 31, 2021.

The summer transfer window will run from August 1 to October 31.

While the domestic transfer window normally begins in the first week of June to continue till August end, it has been pushed back to August this year due to the global health crisis.

But there was no change in the normal May 31 season ending date

and thus the 2020-2021 season will be shortened by two months in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Yes, we have received the circular from the AIFF stating that the domestic season will begin from August 1, 2020 and run to May 31, 2021 and it will open the summer transfer window from August 1 till October 20," the head of a state association told PTI.

"...we are pleased to inform you that the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) has approved the amendment in All India Football Federation's (AIFF) season dates and registration period (transfer window) for 2020-21," the circular from the AIFF said. The second transfer window will be from January 1, 2021 to January 31, 2021.

## ASDSO reiterates...

ASDSO has also demanded that the state government provide sanitizers and face-masks at all educational institutions if the government decides to reopen schools and colleges in July.

"Sanitization of educational institutions and availability of sanitizers and masks should be ensured by the state government as the lives of students cannot be put up at risk," they said.

They termed the present online system of learning as praiseworthy but ineffective, citing that many students did not have access to smart phones and rural areas lacked reliable internet connectivity.

Frequent power supply disruptions in rural areas was another problem, they shared.

Another ASDSO member, Prabin Sharma stressed that the education sector was the worst hit and that the state government should come up with a specific plan to deal with the issue.

"We (students) are facing lots of problem. We find our futures dismal. We appeal to the state government to address our issues on a serious note," he said.

## India's virus...

More than 70 per cent of the deaths are due to co-morbidities, the ministry's website stated

The highest number of confirmed cases in the country are from Maharashtra at 88,528 followed by Tamil Nadu at 33,229, Delhi at 29,943, Gujarat at 20,545, Uttar Pradesh at 10,947, Rajasthan at 10,763 and Madhya Pradesh at 9,638, according to the Health Ministry's data updated in the morning.

The number of COVID-19 cases has climbed to 8,613 in West Bengal, 5,760 in Karnataka, 5,202 in Bihar and 4,854 in Haryana.

It has risen to 4,851 in Andhra Pradesh, 4,285 in Jammu and Kashmir, 3,650 in Telangana and 2,994 in Odisha.

Punjab has reported 2,663 novel coronavirus cases so far, while Assam has 2,776 cases. A total of 2,005 people have been infected by the virus in Kerala and 1,411 in Uttarakhand.

Jharkhand has registered 1,256 cases, while 1,160 cases have been reported from Chhattisgarh, 838 from Tripura, 421 from Himachal Pradesh, 330 from Goa and 317 from Chandigarh.

Manipur has 272 cases, Puducherry has 127 and Nagaland has reported 123 cases till now.

Ladakh has 103 COVID-19 cases, Arunachal Pradesh has 51, Mizoram has 42, Meghalaya 36 while Andaman and Nicobar Islands has registered 33 infections so far.

Dadar and Nagar Haveli has 22 cases, while Sikkim has reported seven cases till now.

The ministry's website said that 8,803 cases are being reassigned to states and "our figures are being reconciled with the ICMR".

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

## ~ SummitTIMES ~ CLASSIFIEDS

### GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

General land 30X40 (3 Plots) available for sale at Tadong 6th Mile next to Harka Maya College.

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

**Contact: 9800201335**

### LAND FOR SALE

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

### LAND FOR SALE

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



# Fear of the unknown is real and hence actively exploited

SALEM LEPCHA

| *After going through fits of hallucinations and mental disorder induced by over-thinking as opposed to passive-thinking ruminating on the mystery virus occasioned by the lockdown, below is the writer's desperate attempt to retrieve some of his sanity. Readers may 'puhleeze' refrain from making any assumptions about the mental state of the writer to the effect of being sane, which clearly as you read you'll find he is not.* |

Okay. This is going to be scandalous. In fact I suspect if this piece will ever get published at all. But, if it does, then kudos to the publisher for not censoring it. This is

snap shot of that creature floats the prime time news to add more drama and reality to the reeled tape. The idiot-box beams assortment of fakery and prevarications to the fawning viewers in autopilot. Data meant to fit the agendas are conveniently manipulated and arguably grim prognosis is thrown in bits and pieces to corroborate it lest the people see through the deceit to whip up even more panic. Animated anchors with all the condiments of background score and riveting script waits in ambush to the unsuspecting viewers. They are in their character. And they succeed. Big time! Convinced the world that the self imprisonment is an imperative, travel restrictions is necessary, masks is the

much more than what meets the eye". But, since you asked, what if those reported to have died of Covid-19 were chronically ill with other ailments and statistically were in the throes of hitting the bucket. This explains why the casualties were mainly old. What if those who succumbed may have died of some other illnesses apparently happened to be diagnosed with Covid-19 but declared as death caused by Covid-19? We underuse our cerebral at our own peril and proxy our thinking to the sound bites emanating from narrative-driven-rhetoric-obsessed media (and at this age social media platforms) bent on raking in more eyes balls because TRPs. You see. Surely we don't get tired of leaving our thinking to others. My divorce from the

have added to their wealth in billions in the same period. Who should be accountable? The answer has exited the door but, was

al proportions is now okay to live with. Do you see the perversion? For seriously, I can't wrap my head around this. Perhaps, the idea

## VIEWPOINT

an effort to go against the tide. Upend the popular narrative peddled and conspired yes conspired by unseen forces and their acolytes in higher echelons of societal pyramids that hold sway on the perception of the "pod people". Yes I said it. So what? I don't toe the line? Precisely! I am in the process of exiting this sick orgy of 'confirmation bias' and intend to remain cynical as from what I see this world is reeling from the smorgasbord of 'relatives' and its 'absolutes' are in tatters. From the hysteria of the mainstream Medias, loud mouthed half-brained public representatives, self proclaimed public health experts and the side kick well you and me all are complicit in this global drama with a Covid-19 plot. The first three for being hand in glove with deceit (knowingly or unknowingly) and the latter for consuming it. And what a story line! If it were at your face conspiracy film manufactured out of the factory of Hollywood would have raked in billions at the expense of the ignoramus that we are.

The story starts with an unprecedented crisis. The unseen not even properly sighted is the villainous antihero baying to wreck havoc on humanity. A simulated

new elixir and economic activities must be halted. In this milieu of deafening cacophony the plight of the lesser mortals stands redundant. Their lives again matter less in this hour of war on dreaded V. The subalterns are further relegated to the subterranean of popular consciousness for their stories are not salacious enough. As a consolation however, their concerns are aired here and there sporadically with prop ups of somber visage showing rather obnoxiously the empathy of the interviewer. How about toning down the rhetoric and hyper-sensationalism rather?

If I may, more sensationally what if this brouhaha surrounding the novel virus coming after benign (ahem!) mankind (you misanthrope!) was a charade just like weapons of mass destructions that Iraq never possessed but oil and a whole lot of it? What if this whole twist on the monotony of our lives was to plunge us into the trance of fear so that we would at our own volition sacrifice our freedoms at the altar of so called "our security"? But, some "enlightened" ones would say what about those who succumbed to the virus? What about them? Wake up you piece of walking meat as the cliché goes, "there is

broadcasting news houses ergo is not without sense of a closure. I ain't even complaining cuz its bliss and my pockets have fewer holes from having not to undergo expensive meditation to detox myself from the constant turds served on our platters by the purveyor of news, read: narratives. A valiant act- to the smirk of the readers-in an age when "information is power" they say but stop not to ask: What kind?

The fear of the unknown is real and the players actively exploit that loophole. And when it's unseen it gets more sinister. I am confounded as you are. I wonder how do we square with the knee jerk reaction of the 'pods' scrambling for toilet-papers, hoarding packaged products and sanitizers god knows for how many generations? For the first time in my living memory or perhaps in century 'socialization' was a dreaded word for humans who pride it as social animals. Who can account for those deceased whose last moments were bereft of their loved ones by their sides? Who will voice the concerns of daily wagers, small business owners, and the ilk whose opportunities to earn their livelihoods was brushed aside for as long as it? By the way billionaires



there an answer? No one cares. And now there is a plot twist to add to this theatrics. A once dreaded virus that brought the world to its knees is not going anywhere soon. So we are to now learn to live with it. Do you get it? The same virus incidentally fatal as per the impression of the media reports and projections citing high casualty rates that to fight it would warrant lockdowns of glob-

is too esoteric for me to make any sense and maybe I should play along the lines. Spoiler alert! The lockdown was successful and those that somehow moonlighted through this plandemic, sorry pandemic, alive and well, owe it to the desperate measures adopted or so they would claim. My foot!

[The writer is Block Officer, Forest and Environment Department]

## Lingmoo Payong Panchayat organizes blood donation camp

SUMMIT REPORT

LINGMOO PAYONG, 08 JUN:

Lingmoo Payong Gram Panchayat of South Sikkim organized a blood donation camp at the District Hospital, Singtam on the initiative of Panchayat President, Yogesh Bhandari.

The camp was organized with technical support from Blood Bank, Singtam Hospital, under Technician, DR Dhakal.

Panchayat member Rejina Lepcha (Badamtam Ward) was the first donor followed by 19 youth and other members of the GPU.

Panchayat members, Huma Devi Adhikari (Kaw Ward), Panchayat Vice President, Pemkit Lepcha (Upper Lingmoo Ward) and Mohan Raj Rai (Chauridara Ward) were also present to support the cause.

Present on the camp were Deepak Bhutra, Pawan Kumar Baloda and Gokul Sharma Oli

(Businessman and Entrepreneur respectively from Singtam) who were there following a Facebook announcement.

Similarly, Suraj Shar-

The GPU family expressed gratitude towards the donors by offering them khadas and a certificate of appreciation. The donors were



ma (HM Lingi Payong Secondary School), Megnath Siwakoti (Teacher Ralap Secondary School) Sachin Rai, Maharishi Gupta came down from Gangtok and Rangpo respectively to support the initiative.

also provided energy drinks, chocolates and light refreshment.

Also in the line-up were first-time donors - KT Lepcha, Phurba Sherpa, Karma Tshering, all from Upper Lingmoo.

## Coronavirus reaches Daman, two positive cases detected

DAMAN, JUN 9 (PTI): Two persons on Tuesday tested positive for coronavirus in the Union Territory of Daman, which was till now in green zone, officials said.

The two patients, a 41-year-old man and a four-year-old girl, both of whom arrived here from Mumbai recently, were shifted to a hospital in Marwad area of Daman, District Collector Rakesh Minhas said.

"Till now, the man was kept at a government-run quarantine facility, while the girl was home quarantined with her parents in Khariwad area. We have shifted both the patients to a hospital in Marwad," he said.

The girl's parents, whose reports came out negative, have also been shifted to the isolation ward of the hospital, the official said.

Since the 41-year-old patient was kept at the quarantine centre soon after he arrived here from Mumbai, he did not come into contact with any local, the collector said.

"We have declared Khariwad area as a containment zone after the girl's report came out positive. We have also initiated disinfection and contact-tracing in the area," he added. The Union Territory's administration recently said Daman and Diu were coronavirus-free till now due to strict implementation of the lockdown orders.

## Some labs took 18 days to submit swab reports: BMC chief

MUMBAI, JUN 9 (PTI):

Some laboratories in Mumbai took as many as 18 days to deliver swab reports related to coronavirus cases, BMC Commissioner I S Chahal said.

The senior IAS officer, who took over as commissioner of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) last month, said after he joined the post, he found that swab reports of April 4 were delivered on April 22.

"Some labs were committing serious crime by submitting reports 18 days later. They deserved to be punished for late reporting," Chahal told a TV channel on Monday.

The civic chief said he told such labs that inordinate delay in submitting reports of samples taken

for coronavirus was not acceptable.

"I told them clearly that if you could not give me swab reports in 24 hours, you cannot function here in Mumbai.

I cannot accept your reports after 15 to 16 days...you don't chew more than you digest," Chahal said to a question.

"I could test around 3,600 (per day) in Mumbai after testing guidelines were issued by the ICMR. Due to the guidelines of carrying out tests of only symptomatic patients, the total figure of testing came down," he said.

Chahal said the civic body is going beyond the testing norms issued by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). "We have 2,500 hospitals in Mumbai.

## COVID awareness at Namthang Manedanda and Nagi Karek GPUs



SUMMIT REPORT

RANGPO, 09 JUN:

Awareness programs on COVID-19 were organized at Namthang-Manedanda and Nagi Karek Gram Panchayat Units under Namthang Ratepani constituency today.

Area MLA, Transport Minister Sanjit Kharel, Block Development Officer, Ram Moktan, SKM

CLC president, Ratna Singh Tamang, Teesta-VI HEP coordinator, Hari Tiwari, SKM students wing general secretary, Kavita Sapkota along with Panchayat Members, SKM youth members, local residents and representatives from different organisations, SHGs and Farmer Clubs were present for the program.

The main purpose

behind today's program was to generate wider awareness among the people about COVID-19 and distribute face masks and hand sanitizers to families of the two GPUs.

Dove-tailing environment week engagements into the day, a plantation drive was led by the Minister at the Nagi-Karek Gram Panchayat Administration Center.

## I quit Test cricket after being ignored for 2 years, says Wahab Riaz

KARACHI, JUN 9 (PTI):

Dropped from PCB's central contract list reportedly for quitting Test cricket, left-arm fast bowler Wahab Riaz said he decided to stop playing the traditional format as he was being repeatedly ignored by the national selectors. Wahab who turns 35 this month, said he had not been selected in Pakistan's Test team since October, 2018 and that was the trigger behind his decision to quit the format last year.

"I played a Test in October, 2017 and then got another chance after exactly one year against Australia also in October on a flat pitch and was then dropped

again for more than a year," he recalled in an interview. "If I can't play, it is not for me. So I was focussing on white ball cricket and felt it would be best if I focussed on T20s and ODIs," said Wahab, who has a combined total of 228 wickets from 27 Tests, 89 ODIs and 31 T20 Internationals.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) dropped Wahab, who made his Test debut in 2010 in England as well as fellow left-arm pacer Muhammad Aamir from their new central contracts list which starts next month.

The general perception is that both the pacers were punished apparently for deciding to leave Test cricket

when Pakistan needed them. Wahab, who plays in most of the T20 leagues around the world, however, said playing for Pakistan was far more important for him than getting a central contract.

"I am fit and bowling well and I want to represent Pakistan in white ball cricket so my aim is to play for my country. Not getting a central contract is up to the cricket board," he said. Wahab, who attained fame after his five wickets in the 2011 World Cup semi-final against India at Mohali and then his blistering spell to Australian Shane Watson in the 2015 World Cup quarter-final, said he would continue to play cricket as long as he felt he can contribute.



What is Novel Coronavirus - nCoV?

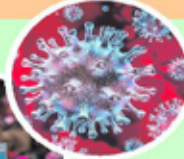
The Novel Coronavirus (nCoV) is new strain of Coronavirus that originated in Wuhan, China. Notorious for mutating quickly and acquiring new qualities, it is a rising epidemic that was previously not identified in humans.

### Symptoms of nCoV

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

### Treatment

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



### Precautions to Prevent nCoV

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

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

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE  
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM



## Stop Ignoring Domestic Violence

*Too many lives are being left scarred*

The lockdown has been a major force of disruption. Yes, it was inevitable and even necessary, but that should be no excuse to not make it as humane as possible. The horrors of the lakhs stranded without jobs, safety or provisions have made it to headlines and rightfully so, but what has not received enough play is how conditions have worsened for victims of domestic violence. Yes, some noise was made by agencies appointed to look out for women and children, but their engagement was superficial at best. A sustained engagement is still missed.

One does not know how bad the situation is in Sikkim, but since it can be agreed that the stress and ennui of the lockdown will make those with a proclivity to turn violent on their partners or children, it opens the door to speak some about a reality which Sikkim continues to ignore. And it is not as if the monstrosity of domestic violence does not hit home often. In recent years, one may recall, a lady was allegedly beaten to death by her husband in West Sikkim. Then there was the incident in Gangtok not that many years ago when a woman was beaten so brutally by her husband through the night that she never woke up after falling unconscious. The entire neighbourhood had heard her screams, then whimpers and then silence, and still no one had intervened. A couple of years ago, a woman ended her spiral of being a victim of domestic abuse by stabbing her husband to death. That incident was a rare one, not because domestic violence is uncommon in Sikkim, but because, in this case, the accused is also a woman. There has also been a case of domestic abuse leading to suicide [alleged as a murder cover-up by the victim's brother] in one of the more crowded residential areas of Gangtok. All of these in recent years!

The case from West Sikkim also included the rare case of intervention. The cycle of violence, as per the panchayat representative who had filed a police complaint, started around two months before the death and had been reported to the police. Clearly, there was time to address the violence before it ended in a fatality. It is also safe to assume that in the Gangtok incident as well, the fatal beating was not the first time that the wife suffered violence. It is obvious that in all cases, neighbours and the elders of the society ignored the ugliness by convincing themselves that they had no 'business' getting involved because it was a 'family matter'. This hesitation to engage occasionally leads to a fatality and almost always condemns a victim to continue suffering in silence... unattended.

It is time that the government and the people collaborated to save women from abusive relationships. But domestic violence unfortunately remains blindsided in Sikkim's over-exuberance to claim that women in Sikkim are empowered and that there is no gender discrimination here. While there can be no denying that at the government policy initiative level, women have been empowered in Sikkim, the same cannot be said for the social engagement on gender issues. While women in Sikkim are not denied opportunities or equality at the policy level, the same cannot be said about how the society at large responds to gender issues and nowhere is it more disturbing than in the society's continuing disregard of women in distress. Women who stand up and say enough and seek justice and rescue might receive it, but that is an engagement with the State. Not all women in distress seek out help, their trauma and fear overpowering them. But the signs are always obvious and the beatings and abuse rarely quiet. At least the immediate neighbours and close friends are in the know, and while some might even offer comfort and advice, no one steps up to lodge an official complaint.

This response is not unique to Sikkim and domestic violence is overlooked, even excused and denied across the world. But that does not make it acceptable. It is important that organisations responsible for women's welfare and empowerment reach out wider awareness on where people can lodge complaints of domestic violence. Complaints, whether from the victim or anonymous, should fetch immediate response and the concerned agencies in turn should have trained counselors and access to police assistance to reach the victims and rescue them. There are many theories on why domestic violence is so common and what factors trigger it. One of these explanations looks at external factors in the offender's environment, such as family structure, stress and social learning. When domestic violence is ignored by everyone even when it is obvious, the perpetrator sees it as an endorsement and continues with the deviance. By putting in place systems which proactively encourage people not to ignore this abomination, at least one causative factor would have been addressed. Agreed, domestic violence is too widespread and complicated to offer any easy solutions, but a start has to be made somewhere and what is suggested above is as a good a place to begin as any.

### WRITE US:

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

# Having trouble concentrating during the coronavirus pandemic? Neuroscience explains why

BÉATRICE PUDELKO  
*theconversation.com*

Fear, anxiety, worry, lack of motivation and difficulty concentrating — students cite all sorts of reasons for opposing distance learning. But are these excuses or real concerns? What does science say?

At the beginning of the pandemic, when universities and CEGEPs, Québec's junior colleges, were putting in place scenarios to continue teaching at a distance, students expressed their opposition by noting that the context was “not conducive to learning.”

Teachers also felt that the students were “simply not willing to continue learning in such conditions.” A variety of negative emotions were reported in opinion columns, letters and surveys. A petition was even circulated calling for a suspension of the winter session, which Education Minister Jean-François Roberge refused.

Students are not the only ones who have difficulty concentrating on intellectual tasks. In a column published in La Presse, Chantal Guy says that like many of her colleagues, she can't devote herself to in-depth reading.

“After a few pages, my mind wanders and just wants to go check out Dr. Arruda's damn curve,” Guy wrote, referring to Horacio Arruda, the province's public health director. In short: “It's not the time that's lacking in reading, it's the concentration,” she said. “People don't have the head for that.”

Why do students feel they don't have the ability for studies? Recent advances in cognitive science provide insights into the links between negative emotions and cognition in tasks that require sustained intellectual investment.

### A QUESTION OF THE AMYGDALA

“The heart has its reasons which reason knows not.” This sentence from 17th-century philosopher Blaise Pascal sums up well the way in which western science has long separated the emotions of the “hot” universe from those of the “cold” universe in human rationality.

Walter Cannon's physiological research has provided a first explanation of how emotions, especially negative emotions, take over our minds. He showed that emotion is a physiological warning system in the body, activating several structures below the cerebral cortex.

One of these structures, the amygdala, is now proving to be particularly important. The amygdala is rapidly activated in the face of threatening stimuli and allows us to learn to be wary of them. Faced with what could be a snake hidden among the branches, an animal will awaken its senses,

alert its muscles and react quickly, without having the luxury of analyzing whether the slender shape is a snake or a stick.

In humans, the amygdala activates quickly and automatically in response to social stimuli loaded with negative emotions. Neuroscience research shows that people are not only highly sensitive to the emotional charge of their perceptions but they are also unable to ignore it.

For example, the emotions aroused by the sight of a snake in the grass or an untrustworthy political figure can capture our attention in spite of ourselves.

### ATTENTION: A LIMITED RESOURCE

One might object that for many people, fortunately, COVID-19 does not pose the same kind of threat as a snake encountered in the undergrowth. Our social systems provide us with protections that are previously unimaginable and we are much better prepared to deal with crisis situations.

And, learning situations established by educational institutions — whether in-person classes or online classes — always require that students focus their attention and consciously control their thoughts. As teachers know from experience, a great challenge while leading any lesson is keeping the attention of all students by ensuring that they remain focused on the activity at hand.

The cognitive psychologist Daniel Kahneman, a Nobel Prize winner in 2002, was among the first to propose that attention is a limited cognitive resource and that some cognitive processes require more attention than others. This is particularly the case for activities involving the conscious control of cognitive processes (such as reading or writing academic papers), involving what Kahneman calls “System 2” thinking. That requires attention and mental energy.

Limited attention capacity is also at the heart of the theories proposing that conscious and controlled cognitive processes are carried out in working memory, which is compared to a mental space capable of processing a limited amount of new information.

In working memory, attention acts as a supervisor of cognitive resource allocation and a controller of action execution. The brain circuits associated with working memory and executive functions are those of the prefrontal cortex.

### WHEN EMOTION EATS AT ATTENTION

Researchers have long believed that the processing of emotions through the amygdala does not depend on the attention resources of working memory. However, evidence is accumulating in favour of the opposite hypothesis, indicating that the circuits connecting the amygdala and the prefrontal

tal cortex play an important role in discriminating between relevant and irrelevant information for the current activity.

For example, emotional stimuli were found to interfere with the performance of a working memory task especially since they were not very relevant to the task. Furthermore, as the cognitive load associated with the task increased (for example, when the task required more cognitive resources), the interference of emotional stimuli not relevant to the task also increased. Thus, it would appear that the more a task requires cognitive effort and concentration, the more easily we are distracted.

Much of the extensive research on anxiety by psychologist Michael Eysenck and colleagues supports this view. They show that people who are anxious prefer to focus their attention on stimuli associated with the threat, unrelated to the task at hand. These stimuli may be internal (worrisome thoughts) or external (images perceived as threatening).

This is also the case with worry as the repeated experience of seemingly uncontrollable thoughts about possible negative events. Both anxiety and worry eat up the attention and cognitive resources of working memory, resulting in decreased cognitive performance, especially for complex tasks.

Other research indicates that feelings of mental fatigue increase when performing a task while trying not to respond to outside demands. It has been suggested that mental fatigue is a particular emotion that tells us that our mental resources are being depleted.

Overall, this research suggests that we are depleting our attention resources to avoid paying attention to irrelevant, but emotionally charged information! It is now better understood why it is so difficult — and exhausting — to avoid checking one's email while reading a scientific text, to switch from email to Facebook and from Facebook to COVID-19 news coverage, when we are concerned about the curve or death toll in seniors' homes.

EMOTION AND COGNITION ARE INSEPARABLE  
Research in cognitive sciences today confirms what we know intuitively: studying requires attention, time and availability of mind. This research shows that cognitive and emotional processes are so intertwined in the brain that, for some researchers, such as Antonio Damasio, no thought is possible without emotion.

Not surprisingly, then, in a context full of messages about the dangers of the pandemic, students find it difficult to focus sustainably on their studies and most seem to lack quality time for reading or writing.

*[the writer is Professeure en psychologie de l'éducation, Université TÉLUQ]*

# How to understand police violence: Not a case of good cop vs. bad cop

TAMARI KITOSSA  
*theconversation.com*

Amidst the grief, disbelief and justified outrage at the killing of African Americans, many people want to make sense of what appears to be senseless police mayhem and violence. The killing of George Floyd and other African Americans by police has led to civilian protests and outrage across the United States and around the world. The gaze has now turned to Canadian police.

According to the Ontario Human Rights Commission, Black Torontonians are 20 times more likely to be shot by police than the city's white residents. Despite numerous inquiries and commission after commission after commission into police violence over the years — many with strong recommendations for police reform — nothing changes. Why?

Universities, news media, Hollywood, politicians and economic elites continually drum into our heads that police “serve and protect” — and so goes the police motto in Toronto. This narrative of police helps to fuel the fantasy that they are necessary in their present configuration. But whom and what police protect must be asked squarely.

### THICK BUREAUCRACIES

Citizens, misunderstanding that they are the ones to be protected, have demanded increased professionalization. This has mainly contributed to an already existing tendency toward a thicker and more unresponsive bureaucracy.

Police are now an unprecedented powerful cultural and political force protected by unions, the brotherhood, police services acts, increased authority, lax prosecution and a protective blanket offered by the courts. The unfettered growth of so many branches of police raises legitimate concerns that we are in a police state. Now is the time for people and

groups to activate what the prominent sociologist C. Wright Mills called “the sociological imagination.”

In other words, we need to apply rational theory to explain the irrationality of the police, politicians and economic elites, given that capitalism is hardly rational. We need to pierce the bubble of ideologies that confuses the interests of the powerful as something good for all of society.

HOW TO APPLY RATIONAL THEORY TO THE POLICE

There is no good police versus bad police. The sociological imagination rejects personalizing explanations. Police are police; they are the states' organ of repression. In a social order that is based on social inequality, even the most benign and friendly cop is little more than an ideological prop to make us grateful that the state can be merciful and is your friend. Black people know otherwise.

After getting past the ideological trap of good versus bad cop, the next step is to ask two fundamental questions in terms of what the police are for. Whom do the police serve? What do they protect in a colonialist and capitalist social order?

The first part of the question implies that police protect “us” from that abstract noun the state calls “crime.” Incidentally, in protecting us

from crime, police are empowered by law to break the law. Basically, this is state lawlessness.

A contradiction? Absolutely! But how to explain it?

IMMUNITY FROM PROSECUTION

This contradiction is, however, absolutely explicable. Police in the U.S. have something called “qualified immunity” from prosecution. In Canada, similar immunity laws exist. Since the state protects its protectors, qualified immunity from prosecution is what often allows police to get away with murder — literally. The legal justification for police violence is key to understand liberal democracies. In a capitalist social order, the principal function of police is to maintain the order of mal-distributions of private and productive property. Without a domestic armed force, the economic, social and political power of the ruling class and elites would not be possible. The police defend the interests of the powerful, and those whose disorganization is their powerlessness. This is not unlike what American law designates Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization (RICO) or, more simply, a mafia.

A RENEWAL OF DEMOCRACY

Police violence has always been the spark for the periodic bubbling over of public discontent with colonialism, capitalism, racism inherent

to social inequality. There are a myriad of better scenarios than the current one.

The police must be defunded. We need a mix of citizens' councils,

Crown councils, courts and diminished roles for police and prisons as remedies for the problem of social inequality. Those citizens' councils must not be co-opted and turned into an iron curtain of mass surveillance.

A new basis for social order is also required, such as a guaranteed basic income and democratic socialism.

This is all uncharted territory and there will be many unintended consequences.

Defunding, which means demobilization, could be a problem. As is the case in contemporary Mexico, Russia and elsewhere, former police and soldiers easily turn to armed brigandage, join paramilitaries or narcos. That might not happen here.

But given the last 40 years is increasingly dystopian and corruption already a serious problem in policing, nothing is to be ruled out.

Committing sociology is not about being right. It is about a frame of mind, of being open to critical interpretations and a way of asking questions about the dense fog of ideology that besets us.

*[the writer is Associate Professor, Sociology, Brock University]*





# Massive fire at Assam's Baghjan oil well

**GUWAHATI, JUN 9 (PTI):** A massive fire engulfed the damaged Baghjan oil well on Tuesday which has been spewing gas uncontrollably for the last 14 days in Assam's Tinsukia district, official sources said.

The blaze at the Oil India Ltd's oil well is so massive that it can be seen from a distance of more than two kilometres, eyewitnesses said.

Three experts from Singaporean firm Alert Disaster Control were at the blowout site and some equipment was being removed when the fire broke out in the afternoon.

A company spokesperson said no casualty or injury has been reported so far.

Firefighters have rushed to the spot and efforts are on to douse it, officials said. The cause of



the fire is yet to be ascertained, they said.

In a series of tweets, the Chief Minister's Office said Sarabananda Sonowal spoke to Union Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan

over the phone regarding the incident.

"The CM has already directed to deploy fire & emergency services, army and police officials at the site to control the situation. The CM also directed

district admin to ensure safety of people and appealed to local people to not panic," it said.

A major blowout happened at the oil well, next to the Dibru-Saikhowa National Park, following

which gas started flowing out uncontrollably.

The district administration had evacuated thousands of people living nearby due to spouting of natural gas and condensate droplets.

## 11 Kolkata Police personnel test positive for COVID-19

**KOLKATA, JUN 9 (PTI):** As many as 11 Kolkata Police personnel have tested positive for COVID-19, taking the total number of infected policemen in the force to 217, a senior officer said on Tuesday.

The 11 infected Kolkata Police personnel were from the combat force, the Police Training School (PTS) and different police stations, the officer said.

"At the moment we have around 217 policemen who have been diagnosed with the disease. We have several of our colleagues who have

recovered and resumed duty... I think our colleagues are doing a fabulous job. I wish everyone will be safe and all those down with the disease will get well soon," the IPS officer said.

Earlier, 17 police personnel of the Garfa Police Station in the city had tested positive for COVID-19.

On Saturday, a constable posted at the Shakespeare Sarani Police Station in the city had succumbed to the disease while undergoing treatment at the Kolkata National Medical College.

## 10 new COVID-19 cases in Manipur, tally reaches 282

**IMPHAL, JUN 9 (PTI):** Ten more people have tested positive for COVID-19 in Manipur, taking the total number of cases in the state to 282, officials said on Tuesday.

Of the 10 new cases, nine were reported from Noney district and one from Kamjong district, a statement issued today by COVID-19 Common Control Room said.

All the 10 people had returned from Delhi, Kerala, Bengaluru and Mumbai and were

staying in quarantine centres, it said, adding that they will be shifted to hospital. Meanwhile, six persons undergoing COVID-19 treatment at RIMS, here were discharged after they tested negative for COVID-19. They have been told to stay in home quarantine for 14-days, it said.

Of the total 282 COVID-19 cases, 218 are active as 64 people have recovered from the deadly disease, the statement added.

## 13 monkeys found dead on reservoir in Assam

**GUWAHATI/SILCHAR, JUN 8 (PTI):** As many as 13 monkeys have been found dead on a reservoir in Assam's Cachar district, officials said.

The bodies were found floating on a reservoir of the Katrail water supply plant of the Public Health Engineering Department on Sunday afternoon, an official of the plant said.

"This has created panic among the people as water is supplied from the plant and it was done so on Sunday. Forest officials have retrieved the bodies and sent those for post-mortem examination," he said.

Though the exact rea-

son of the simians' death will be known after getting the autopsy report, it is suspected that some miscreants might have poisoned the reservoir, the official said.

More than 350 families are dependent on the plant for their water needs, he said.

The incident came after a leopard was brutally killed by locals and its teeth and nails removed, in Katahbari area of Guwahati on Sunday.

Six persons, including a minor, have been arrested for allegedly killing the big cat and a case has been registered with the Gorchuk police station, a senior officer said.

## Central and state ministers spar over opening of temples



**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JUNE 9 (PTI):** As places of worship opened its doors to devotees in Kerala after an over two-and-half month long coronavirus induced lockdown, Minister of state for External Affairs, V Muraleedharan and Kerala Devaswom minister, Kadakampally Surendra sparred over the opening of temples.

Muraleedharan had in a Facebook post hit out at the left government saying, "your government is unable to even maintain social distancing in the state.

As the COVID-19 cases are increasing in the state, are you trying to put the blame on temples by opening them? We need the government to withdraw the decision to open the temples under the Travancore Devaswom Board," he said.

The Rajya Sabha MP from Maharashtra had on Monday evening tweeted that neither devotees nor the temple committees had demanded the re-opening of temples.

"The Kerala government's decision to reopen temples despite opposition from devotees smell foul.

Neither the devotees nor the temple committees demanded the opening of temples.

What is the haste? Is this a deliberate attempt by the atheist @vijayanpinarayi (sic) Govt to denigrate devotees? Govt must heed to the voice of devotees and withdraw its decision," he said in two tweets.

Slamming Muraleedharan, Surendran on Tuesday said the state government had not shown any undue haste with regard to the re-opening of temples and that he sympathises with the central minister.

The central minister should ask his ministerial colleagues about the decision taken in the cabinet meeting on opening of places of worship.

"I feel sad for him (Muraleedharan). The decision on opening of places of worship was taken by the central cabinet in a meeting chaired by our honorable Prime Minister.

The state government never showed any kind of haste in opening the religious places."

The decision was not taken by the state in a jiffy, he said but after holding discussions with various religious heads and community leaders.

"The decision of the state was taken after discussing with various religious and community leaders.

We understand that a minister of state can't take part in the cabinet meeting.

But, at least he should ask other ministers on the Centre's decision before attacking the state," Surendran said.

Malls, restaurants and places of worship opened in Kerala on Tuesday morning in line with the Centre's graded exit plan from the Lockdown, 'Unlock 1.0'. Joining the issue, BJP

state president K Surendran alleged that while the government consulted the who-is-who of other religions, it had a taken unilateral decision in the case of temples.

No spiritual leader or scholars who matter were consulted in the issue, Surendran told media in Kozhikode.

The decision to reopen the temples was only aimed at the wealth of the shrines under the control of the Devaswoms.

The state government did not bother to spend a penny for hundreds of temples which had nothing in their kitty to survive during the past two months, he alleged.

Tens of thousands of staff of these temples were "neglected" by the government without giving any financial aid for survival.

The BJP and Hindu Akiya Vedi had come out on Monday against the state's decision to open places of worship.

Various temples under the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) opened on Tuesday along with some churches and mosques in parts of the state.

While the famed Lord Krishna temple at Guruvayoor opened its doors by following the various norms laid down by the government, the Padmanabha Swamy and Attukkal temples in the state capital were among those which remained shut.

## Odisha to intensify COVID-19 awareness campaign

**BHUBANESWAR, JUN 9 (PTI):** With the state reporting more than 800 new COVID-19 cases in the first week of June, Odisha government has asked different departments to intensify awareness campaign as there is no medicine or vaccine for novel coronavirus.

Chief Secretary A K Tripathy on Monday issued directions to Information and Public Relation, Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water, Women and Child Development and Mission Shakti Departments to intensify IEC (Information, Education and Communication) activities with the active involvement of the community.

Apart from social media, Tripathy also asked the officials to use traditional modes like TV, radio, leaflets and posters while reviewing the progress of the special awareness campaign "Mu bi Covid Yodha" (I am a Covid warrior).

"Information, Education and Communication are the key to win the

fight against Covid-19 and check the possible spread of the pandemic", the chief secretary said, adding that an aware and alert community can achieve wonders in the fight against this unseen enemy.

He said Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had cautioned the people as well as the administration that the month of June will be very challenging as more than 5 lakh Odia migrant workers have returned from different highly infected states and monsoon is also likely to onset on 10th of this month.

"The campaign will focus on spreading awareness among people on the need of social distancing, mask wearing and hand hygiene to curb the spread of the virus," said Tripathy.

He said the involvement of panchayati raj institutions have yielded good results in containing the spread of the diseases in initial phases and directed officials to set up ward committees in both rural and urban

areas so that surveillance could be more effective.

He also suggested that the campaign be intensified through active involvement of women self-help groups, panchayati raj institutions, farmer producer groups and school management committees

Odisha had reported only 284 COVID-19 cases till May 9. It has now increased to 2,994. In one month the state has reported more than 2,700 cases.

Information and Public Relations secretary S K Singh said, "The camping has been launched to infuse in the people the values of self-responsibility with the spirit of Ama Swasthya Ama Hatare (our health in our hand)."

The main themes of the campaign include personal hygiene, hand washing use of mask, social distancing, care of the old and vulnerable, eradication of social stigma, self-monitoring, community surveillance quarantine and making use of 104 and telemedicine, he said.

## 50pc of Kolkata restaurants reopen with safety protocols

**KOLKATA, JUN 8 (PTI):** Around 50 per cent of the 30,000-odd eateries in Kolkata opened on Monday following the Centre's notice allowing restaurants to start functioning with all COVID-19 safety protocols in place.

About 15,000 restaurants opened with at least 6 feet distance between two tables and minimum contact with the restaurant staff during payment and ordering menus, President of Hotels and Restaurants Association of Eastern India Sudesh Poddar said.

Around 25-30 per cent of normal customer presence was reported in the eating joints on the first day, owners of several restaurants said.

"It is the first day of reopening of restaurants after over two-and-half month of lockdown. We know there would be less footfall now compared to the pre-COVID days. But it will catch up," Poddar told PTI. He said patrons are calling up restaurants

to know about timing and availability of bookings, but online delivery still outweighs the fine dining segment in almost all restaurants, an interesting feature in the past two and half months.

"I think it will take time for the people to go back to the old habits with corona scare yet to go. But we are here to assuage their misgivings with full safety measures," Poddar said.

Employees of Peter Cat and Mocambo, two iconic restaurants in the city, wore masks, face shields and gloves.

"Customers also need to wear masks. We are checking body temperature of everyone using thermal gun and making the customers sanitise even their footwear while entering. Patrons are seated on every alternate table," owners of the two restaurants Nitin Kothari said.

"Making people aware that their favourite food joints have opened

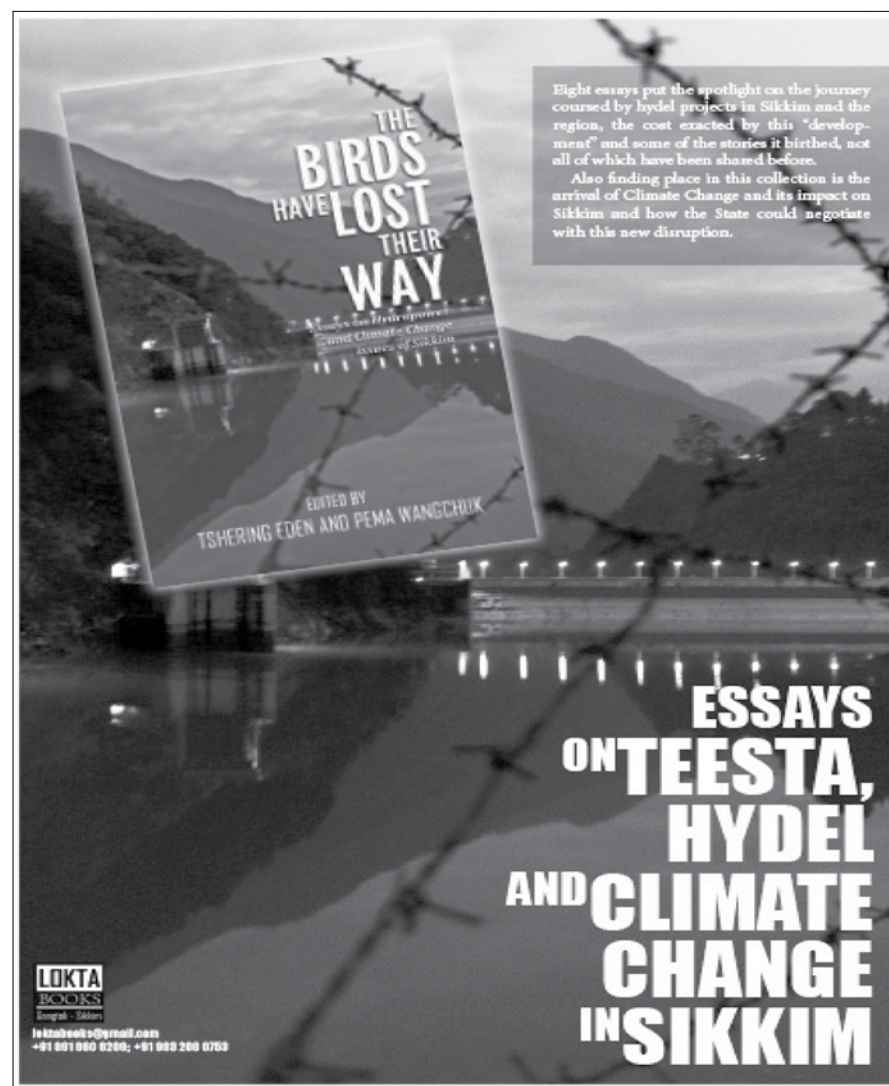
is more important at this stage. We are sure the number of clients will rise in the coming days," he said.

Authorities of Awadhi cuisine restaurant, Oudh 1590 said they witnessed 25 per cent customer presence on the very first day of the re-opening.

"We feel it will go up gradually once people are more comfortable to dine out," owners Shiladitya Chaudhury and Debadev Chaudhury said.

Seating capacity was reduced to 50 per cent while the menu is sent to the mobile phone of the customer at the entrance to ensure minimum contact, they said adding that the patrons were provided with disposable crockery and cutlery.

Ishtiaque Ahmad, partner of Shiraz Golden Restaurant, said the first day saw "30-35 per cent of guests dining at the restaurant. People are still hesitant to go eating out but I am hopeful that the number will grow gradually.





Wade may not engage in verbal duels with India during home Test series

**MELBOURNE, JUN 9 (PTI):** Australia wicket-keeper batsman Matthew Wade on Tuesday said he might stay away from sledging during this year's home Test series against India as he feels Virat Kohli and Co thrive on verbal duels and use it to their advantage. Wade has used sharp words to get into the skin of his opponents in the past, especially in the 2017 India ODI series and also during last year's Ashes.

However, the 32-year-old said he would not want to engage in verbal confrontations with Indian players as it might only spur on the visitors.

"They're a hard team, they use it (sledging) to their advantage very well. Virat is very clever the way he uses his words or his body language. So they use it as an advantage now. To be honest, I don't really want to engage too much into that," Wade told reporters via video conference.

"I know that they thrive off that energy that comes between two players. They're probably as good at doing that as anyone in the world at the moment, so it's something I might stay away from this time."

The four-Test series between India and Australia is scheduled to begin with the first game at Gabba starting December 3. The second, third and fourth Tests are slated for Adelaide Oval (Dec 11-15), Melbourne Cricket Ground (Dec 26-30) and Sydney Cricket Ground (Jan 3-7) respectively.

Wade, who has played 32 Tests, 94 ODIs and 29 T20Is for Australia, said India are a fierce opponent with a bunch of good fielders.

"I have been luckily enough to play India but I haven't played them in Australia, played them twice in India which is hard work. They are a fierce team," he said.

"They are on your face, they have alert fielders which probably India haven't been renowned for in 20 year period, they are up and about all the time when you are batting."

India's pace attack has thrived under Kohli in the last few years and Wade also pointed out that fast bowlers will be India's potent weapon in Australia.

# Massive sports corruption case finally heard at Paris trial

**PARIS, JUN 8 (AP):** A sports corruption trial involving allegations of doping cover-ups and illicit payoffs at the top of track and field opened Monday in Paris.

In six days of hearings, the Paris court is due to hear evidence that Russian athletes paid millions of dollars to hide their suspected doping so they could compete at the Olympics in 2012 and other competitions.

Lamine Diack, who served as president of the sport's governing body for nearly 16 years, is one of the alleged recipients of the payments. Diack, 87, was present in court, wearing a white face mask.

The court briefly considered but then rejected a request from a lawyer for Papa Massata Diack, one of Lamine Diack's sons who is also a defendant in the case, that the trial be delayed because two of his other lawyers weren't able to attend the trial because of coronavirus travel restrictions.

The trial had already been delayed from January to allow the inclusion of new evidence.

Papa Massata Diack lives in Senegal, shielded from an



international arrest warrant issued by France, and did not attend Monday's hearing.

As IAAF president, Diack was one of the most influential men in Olympic sports, presiding over an era when Usain Bolt made track and field wildly popular. But Diack's legacy, and the IAAF's credibility, took a beating af-

ter he stepped down in 2015. He was arrested in France and investigators revealed accusations of athletes being squeezed for payments to cover up their doping cases.

The 86-year-old Diack is being tried for corruption, money laundering and breach of trust. Prosecutors say he directly or indirectly solic-

ited 3.45 million euros ( 3.9 million) from athletes suspected by the IAAF of doping who paid to have their names cleared so they could continue competing. About two dozen Russian athletes were reportedly involved.

Prosecutors also charged Diack for involvement in a 1.5 million payment from Russia

for use in electoral politics in his native Senegal. Prosecutors say the money was creamed off sponsorship and TV rights deals, negotiated with Russian officials.

Prosecutors say the money was to finance presidential and legislative election campaigns in Senegal in 2012, in exchange for slowing down

doping cases targeting Russian athletes.

Diack is also accused of having enabled his son to embezzle IAAF sponsorship revenue from Russia's VTB Bank, Chinese oil firm Sinopec and broadcaster CCTV, South Korean tech giant Samsung and others.

Papa Massata Diack also faces corruption, money laundering and breach of trust charges. Senegal has refused France's extradition requests for the former IAAF marketing consultant.

Lamine Diack was detained on a trip to France in 2015 and has been forbidden from leaving the country since.

Also being tried for corruption are a lawyer who advised Diack, Habib Cisse, and a doctor, Gabriel Dolle, who oversaw drug-testing at the IAAF and is accused of taking payments to delay doping cases. Both men were in court.

Two Russians are also on trial but were not present: Valentin Balakhnichenov, a former IAAF treasurer, and Alexei Melnikov, a coach who led Russia's long-distance running program.

## Experienced goalkeeper Kamaljit Singh joins Odisha FC



**BHUBANESWAR, JUN 9 (PTI):** Odisha FC on Tuesday announced signing of Indian goalkeeper Kamaljit Singh for two years ahead of the seventh edition of the Hero Indian Super League.

The 24-year-old custodian has played for Hyderabad FC in the past.

Kamaljit was a part of the senior national squad, under coach Igor Stimac, for King's Cup, Intercontinental Cup and FIFA World Cup Qualifier

match against Bangladesh last year.

"I am grateful to the club management for showing interest in me. I am looking forward to playing in Bhubaneswar and hopefully will be able to contribute to the team's cause from the back," said Kamaljit.

He had represented Sporting Clube de Goa and Minerva Punjab FC earlier in his career before playing for FC Pune City (now Hyderabad FC) in the ISL.

"He will bring a lot of experience to our goalkeeping position. While he did not have the best of seasons last year, we know the ability Kamaljit possesses," Odisha FC President Rohan Sharma said.

"And we are confident he can not only give competition to Arshdeep, but eventually regain his form and go back to the national team. I am sure Kamaljit will work hard to prove the doubters wrong."

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## Premier League restart preview No 2: Aston Villa

### PAUL DOYLE

**LONDON, 09 JUN [THEGUARDIAN]:**

What was the situation like when the league was suspended on 13 March? Gloomy, with patches of hope. Villa slid into the relegation zone after losing their last four league matches before the shutdown, including grim defeats by Bournemouth and Southampton and a 4-0 spanking by Leicester. Constant mistakes, unfortunate injuries, a general lack of pace and widespread inconsistency gave Villa the look of a newly assembled team running out of time to get things right.

Yet they undoubtedly have quality and also have a match in hand on the teams around them thanks to their progress to March's Carabao Cup final, where, though they ultimately fell to Manchester City, they showed the sort of resilience they will need to survive.

What about now? The outlook is brightened by the return from injury of John McGinn, who was sorely missed after damaging his ankle just before Christmas. The Scot left a hole in midfield that could not be filled, not even by Danny Drinkwater. Now that McGinn is fit again Villa can look forward to an injection of dynamism and thrust. With the form of Marvelous Nakamba having been one of the positives for Villa before the suspension of the league, they can expect to be strong in the centre. Another positive was the sharpness of Mbwana Samatta, the striker whose arrival in January offset the loss to injury of Wesley. The goalkeeper Tom Heaton, however,

remains a key absentee and much will depend on the performances of his replacement. That could be Ørjan Nyland, who did well throughout the Carabao Cup campaign, or Pepe Reina, who has recovered from a harrowing case of coronavirus.

What needs to be done to have a successful end to the season? For a start, Villa need to stop conceding so many goals. That means eradicating the basic mistakes that have frequently sabotaged good work this season. It also means finding the right formula. Dean Smith had success when he switched to a back three in the new year but that proved temporary and he ended up reverting to a back four. Whatever system they use, Villa need at least one reliable central defensive partner for Tyrone Mings. Björn Engels, though hardly infallible, has looked the most likely so far. Villa will also need to improve their attacking, particularly the service from the right to Samatta and McGinn. Villa collected eight points from their previous matches this season against the 10 teams they have left to face; they will probably need more than that to survive.

Have players and staff behaved during lockdown? Mostly. But anyone who saw the photograph in March of Jack Grealish wearing one slipper and one flip-flop as he stood forlornly on a Birmingham street contemplating his damaged Range Rover and flawed judgment will be aware that the club captain let the side down by venturing outdoors just hours after publicly

calling for others to abide by lockdown. He has apologised.

Any unsung/community heroes? Not so much unsung as singing. Kortney Hause revealed his vocal talent by releasing his first single in April. The song, entitled Worth It, was not just a boon for lovers of R&B but also for the NHS, to whom he donated all proceeds from sales. "Music has been a passion and a hobby of mine for many years," he said. "It felt like the right time to do my bit and help out." Grealish, meanwhile, gave money to Birmingham Children's hospital and raised over £55,000 for the NHS by raffling off one of his Villa shirts.

Key player in the run-in? Grealish. He is not just Villa's most gifted player, he is one of the best in the league. Dismissed as an overrated bauble by people who do not pay enough attention, he is, in fact, a highly reliable and effective performer who works relentlessly and creates regularly despite constant attempts to take him down and rough him up. When he is on the pitch Villa always have a chance of scoring.

End-of-season-prediction With Grealish, Samatta and McGinn available to play together for the first time, Villa could yet fire their way to safety. They will survive. Just.

Remaining fixtures (all times BST): Weds 17 June Sheffield United (h) – 6pm, Sky Sports Sun 21 June Chelsea (h) – 4.15pm, Sky Sports Weds 24 June Newcastle (a) – 6pm, BT Sport Sat 27 June Wolves (h) – 12.30pm, BT Sport TBC Liverpool (a), Manchester United (h), Crystal Palace (h), Everton (a), Arsenal (h), West Ham (a).

## Raheem Sterling demands English football gives black managers a chance

**LONDON, 09 JUN [THEGUARDIAN]:** Raheem Sterling has called for English football to seize the moment and finally address its lack of black representation in positions of power.

The Manchester City and England forward made the comments during an appearance on the BBC's flagship political programme, Newsnight, in the wake of anti-racism protests that have taken hold across the world. Advance clips had shown the 25-year-old offering his support to those who have taken to the streets in the aftermath of George Floyd's death at the hands of police in the United States, but the full interview with Emily Maitlis saw him focus on matters closer at hand.

Reflecting on his own sport, Sterling pointed a finger at the long-running disparity between the number of high-profile BAME players and the dearth of those who go on to win significant managerial,

coaching or administrative jobs. Sterling cited the respective fortunes of Steven Gerrard and Frank Lampard, who have landed top roles at Rangers and Chelsea in the early stages of their management careers, as compared to equally experienced black players who have been compelled to start much lower down the ladder.

"This is a time to speak on these subjects, speak on injustice, especially in my field," said Sterling. "There's something like 500 players in the Premier League and a third of them are black and we have no representation of us in the hierarchy, no representation of us in the coaching staffs. There's not a lot of faces that we can relate to and have conversations with. "With these protests that are



going on it's all well and good just talking, but it's time that we need to have conversations, to be able to spark debates.

"There's Steven Gerrard, your Frank Lampards, you have your Sol Campbells and you have your Ashley Coles. All had great careers, all played for England. At

power. Asked what would represent success for the change movement, he said: "When there's more black people in positions. When I can have someone from a black background for me to be able to go to in the FA with a problem I have within the

the same time, they've all respectfully done their coaching badges to coach at the highest level and the two that haven't been given the right opportunities are the two black former players. "I feel like that's what's lacking here, it's not just taking the knee, it is about giving people the chance they deserve."

Sterling also feels there is a lack of representation in the game's governance, suggesting a more diverse mix is needed in the corridors of

club. These will be the times that I know that change is happening." The former Manchester United and Aston Villa striker Dwight Yorke also bemoaned his struggles in the managerial market, revealing even a hand from Sir Alex Ferguson could not help him earn a shot at another of his old clubs. He told BeIN Sports: "I've applied for the Villa job twice now. I get one response from the CEO and his response to me was I need experience.

"Where am I going to go and get experience if I'm not being given a chance? When I applied for the Villa job, I went into [Ferguson's] office and told him exactly what I was trying to do. He gave me some experience, he told me what I needed to do and I picked his brain. At the same time, he picked the phone up and rang Villa for me to give his recommendation. With his help, I still can't get an interview. That is what we are facing."



# Cathay Pacific proposes USD 5 billion bailout led by government

**HONG KONG, JUN 9 (AP):** Financially battered Hong Kong airline Cathay Pacific Airways has proposed the government help fund a 39 billion Hong Kong dollar (USD 5 billion) recapitalization plan to help it survive the coronavirus pandemic.

Cathay Pacific said in a stock exchange filing on Tuesday that the plan calls for it to issue shares to raise more than 33 billion Hong Kong dollars (over USD 4.3 billion).

Of that total, about 20 billion Hong Kong dollars (USD 2.6 billion) would be issued to a new, government-controlled group to be called Aviation 2020.

The airline also would receive a 7.8 billion Hong Kong dollar (USD 1 billion) loan from Aviation 2020.

Cathay Pacific, one of Asia's biggest airlines, proposed the bailout as it struggles to survive the near collapse of regional travel due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Cathay Pacific has ex-



plored available options and believes that a recapitalization is required to ensure it has sufficient liquidity to weather this current crisis, it said in the filing.

Travel to Hong Kong has also declined amid months of anti-government protests that spiraled into violence at times last year.

Political pressures from Beijing also led to the resignation of Cathay Pacific's CEO

Rupert Hogg after some of its employees were found to have joined the protests.

The airline said the plan was in response to unexpected events, including the outbreak of the global COVID-19 pandemic which has created significant challenges for the airline industry.

The company said it plans executive pay cuts and a second voluntary leave scheme for employees on top of earlier

cost-cutting measures.

In the first four months of the year, the number of passengers carried by Cathay Pacific plunged nearly 65 per cent amid a halving of capacity. The airline has been operating a skeletal network of flights to major destinations such as Singapore, Beijing, Los Angeles, New York and Tokyo.

Cargo measured by weight fell nearly 27 per cent in the first four

months, against about a 25 per cent decrease in capacity, the airline said.

Cathay Pacific and Cathay Dragon, the group's two main carriers, reported a combined 4.5 billion Hong Kong dollar (USD 580 million) unaudited loss in the first four months of 2020.

Cathay Pacific and major stakeholders Swire Pacific and Air China suspended trading ahead of Tuesday's announcement.

## Moscow emerges from lockdown as WHO warns of 'worsening' global crisis



Moscow emerged from a strict coronavirus lockdown on Tuesday despite Russia seeing thousands of new cases every day, as the World Health Organization warned the pandemic was "worsening" worldwide.

Muscovites flocked to streets and parks after authorities in the Russian capital lifted restrictions in place since March 30, even as the country registered 8,595 new cases and its total death toll surpassed 6,000.

Walking in central Moscow under sunny skies, 33-year-old marketing manager Olga Ivanova said that after weeks stuck at home it felt good to have her city back.

"It's nice out and there are a lot of people on the streets. It's a beautiful day, in every sense of the word," she said.

With more than 485,000 cases as of Tuesday, Russia has the third-highest number of confirmed infections after the United States and Brazil.

Officials say the high number is the result of a huge testing campaign, with more than 13 million tests carried out so far, and point to Russia's relatively low mortality rate as evidence it is safe to ease lockdowns.

Critics have accused authorities of under-reporting deaths and say officials are rushing to lift restrictions for political reasons, after President Vladimir Putin rescheduled a high-profile military parade for June 24 and a vote on constitutional reforms for July 1.

But as large parts of Europe and the United States reopen, the WHO reported a record number of new coronavirus cases globally.

Director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said Monday that 136,000 cases had been reported in the previous 24 hours, "the most in a single day so far,"

with the majority of them in the Americas and South Asia.

- Complacency is 'biggest threat' -

"Although the situation in Europe is improving, globally it is worsening," he told reporters.

Tedros said that in countries where the situation was getting better, "the biggest threat is now complacency".

"More than six months into this pandemic, this is not the time for any country to take its foot off the pedal," he said.

COVID-19 deaths have passed 406,000 worldwide, with more than seven million infections, since the disease emerged in China late last year before sweeping the globe, subjecting billions to some form of lockdown and paralysing economies.

Governments around the world are cautiously peeling back those restrictions to resuscitate their economies while trying to avoid a resurgence of infections.

A study by Imperial College London published on Monday estimated that lockdowns prevented 3.1 million deaths in 11 European countries. Cyprus on Tuesday welcomed its first tourists after nearly three months on lockdown, with flights scheduled from Israel, Greece and Bulgaria.

Desperate to save its summer tourism season, the Mediterranean island's government has pledged to cover the medical costs of any visitor who tests positive for the coronavirus while on holiday.

Other countries have been more cautious.

The health minister in Spain, one of the hardest-hit countries in Europe, said that wearing face masks in public will be compulsory "until we permanently defeat the virus" with an effective treatment or vaccine. And Britain, which is

## German exports down nearly a quarter in April as virus hits

**BERLIN, JUN 9 (AP):** German exports plunged by nearly a quarter in April compared with the previous month as coronavirus shutdowns dragged down demand, official data showed Tuesday.

The figures from the Federal Statistical Office followed data showing big drops in factory orders and industrial production in Europe's biggest economy in April, underlining expectations of a sharp economic contraction in the second quarter.

Exports dropped 24% in April, following an 11.7% decline in March the month when

European countries, including Germany, started imposing lockdowns.

In year-on-year terms, exports dropped 31.1% in April, the biggest drop since records began in 1950. There were sharp drops in exports to France, Italy and the U.S. - 48.3%, 40.1% and 35.8% respectively. Exports to China, however, were down a comparatively modest 12.6%.

German imports dropped 16.5% in April compared with the previous month, following a 5% drop in March. In year-on-year terms, there was a 21.6% de-

cline in April. Germany's lockdown was less severe than those imposed in Italy, Spain and France and it never ordered factories closed, but companies did largely stop production in some areas such as the automaking sector and supply chains were disrupted.

Germany started easing restrictions on public life on April 20 and the process has gathered pace since. However, the German economy went into a recession in the first quarter, when it shrank by 2.2%, and that is expected to deepen in the current quarter.

## Hong Kong leader says all should learn from year of protest



**HONG KONG, JUN 9 (AP):** A year on from the start of Hong Kong's anti-government protests, the leader of the semi-autonomous Chinese city said Tuesday that all sides should learn from the difficulties and challenging times over the past year. Everyone has to learn their lesson, including the Hong Kong government, Carrie Lam told reporters before a weekly meeting with advisors.

Hong Kong cannot bear that kind of chaos, and the people of Hong Kong want a stable and peaceful environment to be able to live and work here happily. Lam did not elaborate on what lessons should have been learned.

Tuesday marks the one-year anniversary of the first large-scale protest against a proposed extradition bill that would have allowed people in this former British colony, which has its own legal system, to be sent to mainland China to stand trial. Organizers pegged the turnout at more than a million people, while police estimated a crowd of 240,000.

The mass protest on 9 June last year has been etched in the collective memory of Hong-kongers," the Civil Hu-

man Rights Front, which organized the event, wrote in a Facebook post on Tuesday. "It also marks the beginning of our togetherness in defending our beloved city. The march through central Hong Kong was the start of a pro-democracy movement that saw protesters break into the legislative building and take to the streets every weekend for months, even after the extradition bill was withdrawn.

At times, violent clashes broke out between protesters and the police, leading to accusations of police brutality and sparking protester demands for an independent inquiry into police behavior.

Hong Kong saw a lull in protests during the coronavirus outbreak early this year, but as infections have ebbed, protesters have returned to the street to demonstrate against an imminent national security law for Hong Kong as well as a recently approved national anthem bill that makes it illegal to insult the Chinese national anthem.

Critics and protesters say that the national security law is a blow to the one country, two systems framework following the handover of Hong Kong

from Britain to China in 1997, which promised the city freedoms not found on the mainland.

There were calls for protests to mark the anniversary Tuesday, both at lunchtime and in the evening, though no sizeable ones had materialized by early afternoon.

China blames the protests in part on foreign intervention and is hastening to enact a national security law for Hong Kong aimed at curbing secessionist and subversive activities.

Hong Kong's problems are a result of the opposition and foreign allies attempting to turn Hong Kong into an independent or semi-independent political entity and a pawn to contain China's development, Zhang Xiaoming, deputy director of the Chinese Cabinet's Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office, said in a speech posted to the office's website Monday.

The more the bottom line of national security is consolidated, the greater the space will be for Hong Kong to leverage its advantages under 'one country, two systems,' Zhang said.

China will unswervingly protect its sovereignty and block any outside interference in Hong Kong's affairs, he said.

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## Daniel Radcliffe Addresses J.K. Rowling's Transphobic Comments in New Essay

"To all the people who now feel that their experience of the books has been tarnished or diminished, I am deeply sorry for the pain these comments have caused you"

Twice in recent months, Harry Potter author J.K. Rowling has decided to tarnish her legacy by spouting transphobic comments on social media. The latest instance came over the weekend, when Rowling seemingly dismissed the existence of non-binary people and gender-nonconforming people. "If sex isn't real, there's no same-sex attraction. If sex isn't real, the lived reality of women globally is erased," Rowling tweeted. "I know and love trans people, but erasing the concept of sex removes the ability of many to meaningfully discuss their lives. It isn't hate to speak the truth." Now, Harry Potter himself, Daniel Radcliffe, is speaking out in support of the trans community in a new essay published to The Trevor Project.

Radcliffe, who portrayed the titular character in all eight Harry Potter films, said he felt "compelled to say something at this moment" even if it meant uncomfortable press headlines pitting him against Rowling.

"I realize that certain press outlets will probably want to paint this as in-fighting between J.K. Rowling and myself, but that is really not what this is about, nor is it what's important right now," Radcliffe began. "While Jo is unquestionably responsible for the course my life has taken, as someone who has been honored to work with and continues to contribute to The Trevor Project

for the last decade, and just as a human being, I feel compelled to say something at this moment." "Transgender women are women," Radcliffe continued. "Any statement to the contrary erases the identity and dignity of transgender people and goes against all advice given

experience of the books has been tarnished or diminished."

"I am deeply sorry for the pain these comments have caused you," Radcliffe wrote. "I really hope that you don't entirely lose what was valuable in these stories to you. If these books taught you



by professional health care associations who have far more expertise on this subject matter than either Jo or I. According to The Trevor Project, 78% of transgender and nonbinary youth reported being the subject of discrimination due to their gender identity. It's clear that we need to do more to support transgender and non-binary people, not invalidate their identities, and not cause further harm."

Radcliffe then encouraged his fans to check out The Trevor Project's Guide to Being an Ally to Transgender and Non-binary Youth to better understand the differences between sex and gender. To close his letter, Radcliffe addressed Harry Potter fans who "now feel that their

that love is the strongest force in the universe, capable of overcoming anything; if they taught you that strength is found in diversity, and that dogmatic ideas of pureness lead to the oppression of vulnerable groups; if you believe that a particular character is trans, nonbinary, or gender fluid, or that they are gay or bisexual; if you found anything in these stories that resonated with you and helped you at any time in your life — then that is between you and the book that you read, and it is sacred. And in my opinion nobody can touch that. It means to you what it means to you and I hope that these comments will not taint that too much."

### Frank Grillo says he is outgrowing' superheroes, no longer wants to play Punisher

**LOS ANGELES, JUN 9 (PTI):** Actor Frank Grillo says superhero films don't excite him anymore and there are hardly any chances of him returning to the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU).

Grillo, who featured as Brock Rumlow/Crossbones in MCU, had once expressed his desire to play Frank Castle aka The Punisher, essayed by Jon Bernthal in the axed Marvel TV show The Punisher.

But in a recent interview with Up-roxx website, the actor said as an artiste he has grown a lot since the time he first starred in Marvel films and playing The Punisher is no longer a part of his character wish list now. That's not in my trajectory now. It's not where my life is

taking me anymore, and my friend Jonny Bernthal did an amazing job. My life and what I want to do is much different now, and I think I'm outgrowing that whole kind-of Marvel and superhero thing, Grillo said.

The 55-year-old actor, who owns a production company with filmmaker Joe Carnahan, said he now wants to focus on creating original content.

Joe and I have a really good little company in WarParty, and we're concentrating on action thrillers that are responsibly budgeted, and we're very busy, knock wood, and we'll go down the path of creating our own material and content and having a good time," he said.

### Keanu Reeves on why he returned for 'Matrix 4': Beautiful script, wonderful story

**LONDON, JUN 9 (PTI):** Hollywood star Keanu Reeves says it was director-writer Lana Wachowski's "beautiful script" for "Matrix 4" that compelled him to come back to the world of cyberpunk.

The actor, who will reprise his role as Neo in the upcoming fourth installment of the cult sci-fi franchise, said the new film has some "meaningful things" to convey and he didn't want to let go of the opportunity.

"Lana Wachowski wrote a beautiful script and a wonderful story that resonated with me. That's the only reason to do it.

"To work with her again is just amazing. It's been really special, and the story has, I think, some meaningful things to say, and that we can take some nourish-

ment from," Reeves told Empire magazine. According to reports, the film is hoping to resume production in July and Warner Bros Pictures, the studio behind the film, had signed eight-week extensions to keep the star cast on hold.

The film was in production since February, and moved from San Francisco to Berlin mid-March for shooting, which never began due to the coronavirus-led shutdown.

Besides Reeves, Carrie-Anne Moss and Jada Pinkett Smith will be reprising their roles as Trinity and Niobe, respectively in the fourth chapter.

Yahya Abdul-Mateen II, Neil Patrick Harris, Brian J Smith, Toby Onwumere and Jonathan Groff are new additions to the series.

### When Jason Statham dissed Marvel movies, and Vision actor Paul Bettany had a befitting reply

Jason Statham had once said that even his grandmother could do a Marvel movie, as they posed no challenge, to which Vision actor Paul Bettany had a befitting response.

Despite being pursued by Marvel Studios, actor Jason Statham has a particular dislike for their movies. In an interview, Statham said that even his grandma could perform in them, and that they posed no challenge.

In 2015, the actor told Italian website I 400 Calci that Marvel movies' reliance on special effects and green screen means that actors don't really have to perform stunts. He said, "I could take my grandma and put her in a cape, and they'll put her on a green screen, and they'll have stunt doubles come in and do all the action. Anybody could do it."

He said that these types of films don't feel 'authentic' to him, and that he is "inspired by old, real-star [actors] — guys that can really do their thing."

Actor Paul Bettany, who voiced Jarvis in the Marvel films before playing Vision, had a befitting reply to Statham's comments. In an appearance on Conan O'Brien's show, Bettany said, "I would never talk sh\*t about somebody else's work, but I'm just saying, you know, I read the contract, they employed me as an actor. There's obviously stuntmen in the world — you've met them, you've seen them.



**COFFEE STOP!** The actress, Scout Willis makes a pit stop at her local coffee shop for a beverage in her cute cowboy boots!

## When Mira Rajput Revealed Shahid Kapoor's Favourite Position In Bed

This wasn't the first time when Mira Rajput and Shahid Kapoor revealed secrets about each other.

Shahid Kapoor and Mira Rajput are one of the most followed couples in Bollywood. Their PDA over social media needs no introduction. But did you know, Mira once spilled out her bedroom secrets and revealed what position Shahid prefers in bed?

Yes, you read that right. Shahid Kapoor and Mira Rajput graced Neha Dhupia's chat show BFFs With Vogue. While the two had a lot of fun, what came out as a surprise was Neha's question about the couple's favourite position in bed.

Well, that question did take Shahid Kapoor aback, but Mira Rajput was a complete sport and answered it in a sassy way. Answering Neha's quite a naughty question, Mira said, "I think he is a control freak. He is always telling me what to do." It was after this, Shahid Kapoor could not stop blushing.

This wasn't the first time the two revealed

secrets about each other. When Shahid Kapoor went on Koffee With Karan, he revealed that he is petrified of Mira. He said, "I'm constantly petrified of my wife. If I take a piss and



forget to put the seat up and then back down, she'll come and lecture me, and says, 'what kind of a man are you? Haven't people taught you any manners.'"

However, alongside their love and chemistry, Mira Rajput has also made headlines for the speculations of her planning to enter Bollywood. As for Shahid Kapoor, the Kabir Singh actor will be next seen in the Hindi remake of South film Jersey. He was shooting for the same when the pandemic hit the shores.

#### ARIES:

Happiness is an inside job, Aries. This means you are the creator of your reality and you get to decide where you want to vibrate at. Honour your need for solitude and self-care. If you feel like the world is weighing you down with unrealistic expectations, it's best to take a step back and hit the refresh button. Remember, your time and energy are sacred.

Tip: Honour your need for solitude and self-care.

#### TAURUS:

The trouble is, you tend to think your opinion is better than that of others. No wonder chaos and commotion are a constant, especially in the workplace. Today, you're being asked to listen more than you speak. Practice patience. Exercise compassion. Who knows? You may end up learning something new in the process.

Tip: Practice active listening. Bring forth the energy of peace and harmony.

#### GEMINI:

Sometimes, life turns out to be picture-perfect. At other times it throws us off our game with a series of curve balls. What's empowering about this phase is that it's helping you look at the past through the lens of wisdom and take both the good and the bad in your stride. You're realising that everything that transpired was essential to your growth and has made you the person you are today, and for that you are grateful.

Tip: You're looking at your past through the lens of wisdom.

#### CANCER:

Here's the thing. Cancer: everybody is going through their own trials and tribulations. Don't take their words (or criticism) personally. What they're saying has nothing to do with you. Some of you may find yourself caught in the on-again, off-again. Know the difference between infatuation and love.

Tip: Know the difference between infatuation and love.

#### LEO:

Matters related to home and property are likely to take centre stage today. For some, repairs and renovation may be a theme. Others may be considering investing in a new property or moving into their ancestral home. Trust that the stars are aligning for you to make positive changes on this front. Like where you are but want to clear the energy that's been weighing you down?

Tip: Positive changes on the home front are indicated.

#### VIRGO:

You've been indoors for what feels like a lifetime, you can't remember what the outside world looks like, and you miss your crew terribly. There are going to be good days and not-so-good days, Virgo. Take both the shadow and light into your stride as you focus on finding the silver lining in your current situation. It's true that you are confined to your house, but you've never been more free to explore who you truly are. So make coffee, make music, make art, make love.

Tip: Make love. Make coffee. Make art.

#### LIBRA:

Sometimes, things work out organically. At other times,

they tear you apart leaving scars in places you didn't know existed. It's all a part and parcel of life: the duality; the intimate dance of shadow and light. It will be easy for you to recede into a space of darkness given everything that is transpiring right now. Keep your head above water. Understand what your circumstances are teaching you. The need for boundaries is becoming stronger than ever before.

Tip: Understand the need for boundaries.

#### SCORPIO:

We hold on to the idea of who we are because there is comfort in familiarity. Don't forget that this comfort is synonymous with stagnation too. The cards are urging you to embrace the winds of change, to let go of the false sense of self, and allow yourself to be transformed. Trust that this metamorphosis will make you more "you" than you've been in a long time now.

Tip: This transformation is bringing you closer to your truth.

#### SAGITTARIUS:

We're always talking about beginnings, but endings have their own beauty and grace too. They bring with themselves the news of completion and signal the end of a chapter. Sagittarius, be grateful for what was and what is yet to come. Know that you are making space for a better tomorrow. A quick mental health check is in order today. Resist the urge to isolate yourself, no matter how heavy your heart gets.

Tip: Resist the urge to isolate yourself.

#### CAPRICORN:

The pursuit of knowledge is a big theme in the Capricorn HQ, and not the kind you find in textbooks. You're approaching everything in life with the humility of a student and allowing the greatest lessons to reveal themselves to you. As Socrates once said, "I am the wisest man alive, for I know one thing, and that is that I know nothing at all."

Tip: The pursuit of knowledge is a big theme for you.

#### AQUARIUS:

Sometimes, we let our practical side overrule. At other times, we believe in the magic that surrounds us. But who said you have to pick one over the other? Both of these truths co-exist and are available to you in every moment. So, allow yourself to dream of a better world and take the lead no matter how daunting this may feel in the beginning.

Tip: Take the lead. Dream a new world into being.

#### PISCES:

This is a time of abundance and financial stability. Look at you making your money work for you, Pisces! Finding a middle ground between your intuitive and practical side has been a game-changer. In the realm of love, however, things may not be as picture-perfect. Some of you may feel like you are the anchor here and that your partner isn't supporting you in the way you'd like them to.

Tip: This is a time of abundance and financial security.