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# SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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## India's COVID-19 tally climbs to 14,83,156, recoveries climb to 9,52,743

**NEW DELHI, JUL 28 (PTI):** With a single-day increase of 47,703 COVID-19 cases, India's virus tally mounted to 14,83,156 on Tuesday, while the recoveries surged to 9,52,743 pushing the recovery rate to 64.24 per cent, according to the Union Health Ministry data.

The country's death toll due to the virus rose to 33,425 with 654 deaths being reported in a 24-hour span, the data updated at 8 am showed.

There are 4,96,988 active cases of coronavirus infection in the country presently.

According to the data, the recovery rate among COVID-19 patients is 64.24 per cent while the fatality-rate is 2.25 per cent.

The total number of confirmed cases also includes foreigners.

This is the sixth consecutive day that COVID-19 cases have increased by more than 45,000.

Of the 654 deaths reported, 227 are from Maharashtra, 77 from Tamil Nadu, 75 from Karnataka, 49 from Andhra Pradesh, 39 from West Bengal, 30 from Uttar Pradesh, 26 from Delhi, 22 from Gujarat, 17 from Telangana, 12 from Punjab, and 10 from Rajasthan.

Nine fatalities each have been reported from Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir, seven each from Assam and Odisha, five from Haryana, four each from Tripura and Jharkhand, three each from Puducherry and Uttarakhand, two each from Himachal Pradesh and Kerala, and one each from Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Nagaland and Sikkim.

Of the total 33,425 deaths reported so far, Maharashtra has reported the maximum at 13,883, followed by 3,853 in Delhi, 3,571 in Tamil Nadu, 2,348 in Gujarat, 1,953 in Karnataka, 1,456 in Uttar Pradesh, 1,411 in West Bengal, 1,090 in Andhra Pradesh and 820 in Madhya Pradesh.

So far, 631 people have died of COVID-19 in Rajasthan, 480 in Telangana, 397 in Haryana, 321 in Jammu and Kashmir, 318 in Punjab, 253 in Bihar, 147 in Odisha, 89 in Jharkhand, 86 in Assam, 66 in Uttarakhand and 63 in Kerala.

Chhattisgarh has registered 44 deaths, Puducherry 43, Goa 36, Tripura 17, Chandigarh and Himachal Pradesh 14 each, Meghalaya and Nagaland five each, Ladakh four, Arunachal Pradesh three, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu two and Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Sikkim one each.

## Sikkim reports 24 new cases and 12 full recoveries

**SAGAR CHHETRI  
GANGTOK, 28 JUL:**

**T**wenty-four new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Sikkim in the 24 hours ending Tuesday morning.

Of these, eight were reported from East Sikkim and 16 from South Sikkim, taking the number of active cases to 392 in the State. Sikkim's tally of confirmed cases reported so far stands at 579. Meanwhile, 186 patients have made full recoveries and have been discharged from the hospital. 12 more patients were discharged from the hospital yesterday. In that sense, the week has begun well for Sikkim with 28 people beating the virus in two days – Sunday and Monday.

In his daily health bulletin this evening, Health Department DG-

cum-Secretary, Dr Pempa T Bhutia informed that nine samples were tested by TrueNat on Monday and all returned negative, while 23 new cases were detected out of 433 samples tested by RT-PCR.

He added that only one person tested positive during rapid antigen testing of 141 samples.

While providing details of the 23 new cases detected by RT-PCR, he informed that three positive patients were detected from samples sent by Singtam district hospital. He added that these three were contacts of the village guard from Singtam who had tested positive earlier in the first wave of infections reported from Singtam.

Meanwhile, 16 more contacts in Mamring have tested positive

for COVID-19.

Dr Bhutia went on to inform that two ITBP personnel at Ray and two GREF personnel from Rongli, who were already in isolation, also tested positive.

While giving the break-up of screening by RAT, Dr Bhutia mentioned that nine samples in Rongli, five in Rhenock and 100 in Rangpo [80 returnees and 20 contacts] all tested negative.

During testing of 21 samples [09 contacts and 12 in Flu Clinic] at Singtam, one lab technician of Health Department, who is a contact of the electrician who had tested positive a few days back, was found positive for COVID-19.

As for the overall COVID-19 scenario in Sikkim thus far - out of

579 cases reported so far, 386 are from East Sikkim, 41 West Sikkim, 139 South Sikkim and one from North Sikkim.

On the decision of the high-level meeting of the state task force to allow asymptomatic patients the option of staying in home quarantine, the Secretary informed that the Standard Operating Procedure prepared for this dictates that only asymptomatic patients who have a separate room and toilet and other feasible conditions to stay isolated from other family members will be allowed to stay under home quarantine.

He added that positive patients with co-morbidities will not be allowed for home quarantine and have to stay compulsorily in hospital.

## 'Incredulous' that CM blames people for surge in COVID numbers: SDF

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 28 JUL:**

**S**ikkim Democratic Front has demanded Chief Minister PS Tamang take back his recent statement and tender an apology to the people of Sikkim whom he is reported to have blamed for the spike in COVID-19 cases in Sikkim.

The party points out that a Chief Minister has the responsibility to guide the people at this juncture and not make statements that could lead to more chaos among the people.

An SDF press release issued by its spokesperson, Prashant Babu Chettri, states that it was disheartening to see the "incredulous"

statement made by the Chief Minister blaming the people for the surge of Covid-19 cases in the state and issuing directives to the police to take strict action.

SDF fears that the statement will lead to a major setback in efforts to contain the virus as effective coordination is required between the people and the authorities for the safety of all.

The release points out to the CM that his party, Sikkim Krantikari Morcha, conducted more than 15 party gatherings across the state during the lockdown [unlock-2] during which masks were rarely seen and no social distancing was



maintained.

"Sikkimese people are and always have been law abiding

citizens and the statement

put forth by the Chief Minister not only positions

the people's credibility in bad light, it also raises a big question on their honesty. The sincerely disciplined nature of our people was the vital reason behind Sikkim being Covid-19 free for more than 4 months since the first case was reported in India," the release states.

The release joins the rest of the Opposition in alleging that when Sikkim received national and international praise for keeping COVID at bay, the CM was quick to take all the credit but today, when Sikkim is faced with a crisis, the blame has been conveniently shifted to the people.

## CM chairs special meeting on education

**GANGTOK, 28 JUL (IPR):**

**A** special meeting was held today to discuss and deliberate on the current education situation and future road map of digital education in the State at Samman Bhawan. Due to the global pandemic, education and students right to education have been hit hard and to combat the situation, digital and online classes are the only option in the current situation.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary, SC Gupta briefed the august gathering on the agenda of the meeting and the views and suggestions of the department on the issues.

The Chief Minister welcomed everyone on behalf of the Government and stated that the State Government is utilising the IT sector to its optimum level, which had been dormant for all these years. He stressed on the fact that during the pandemic, Information Technology and digital connectivity have played an effective and a monumental role and this technology boon could be used as a medium to move forward in this path and makes the best use of it. He also reiterated that Sikkim has been granted an Independent BSNL Administrative Control Centre for the State which will improve connectivity and help in achieving e-Governance by 2022, as proposed by the Central Government. He focussed on moving forward with time and adapting to technological advancement for overall development.

He also proposed that the teachers who are currently off duty due to the COVID-19 situation could be part of the monitoring team in GPUs for ensuring that the asymptomatic cases are following the necessary protocols



and guidelines. Their noble services could be utilized to raise awareness, educate, inform and regulate the patients.

However, they should be well briefed before sending them for the fieldwork. This proposal was appreciated by the department who will be preparing a list of teachers and also prepare the Standard of Practise (SOP). The Chief Minister also suggested utilising the services of OFOJ employees for assisting the teachers.

The Secretary, Education Department, Anil Raj Rai communicated that the major problem currently faced by the department is connectivity, especially in the shadow areas which mostly fall under difficult terrain. To tackle the situation, currently, they are providing pre-recorded contents to students who do not have access to proper internet connectivity. He also informed that they are using various applications and broadcasters to conduct these classes. He also emphasized on the departments plan to initiate counselling for parents and ask their opinion regarding the reopening of schools.

The Chief Secretary stated that the connectivity issue cannot be solved instantly and we need to make the best use of the facilities we have at our disposal. He insisted on uniformly upgrading

the facilities and use YouTube and other similar platforms for these purposes.

The Chief Minister emphasized on turning Sikkim into an education hub to attract students from various states and abroad. He stated that we should move towards the unconventional technique of education and more research-based methods in Soreng Science College and turn it into a centre for excellence by including subjects like Environmental science, climate change, Himalayan studies centre where traditional practices of Himalayan people and their livelihood opportunities will also be included. He directed the department to set up a team to prepare a Standard of Practise (SOP) in advance to monitor students, teachers and lecturers returning to the state in case of commencement of schools and colleges in the near future.

He also added that the maintenance of schools should be done regularly and should not be ignored because of the lockdown. He directed the education department to hold a meeting with the IT Department to sort out issues about digital education and find a middle path which will be feasible looking at the current scenario.

The meeting was also attended by Minister, Education, KN Lepcha and other officers of the concerned department.

## People already suffering, don't deserve blame:

### HSP on CM blaming people for COVID spike

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 28 JUL:**

**H**amro Sikkim Party has strongly condemned the recent statement attributed to the Chief Minister in which he has insinuated that the people of Sikkim are to blame for the surge in COVID-19 cases in the state.

"In a situation where people are scared due to the pandemic, it is ridiculous that the public is being blamed now. It may be

recalled that the same public has foregone their civil liberties and have observed the lockdown for four months which had kept the virus in check," a press release issued by HSP spokesperson, Biraj Adhikari said.

The release reminds the Chief Minister that he has been quick to take credit when the pandemic was at its lowest, and "it is surprising that he is blaming the people now that we are facing the full brunt of

## 43 pc Indians suffering from depression: Study

**NEW DELHI, JUL 28 (PTI):** Ever since the pandemic hit India over five months back, followed by an unprecedented lockdown, stress levels have been on the rise with 43 per cent Indians suffering from depression, according to a new study.

Conducted by GOQii, a smart-tech enabled preventive healthcare platform, the study surveyed over 10,000 Indians to understand how they have been coping with the new normal.

According to the study, 26 per cent respondents were suffering from mild depression, 11 per cent were feeling moderately depressed, and six per cent were facing severe symptoms of depression.

"The last five months have been unexpected. The situation has taken a major toll on the mental health of citizens. With the series of lockdowns, anxiety, job cuts, health scares, and the overall volatile environment, stress levels are at an all-time high.

"Copious amounts of stress can lead to depression. With the current lockdown and lifestyles

drastically changing, we have seen that 43 per cent of Indians are currently plagued with depression and are learning to cope with it," the study said.

To monitor the severity of depression in the respondents, the study relied on self-administered Patient Health Questionnaire or PHQ-9 (a form of primary care evaluation of mental disorders).

It took into account nine aspects of an individual's daily routine, including interest levels in activities, appetite, sleep cycles, ability to concentrate, and energy levels.

"Our study indicates that an increasing number of people across the country are dealing with mental health issues triggered by the spread of the coronavirus and the consequent lockdown.

"The mounting uncertainty is the basis of the high stress index which can be controlled with a balanced diet, changes in lifestyle and appropriate sleep patterns," said Vishal Gondal, Founder and CEO, GOQii.

Those feeling depressed

complained of having little interest or pleasure in doing things, feeling hopeless, dealing with erratic sleep cycles, poor eating habits, low levels of energy, low self esteem, having trouble concentrating, being restless, and having thoughts of self harm.

"More than 59 per cent of the population said they had little pleasure in doing things these days, out of which 38 per cent have this feeling on a few days and 9 per cent feel so more than half of the days. Nearly 12 per cent felt this way almost every day in these times, the study said.

It pointed out that more than 57 per cent of the respondents complained of feeling tired or having little energy through "at least some days in the last few weeks".

"At least more than 15 per cent have this feeling more than half of the days. This leads to some people sleeping too much while some others have trouble sleeping.

"With the change in lifestyle, approximately half of the population is having trouble with their sleep," the study said.

## Assam's deputy speaker tests positive for COVID-19

**GUWAHATI/SILCHAR, JUL 28 (PTI):** Assam Assembly's Deputy Speaker Aminul Haque Laskar tested positive for COVID-19 on Tuesday, the sixth MLA from the ruling BJP to get infected by the coronavirus in the state. Laskar's driver has also tested positive for the infection, officials said.

"With a very sad heart I would like to inform that I have been tested Covid-19 positive (+ve) from the first swab sample test few minutes back. I was not feeling well was since morning (sic)," Laskar said on his Facebook page.

He, however, said that all his family members have been found to be negative for COVID-19.

"Those who have come into my contact from the last 1 week, Please isolate yourself and get yourself covid tested (sic)," Laskar posted.

Silchar Lok Sabha MP Rajdeep Roy said that along with Laskar, his driver has also tested positive.

A senior official of the Health Department said that Laskar, who is a



BJP MLA from the Sonai constituency, is diabetic and doctors are closely monitoring his condition.

"He has already been admitted to the Silchar Medical College and Hospital. A team of doctors is monitoring his health parameters," Cachar district Health Department's Media Expert

Suman Choudhury said.

On July 20, BJP MLA Atul Bora from Dispur constituency became the fifth legislator of the ruling party to test positive for COVID-19 in the state.

The first BJP MLA to be infected was Patharkandi's Krishnendu Paul, followed by Naryan Deka of Barkhetry

constituency, both of whom have recovered and discharged from the hospitals.

Later, Sadiya MLA Bolin Chetia too tested positive for COVID-19 and was admitted to the Tinsukia Civil Hospital.

BJP's Sonari MLA Nabanita Handique became the fourth party legislator to test COVID-positive in Assam. Her son, driver and a personal assistant had also tested positive.

Another prominent politician from the state to be diagnosed with COVID-19 was All India Mahila Congress president and former Silchar Lok Sabha MP Sushmita Dev. She has recovered and released from the Silchar Medical College and Hospital.

Apart from politicians, more than a dozen senior bureaucrats in the state have tested positive along with over 1,200 police personnel.

Assam has recorded a total of 33,576 cases of COVID-19 so far, of which 13,767 have been reported from Guwahati itself.

## Nitrogen dioxide levels fell by more than 70% during COVID-19 lockdown in New Delhi: UN

**UNITED NATIONS, JULY 28 [PTI]:** Levels of nitrogen dioxide fell by more than 70% during the lockdown in New Delhi, a UN policy brief said on Tuesday, warning that the environmental gains could be temporary if the cities re-open without policies to prevent air pollution and promote decarbonisation.

The UN Secretary-General's Policy Brief on 'COVID-19 in an Urban World' said that with an estimated 90 per cent of all reported COVID-19 cases, urban areas have become the epicentre of the pandemic. It also pointed out that several new scientific studies suggest that poor air quality is correlated with higher COVID-19 mortality rates.

The size of their populations and their high level of global and local interconnectivity make them particularly vulnerable to the spread of the virus.

The brief said that while pollution and greenhouse gas emissions have fallen sharply during the pandemic when countries halted their economies to contain the spread of the virus, these environmental gains are

expected to be temporary if economies reopen without policies in place that prevent air pollution and promote decarbonisation.

"Levels of nitrogen dioxide fell by more than 70% during the lockdown in New Delhi (India), 40% in urban areas in China, 20% in Belgium and Germany, and 19 40% in different areas of the US," the brief said.

A small increase in fine particulate matter has been associated with an 8% increase and up to 21.4% increase in death rates in the US and the Netherlands, respectively, it said.

New evidence also points to impacts on pregnant women and newborn babies as well as maternal mortality, particularly among populations already facing socio-economic stress due to marginalisation.

On COVID-19 outbreaks in informal settlements, the brief said that in Mumbai, as of mid-April 2020, 30 per cent of designated containment zones which are areas with large outbreaks were in slums, while 60 per cent were within 100 metres of an informal

settlement, it said.

In his message, UN chief Antonio Guterres said urban areas were ground zero of the COVID-19 pandemic, with 90 per cent of the reported cases.

"Cities are bearing the brunt of the crisis many with strained health systems, inadequate water and sanitation services, and other challenges. This is especially the case in poorer areas, where the pandemic has exposed deeply rooted inequalities," he said.

"We must act with the same urgency and resolve to transform cities and address the climate and pollution crises. Now is the time to rethink and reshape the urban world," he said.

The brief said that recognising the differentiated exposure to risks and impacts, some governments have designed tailored measures for vulnerable groups. It cited the example of Pune where a collective of waste-pickers has been distributing gloves and masks to informal waste-pickers.

"In many cities, informal waste-pickers make an important contribution to

waste management but are at heightened risk during the pandemic without adequate protection, it said.

The brief noted that urban density does not inevitably correlate with higher virus transmission. Cities are largely vulnerable as a result of choices about how they are organised and how people live, work and travel in and around them.

The pandemic has also exposed deep inequalities in how people live in cities, and how cities serve their residents. The already vulnerable have suffered most – 24 per cent of the world's urban population live in slums and less than half the global population can access open public spaces within 400 metres' walking distance of their homes.

The UN chief said the policy brief recommends that there is a need to ensure that all phases of the pandemic response tackle inequalities and long-term development deficits and safeguard social cohesion.

"We must prioritise those who are the most vulnerable in our cities, including guaranteeing safe shelter for all and emergency housing to

those without homes," he said, adding that access to water and sanitation is also vital.

He said the inadequate state of public services in many cities requires urgent attention, particularly in informal settlements.

"Nearly one-quarter of the world's urban population lives in slums. Local governments are already taking action from prohibiting evictions during the crisis to putting in place new clean water stations in the most vulnerable areas, the UN chief said.

There is a need also to strengthen the capacities of local governments and this requires decisive action and deeper cooperation between local and national authorities, he said.

"Stimulus packages and other relief should support tailored responses and boost local government capacity," Guterres said.

The brief also recommends that nations must pursue a green, resilient and inclusive economic recovery.

"By focusing on high ecological transformation and job creation, stimulus packages can steer growth towards a low-carbon, resilient pathway and advance the Sustainable Development Goals," he said.

## CM's greetings on Guru Rinpoche's Thrunkar Tshechu

**GANGTOK, 28 JUL (IPR):** The Chief Minister, Prem Singh Tamang has extended his warm greetings to the people of Sikkim on the occasion of Guru Rinpoche's Thrunkar Tshechu.

Guru Rinpoche's Thrunkar Tshechu marks the birth anniversary of Guru Rinpoche, the patron saint of Sikkim, who introduced Buddhism in the tiny Himalayan State on the eighth century AD. It

was learned that during his visit to Tibet, Guru Rinpoche developed a special connection with the land of Sikkim and blessed it abundantly.

In his message, the Chief Minister stated that on this auspicious day, let us pay homage to Guru Rinpoche. He hopes that Guru Rinpoche continue to bless Sikkim and the Sikkimese people and pray together for peace and well being of all sentient beings in these trying times.

## Former Karnataka minister passes away due to coronavirus

**BENGALURU, JUL 28 (PTI):** Former Karnataka Minister Raja Madangopal Naik has died of COVID-19 at a hospital in Kalaburagi, a health department official said on Tuesday.

He was 69 and is survived by his wife and two sons.

"He was admitted to the ESIC hospital in Kalaburgi about a week

ago and passed away on Monday," the official told PTI.

Naik, who had stints in Congress, BJP and the JD(S), was a minister in the Congress government headed by M Veerappa Moily.

About a week ago, Naik developed health complications and tested positive for COVID-19, the official said.

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#### FOR RENT:

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

#### GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

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

#### FLAT FOR SALE

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

#### LAND FOR SALE

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

#### GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

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

**Contact: 9800201335**

#### LAND FOR SALE

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

#### LAND FOR SALE

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

## ATK proposes removal of salary cap on ISL teams

**ABHISHEK HORE**

**NEW DELHI, JUL 28 (PTI):** Taking the road less travelled amid the COVID-19 pandemic, three-time champions ATK have approached the Indian Super League (ISL) with a bold proposal to remove the salary cap of Rs 16.5 crore per team per season.

Football Sports Development Ltd., which organises the country's top football league, received the suggestion during a meeting with the 10 competing clubs about a month back when it had asked for feedback regarding foreign players' participation in the 2020-21 season and future editions.

Salary cap is the maximum overall expenditure that can be incurred by a club for the inclusion of a player in the squad and it includes annual salary, bonuses, and signing-on fee.

Mumbai City FC, now backed by English Premier League giants Manchester City's City Group, are also of the same opinion and have supported ATK's proposal, well-placed sources in the Indian football fraternity said.

"This was proposed during FSDL's meeting with the clubs a month ago and removal of price cap is a suggestion the ISL will be studying. It is too early for ISL to adopt no salary cap but this can be done in the near future," a source close to the ISL told PTI.

"Not only that, ATK also had support from Mumbai City FC, which is backed by the same group as Manchester City," the source added.

It is understood that the lucrative ISL is gun-ho about the proposal as it indicates that there are takers for Indian football willing to loosen their purse strings.

"It shows that Indian football is on the right track and people are ready to invest in it," an insider aware of the developments added.

Mumbai City FC are willing to pay Rs 1.6 crore transfer fee for FC Goa star Hugo Boumous before the upcoming season comes calling.

The French-Moroccan attacking midfielder was one of the best players in the competition last season and scored 11 goals and assisted 10.

When contacted, the Kolkata-based team, rechristened ATK-Mohun Bagan after the tie-up with the iconic 131-year-old club, was not forthcoming.

While chief executive officer Raghu Iyer called it incorrect, another official of the franchise said they will "abide by the ISL rules and regulations as part of the league".



The ATK franchise is jointly owned by industrialists Sanjiv Goenka, Harshavardhan Neotia, Utsav Parekh, former India cricket team captain and current BCCI president Sourav Ganguly and Mohun Bagan Football Club (India) private Ltd.

Actor Ranbir Kapoor and Bimal Parekh co-own the Mumbai franchise.

The sixth season of the league saw a reduction in the

salary cap for clubs from Rs 17.5 crore to Rs 16.5 crore.

ATK is by far the most successful club in the ISL, having won the title a record three times, in 2014, 2016 and 2020.

As per stated policy, FSDL "reserves the right to add, modify, amend, cancel, limit, vary or change, either wholly, or in part, at any point in time, these terms, without prior notice".

## Nagaland Govt corrects COVID-19 death toll from 4 to 5

**DIMAPUR, JULY 27 [NAGALANDPAGE]:** A day after Nagaland Page reported the number of COVID-19 deaths in Nagaland at 5, State health authorities on Monday corrected the COVID-19 death toll from 4 to 5. But State authorities maintain that the 5 deaths are under investigation for establishing whether they are COVID-19 related deaths.

On Sunday, an 82-year old patient from Zeliangrong village in Dimapur, who was on ventilator, passed away, taking the COVID-19 death toll in the State to 5.

But till late Sunday night, the official dashboard of the COVID-19 War Room of the Government of Nagaland showed the number of COVID-19 deaths at 4, while the Nagaland COVID-19 bulletin issued by the Department of Health & Family Welfare also showed the number of deaths at 4.

The deceased admitted at Dimapur COVID Hospital was being monitored by medical team comprising of one doctor, two nurses and two attendants on eight hourly rotation basis.

Another COVID-19 related death on July 25 – an employee of Zinyu Gas Agency – is yet to be included in the COVID death data of the State Government. The deceased had tested positive for COVID-19 by TrueNat but his confirmatory test through RT-PCR is still awaited.

COVID-19 tally jumps to 1385  
Meanwhile Nagaland reported 46 new cases of COVID-19 on Monday taking the total cases in the State to 1385. But with 5 deaths and 569 recoveries, the total active cases in the State are 811.

Of the 46 cases, 45 were

detected by RT-PCR test and one by TrueNat. From the 45 tested positive by RT-PCR test, 23 are in Kohima, 14 at Dimapur and 8 at Mon.

As per the severity of symptoms, 808 active cases are asymptomatic and 2 active cases are mild while one active case is moderate. All the positive persons are receiving medical care at the designated COVID-19 Hospitals and COVID-19 Care Centres. Further, active surveillance and contact tracing is also in progress to prevent further spreading of the infection.



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fresh lot of rapid information

# China call to India to fight ‘hegemonism’

**NEW DELHI, JULY 28:** China on Monday sought to remind India of its stated policy of strategic independence and added the two countries should firmly resist hegemonism, amid growing tensions between Washington and Beijing that have been compounded by the closure of a Consulate each and cross-allegations of forcible entry into the diplomatic premises.

China's call to India to fight hegemonism, something Beijing itself is now being accused of, comes in the midst of a face-off along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and a call by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to build a coalition of democratic nations against China.

“India is an emerging

economy in the world & adheres to strategic independence. China & India should resolutely oppose any act of reversing the wheel of history, firmly resist hegemonism & power politics, & resolutely promote democratisation & legalisation of intl relations,” tweeted Chinese Embassy spokesperson Ji Rong at the end of a 3-part Twitter intervention on Monday afternoon focused on the US.

“Some US politicians always view China with Cold-War mentality instigating containment, ideological confrontation & anti-China clique. US kept turning away from intl treaties & organisations & selectively applied intl law. Intl community knows who is real trouble-maker & threat,” Ji wrote.

“China has all along been an upholder of intl order & practitioner of intl fairness & justice. Instead of seeking hegemony when growing stronger, China is firmly committed to finding a new path of peaceful development & win-win cooperation with other countries,” the spokesperson added.

The comments come after a weekend that saw China close its Consulate in Houston after the US ordered it to do so, and retaliate by ordering the closure of the American Consulate in Chengdu. The closures also saw counter-allegations of breaking into each other's premises in violation of diplomatic protocols. Allegations of espionage were also traded.

Over the past few weeks, Pompeo has been speaking repeatedly

and extensively on the behaviour of the Communist Party of China, referring to the troubles many of China's neighbours are having with its aggression across land borders and in the sea.

Referring to Pompeo's speech last Thursday when he called for an anti-China coalition and abandoned the change in Washington's policy towards China that former President Richard Nixon had ushered in nearly 5 decades ago, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin had earlier in the day said the US Secretary of State seemed to have forgotten that instigation of hatred and confrontation ran counter to the trend of the times.

“The US gains no support in trying to

reverse the wheel of history. Pompeo talks all about safeguarding democracy and freedom, but he doesn't represent democracy and freedom at all. He serves the US hegemony and the interest groups behind him. But long gone are the days of ideological confrontation. The world today is on an unstoppable trend towards multi-polarity,” Wang said.

India's growing proximity to the US, particularly engaging with Washington's policy in the Indo-Pacific that Beijing sees as an effort to contain its influence in the region, is perceived as one of the reasons for China's aggression along the LAC but it in turn has had foreign policy wonks make a stronger case for greater alignment of New Delhi with Washington.

## Village sanitizing programme at Poklok Samseybung



**SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 28 JUL:**

Saptarangi Sangh Samseybung [SSS] in collaboration with the committee of Shiva Karali Mandir Samseybung [SKMS], conducted a daylong village sanitizing programme in Poklok Samseybung ward, under Poklok Kamrang

constituency today, a press release informs.

The programme was held under the guidance of the Chief Minister's spouse, Krishna Kumari Rai, president, Saptarangi Sangh, Nagendra Sharma along with the local youth.

The team was led by Nagendra Sharma

wherein the volunteers visited every house hold to distribute masks and sanitizers. Along with Anganwadi workers they sanitized the surrounding areas and advised people to not leave their houses, and follow the lockdown rules properly.

The grievances of the people were heard and the names of those in need of help were noted down.

Convenor SKM Nari Shakti South District, Babita Limboo and in-charge self help group, Tika Sharma were also part of the team. The sanitization work was carried out by an employee of Gram Prashasan Kendra of Poklok Denchung GPU, Prakash Rai.

## Nepal Communist Party's meeting postponed indefinitely

**KATHMANDU, JULY 28 [PTI]:** A crucial meeting of Nepal's ruling communist party scheduled for Tuesday to iron out the differences between Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli and the rival faction led by party executive chairperson Pushpa Kamal Dahal “Prachanda” has been postponed indefinitely.

The meeting of the 45-member Standing Committee of the Nepal Communist Party (NCP) was scheduled for 11 am.

The two leaders — Prime Minister Oli and Prachanda — need more time for informal consultations to sort

out their differences, Standing Committee member Ganesh Shah said, announcing the postponement of the talks.

On Wednesday last week, a Standing Committee meeting was briefly held at the Prime Minister's Official residence at Baluwatar. However, the prime minister did not attend the meeting.

Subsequently, the party decided to convene another meeting a week later, on July 28, to review its activities, the government's performance, finalising

division of work among party's cadres and leaders, and proposed general convention among other issues.

Tuesday's meeting was postponed as the two leaders need some more time for consultation, PM's press advisor Surya Thapa said in a Facebook post.

The date of the next meeting will be decided after the two leaders hold consultations, he said.

A bitter internal feud has been brewing in the ruling NCP since the last few weeks after top party leaders, including

Prachanda, demanded Oli's resignation, saying his recent anti-India remarks were “neither politically correct nor diplomatically appropriate.” They are also against Oli's autocratic style of functioning.

The differences grew further after Oli said that some of the ruling party leaders are aligning with the southern neighbour to remove him from power after his government issued a new political map incorporating three Indian territories of Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura.

Prachanda on Monday last week said efforts were going on to resolve the intra-party differences and ruled out an early general convention of the party as proposed by embattled Prime Minister Oli.

Oli and Prachanda have held at least eight meetings in recent weeks to sort out the differences between them. But, as the Prime Minister did not accept the condition of a one-man-one-post, the talks failed. Oli has refused to give up his post as prime minister as well as a co-chairman of the NCP.

## 40 Punjab policemen to donate plasma

**CHANDIGARH, JUL 28 (PTI):** Forty Punjab policemen who recently recovered from COVID-19 have come forward to donate their plasma for treating people infected with the disease.

The majority of the policemen are from Jalandhar (Rural), with its Senior Superintendent of Police Navjot Singh Mahal leading the way after recovering from the infection, Director General of Police (DGP) Dinkar Gupta said on Tuesday.

The DGP personally reached out to his officers and other officials to donate plasma after their mandatory two-week recovery period ended.

So far, 831 Punjab police personnel have tested positive for COVID-19, of which 336 have recovered. The department has 495 active cases.

As more and more policemen get cured, the number of volunteers to donate their plasma is expected to see a sharp rise, Gupta said.

The blood plasma



of two policemen had already been taken, he informed in a statement here.

All the 33 personnel recovered from the

disease in Jalandhar

(Rural) had committed to plasma donation, the DGP said. The number of policemen donating their plasma in Kapurthala is

three and Batla two.

The DGP said a special campaign had been launched to create awareness among the cured police personnel to come out for this noble cause.

The Punjab Police has in place an elaborate mechanism to test its personnel on frontline duty to ensure early diagnosis, isolation and treatment.

The state government has set up its first plasma bank in Patiala and is preparing to operationalise two more.

## Last surviving daughter of Nizam of Hyderabad no more

**HYDERABAD, JUL 28 (PTI):** Sahebzadi Basheerunnisa Begum, the last surviving daughter of Nizam Mir Osman Ali Khan, the last ruler of the erstwhile Hyderabad State, passed away at her residence here on Tuesday.

She was 93 and is survived by her only daughter.

She died of natural causes, Nawab Najaf Ali Khan, the Nizam's grandson said.

“The last of all the surviving children of the seventh Nizam of

Hyderabad, HEH Nawab Mir Osman Ali Khan Bahadur has passed away.

It is a big loss to the family as Sahebzadi Basheer Unnisa Begum Saheba was an epitome of Hyderabad culture, tradition and values,” Khan, also the president of Nizam Family Welfare Association, said in a statement.

Born in September 1927, Basheerunnisa Begum was married to Nawab Kazim Nawaz Jung, better known as Ali Pasha”, he said.

## Brothers killed in lightning strike in Chhattisgarh

**JASHPUR, JUL 28 (PTI):** Two brothers were killed when they were struck by lightning in a village in Chhattisgarh's Jashpur district on Tuesday, police said.

The incident took place around 11 am when the victims, identified as Janku Sai (29) and his brother Janak Sai (25), were sowing paddy

saplings in their field in Dumariya village under the Farsababar police station area, a local police official said.

While they were working in the field, heavy rainfall started following which they took shelter under a nearby tree where lightning struck, killing the duo on the spot, he said.

## Woman nabbed for land fraud in Bhopal

**BHOPAL, JUL 28 (PTI):** The Bhopal police have arrested a 50-year-old woman, carrying a reward Rs 10,000 on her head, for alleged land-related frauds, an official said on Tuesday.

Kavita Nagle, who had been wanted in cases of land fraud, was nabbed from Awadhपुरi area on Monday, said additional superintendent of

police (ASP) Gopal Singh Dhakad.

The accused had allegedly sold a piece of land to several persons and duped them of Rs 1.36 crore, he said, adding that a complaint was lodged in Awadhपुरi area.

Some forged land documents were also seized from the accused, who had sold two acres of land to four persons,

the official said.

A case under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code for criminal breach of trust and cheating was registered in this regard, he said.

Similarly, the accused had also sold a government land to some poor people and collected Rs 24 lakh from them, he said, adding that the case is currently sub-judice.

## Fawad Alam named in 20-man Pakistan Test squad, comeback chances bright

**KARACHI, JUL 28 (PTI):** Batsman Fawad Alam could make a comeback to Pakistan's Test team after 11 years after being named in the 20-member squad along with two specialist spinners, for the upcoming Test series against England.

The tour selection committee headed by head coach and chief selector, Misbah-ul-Haq left out batsmen Ifthikar Ahmed, Khushdil Shah, Fakhar Zaman and uncapped Haider Ali, handing

Fawad with a good chance to make a comeback.

The left-hander played the last of his three Tests way back in 2009 in New Zealand.

The selectors also included two specialist spinners, Kashif Bhatti and the experienced Yasir Shah apart from two all-rounders in Faheem Ashraf and Shadab Khan.


The squad has been finalised from a list of 29 players who were sent to England in

different batches due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The selectors short-listed the 20 players after the two four-day intra squad matches in Derbyshire.

The selectors have also retained former captain and wicketkeeper-batsman, Sarfaraz Ahmed in the Test squad, giving an indication that a comeback might be awaiting him.

The Test series will begin in Manchester from August 5.



### 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	Precautions to Prevent nCoV
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fever</li> <li>● Difficulty in breathing</li> <li>● Dry Cough</li> <li>● Severe acute respiratory syndrome</li> <li>● Pneumonia - like symptoms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Wash your hands often with soap.</li> <li>● Use an alcohol based hand sanitizer</li> <li>● Observe good personal hygiene.</li> <li>● Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.</li> <li>● Avoid contact with people with possible symptoms.</li> <li>● Avoid contact with animals and consumption of undercooked meats.</li> <li>● Avoid travel to nCoV affected places.</li> <li>● Wear a mask if you have respiratory syndrome. and cover your mouth while coughing or sneezing.</li> </ul>
<h3>Treatment</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Treatment is symptomatic and supportive, based on the patient's clinical condition.</li> <li>● No vaccinations available as of now</li> <li>● Visit Doctor in case symptoms detected</li> </ul>	<p>If you seek help, you may call :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Toll free no. 104</li> <li>District surveillance Officer</li> <li>EAST : 7028372100</li> <li>WEST : 9593287809</li> <li>NORTH : 9641957468</li> <li>SOUTH : 7407691463</li> <li>New STNM</li> <li>AMS : 9434711402</li> </ul>

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

## Blame Games

*Whenever everyone plays victim, who will take the initiative?*

Anyone who has been following political developments and public statements of public figures in Sikkim, or for that matter at the national level, would have noticed that everyone is quick to take the position of a victim, someone wronged and the best efforts laid to waste. This propensity is not limited to those in the Opposition or in the minority and is a frequently adopted position even by those in power or in the majority as well. And this is not even a new ploy; in fact, it is a dated move. But it continues to remain in vogue because playing the victim presents the easiest recourse and offers a convenient way to dodge accountability – after all, if you sign up among the victims as someone [or some people] somehow wronged, you escape being lined up as perpetrators. This dodge has worked consistently well and is hence so infectious; and need one add, dangerously counterproductive because it obsesses over denials and slights, real and imagined, but ignores individual and societal shortcomings which also contribute to the situation.

Politicians in power blame those in opposition of distractions and digressions which delay development, sometimes even the people themselves for not being serious enough. Those in opposition blame the ones in power of corruption which siphons away progress and often also of ineptitude. People blame each other for personal failures, locals blame non-locals of stealing away opportunities, non-locals accuse locals of sloth, doctors blame patients for having come to them too late and patients blame doctors of being too incompetent... Students blame teachers, teachers reciprocate, and the blame-game plays on and everyone sulks as a victim. Soon the role-play becomes so convincing that the young start buying in and now a generation is in grooming which is quick to blame everything on someone else, becoming intransigent and perfectly mirroring the very system and situation that they have issues with. Finger-pointing is a preferred pastime that the young see around them every day – leaders who fail to convince voters to trust them, blame money power or even the EVMs, parties which cannot attract an audience, blame intimidation of supporters; departments which scandalize with their inefficiency, blame blackmailing agents of spreading canards; panchayats who bungle, blame MLAs who blame Ministers who blame babus who blame political pressure... and the buck keep rolling.

The young always inspire hope and keep optimism alive and they do so by rebelling, by announcing that they will be different. Ominously for Sikkim, those claiming to speak for the young are screaming deeper colours of victimhood. When they should be open and pursuing excellence, they obsess over perceived slights, celebrate mediocrity, abandon reason, chase conspiracies and obey orders. The young receive “attitude” from one side and condescending advice from the other, and very soon their issues get sidelined as the discussions move to places which serve politicking very well, but offer no resolutions. And when solutions can’t be worked out, everyone collapses backing to playing victims of subterfuge.

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## A brief history of masks from the 17th-century plague to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic

CATHERINE CARSTAIRS

THECONVERSATION.COM

As of July 18, it is mandatory to wear masks in indoor public spaces in Québec following similar edicts across the country.

While inspired by growing evidence that masks can reduce the spread of COVID-19, this seems deeply ironic in a province so opposed to face coverings that Québec passed legislation that forbade people from receiving certain government services if their face was covered.

The Toronto Transit Commission made face coverings mandatory at the beginning of July. And yet, just three years ago, TTC workers were forbidden from wearing masks to protect themselves against air pollution in the subway system. The TTC also instructed its workers not to wear masks during the 2003 SARS epidemic in Toronto.

Clearly, our discomfort about wearing masks in the midst of a pandemic has deep roots.

### BAD SMELLS AND BIRD BEAKS

Medical mask-wearing has a long history. In the past few months, pictures of the beaked masks that doctors wore during the 17th-century plague epidemic have been circulating online. At the time, disease was believed to spread through miasmas — bad smells that wafted through the air. The beak was stuffed with herbs, spices and dried flowers to ward off the odors believed to spread the plague.

In North America, before the 1918 influenza epidemic, surgeons wore masks, as did nurses and doctors who were treating contagious patients in a hospital setting. But during the flu epidemic, cities around the world passed mandatory masking orders. Historian Nancy Tomes argues that mask-wearing was embraced by the American public as “an emblem of public spiritedness and discipline.”

Women accustomed to knitting socks and rolling bandages for soldiers quickly took to mask-making as a patriotic duty. That said, the enthusiasm for mask-wearing waned quickly, as Alfred W. Crosby showed in America’s Forgotten Pandemic: The Influenza of 1918.

### CANADIAN RELUCTANCE AND JAPANESE WILLINGNESS

In her study of the 1918 flu in Canada, historian Janice Dickinson McGinnis argued that masks were “widely unpopular” and that even in places with mandatory masking orders in place, people often failed to wear them or just pulled them on when police appeared.

Public health officers were dubious about the value of masks. In Alberta, for example, the flu first appeared at the beginning



of October 1918. By the end of the month, the province ordered everyone to wear a mask outside of their homes, to be removed only in the case of eating. In just four weeks, the order was rescinded.

The Medical Officer of Health for Edmonton reported that practically no one wore a mask thereafter, except in hospitals. In his view, the rapid spread of the disease after the mask order was put into effect made the order an object of “ridicule.”

In Japan, by contrast, the public embraced mask-wearing during the Spanish flu. According to sociologist Mitsutoshi Horii, mask-wearing symbolized “modernity.” In the post-war era, Japanese people continued to wear masks to prevent the flu, only stopping in the 1970s when flu vaccines became widely available. In the 1980s and 1990s, mask-wearing increased to prevent allergies, as allergy to cedar pollen became a growing problem. In the late 1980s, the effectiveness of flu vaccinations declined and wearing a mask to avoid influenza resumed.

Mask-wearing skyrocketed in the early years of the 21st century with the outbreak of SARS and avian influenza. The Japanese government recommended that all sick people wear masks to protect others, while they suggested that healthy people could wear them as a preventative measure. Horii argues that mask-wearing was a “neoliberal answer to the question of public health policy” in that it encouraged people to take individual responsibility for their own health.

When H1N1 hit Japan in 2009, it first struck tourists who had returned from Canada. The sick

were blamed for failing to wear masks while abroad. In a country that takes etiquette very seriously, wearing masks in Japan has become a form of politeness.

### A CENTURY OF CHINESE MASK-WEARING

Similarly, in China, mask-wearing has a long history. A pneumonic plague epidemic in China in 1910-11 sparked widespread mask-wearing there. After the Communists came to power in 1949, there was intense fear of germ warfare, leading many to wear masks. In the 21st century, the SARS epidemic intensified mask-wearing, as did the smog that blanketed many Chinese cities. The Chinese government urged its citizens to protect themselves against pollution by wearing masks.

During the COVID-19 epidemic, some of the first people in Canada to wear masks were people with ties to Asia, who were already accustomed to the practice of masking.

One of the first cases of COVID-19 in Canada was that of a student at Western University who had visited her parents in Wuhan over the Christmas break. On the flight back to Canada, she wore a mask. She self-isolated upon her arrival in Canada and when she became sick, she showed up at the hospital wearing a mask. She did not infect anyone else.

### CRAFTING MASKS

Long before Etsy crafters and Old Navy began producing fashionable masks for the North American market, colourful masks were available in India, Taiwan, Thailand and other Asian countries. During the SARS epidemic in Hong Kong, the

New York Times reported that consumers could purchase masks with Hello Kitty and other cartoon characters, as well American flag masks meant to show the wearer’s support for democracy.

Ironically, given that the masks are intended to protect others, mask-wearing has made Asians in Canada a target of racist attacks. In the early days of COVID-19, Western media outlets featured Asians wearing masks as a harbinger of the epidemic. Asians wearing masks have been verbally and physically attacked.

### CONTENTIOUS CHOICES

Controversies over masks continue. On July 15, a man died after a confrontation with the Ontario Provincial Police after he reportedly assaulted staff at a grocery store who insisted he wear a mask. Some Canadians complain that masks are uncomfortable, unnecessary, harmful to their own health or ineffective.

Masks can be a visual representation of the threat of COVID-19 and make people feel more fearful; an “optimism bias” can make people reluctant to wear masks because they think that the novel coronavirus will not affect them. There are also real concerns that masks impede communication for frail elders and the hearing impaired.

But support for mask-wearing appears to be growing. In the face of a serious health threat, Canadians are wisely following the lead of Asian countries.

*[the writer is Professor, Department of History, University of Guelph]*

## What you need to know about rebranded skin-whitening creams

AMINA MIRE

THECONVERSATION.COM

Corporations like Unilever, L’Oréal and Johnson & Johnson recently announced they will no longer sell products that mention “skin whitening.” These companies will now adjust how they market their products, especially on social media. However, they will continue to promote creams and serums formulated for skin-whitening effects. These companies have already developed other terms besides “skin whitening” to promote their products. The multi-billion-dollar market for skin whitening products is an enduring sign of commodity racism. Skin whitening is at once an old and emerging globalizing industry. Women (and some men) whiten their skin by using products that reduce or suppress melanin biosynthesis and function.

Products are also marketed to white women with the promise of making white women’s aging skin and faces appear smooth, wrinkle-free and younger looking. As an anti-aging care, skin whitening is formulated to bleach out visible signs of aging such as age spots.

So actually, skin-whitening products have already been marketed under different labels such as skin brighteners for at least the past 20 years.

### TRANSFORMATION FROM WHITENESS TO WELLNESS

Medical sounding terms such as cosmeceutical and skinceutical have long been used to market skin-whitening products to white women to fight age spots, dull skin, hyperpigmentation, etc. These coded words widely promote the message that good skin is youthful looking and glowing.

In the marketing of skin-whitening products, lighter skin embodies whiteness not only as a sign of racial difference but also as a signifier of class



privilege. The rebranding and niche marketing of skin-whitening products is made easier by the fact that these are often melanin-suppressing products with pharmaceutical properties.

Increasingly, advertising for skin-whitening cosmetics uses terms that can be substituted with whiteness: glowing, radiant, translucent, bright and clear. These terms frame skin whitening as a source of recuperative wellness and youthful femininity.

Meanwhile, there is no clearly defined regulatory framework for these products. This makes it easier for endless rebranding and niche marketing of skin whitening products.

### THE BANNER OF ANTI-AGING

Skin whitening has been marketed as part of a fight against aging, which means it has also come to be seen as a legitimate way to take care of one’s skin.

Women are told over and over that getting and keeping glowing skin at all ages is a standard requirement for femininity and beauty.

When corporations promote skin whitening under the banner of anti-aging wellness to aging middle class white women, the practice is often defended, both by consumers and the cosmetics industry, as a legitimate way of regenerating the aging white female body and shielding it from environmental deterioration, modern stress, air pollution and more. In this way, advertisements for anti-aging skin whiteners are supposedly formulated to promote wellness by restoring, regenerating and protecting white women’s skin from the harmful effects of sun damage and other environmentally induced signs of aging.

The idea that increased pigmentation represents

an unhealthy process of premature aging has facilitated the promotion of skin whitening products to both white women and women of colour. The symbolic association of whiteness with youthful appearance and anti-aging wellness has driven the research and development and mass marketing of high technology-based skin whitening products with anti-aging claims.

As a result, the industry invites all women, regardless of ethnicity, race and or nationality, to seek smooth, radiant and youthful-looking skin, which is free from age spots and hyperpigmentation, by consuming skin-whitening products.

### THE MISGUIDED DESIRE FOR WHITENESS

In the past two decades, skin-whitening products have been promoted in glossy magazines, online shops, upscale health spas, wellness boutiques, department stores and websites run by cosmetics firms. It is pertinent to stress that the globalization of skin whitening depends on more than a misguided desire for whiteness.

The cosmetics, pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries will continue to invest in skin-whitening products by using terms which convey that a good skin is youthful looking — and white.

The leading cosmetics and pharmaceutical firms have declared that they will no longer mention skin whitening. Yet they will continue to promote products that produce skin-whitening effects. This lack of real change reveals how deeply the intersection of race, gender, femininity and ageism continues to shape the globalization, normalization and mainstreaming of the skin-whitening industry.

*[the writer is Associate Professor of Critical Race Theory and women and Health, Carleton University]*

# Don't want any confrontation with governor: Nagaland CM

**KOHIMA, JUL 27 (PTI):** Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio said on Monday that his government does not want any confrontation with the governor on the Naga political issue but hopes to work together to find an early solution to the problem.

Speaking to reporters at the Civil Secretariat here, the chief minister broke his silence on the Raj Bhavan's letter seeking details of the relatives of government employees involved with Naga underground groups.

"The first letter was issued on February 14 and was to be filled up in the self-declaration format and be submitted by April 4, but the state government did not do," he said.

"But when the



reminder letter came on June 24, we did not have an option, but to carry out the direction, because he (governor) had also given the letter on the collapse of law and order on June 16," Rio said.

The chief minister was referring to the state government's July 7 directions to all its employees to self-declare by August 7 whether they have family members or relatives with links to any Naga underground

organisation.

"We don't want to confront or disagree -- we don't know what he (governor) is thinking but the Cabinet and me...we have no difference and we need to work together to bring settlement (on the Naga issue) because this is the desire of the people," Rio said.

In a damning indictment of Rio's government, Governor RN Ravi had in a letter on June 16 said that armed gangs were brazenly running their own governments in the state challenging the legitimacy of its elected authority and creating a "crisis of confidence" in the system.

Ravi, a retired IPS officer who was a special director in the

Intelligence Bureau and the Centre's interlocutor for the Naga peace talks, had warned that he would promulgate Article 371A(1)(b) of the Constitution, which gives the Nagaland governor special responsibility with respect to law and order, if things did not improve.

Ravi had also given enough indication of his intention to have a greater say in administration, as he proposed to periodically review the law and order situation and issue directions.

Stating that his government was the representative of the people, the chief minister said the treasury benches do not have a difference with the opposition on the Naga political issue.

## IOA forms 11-member CGA of India for 2020-21 season



**NEW DELHI, JUL 28 (PTI):** The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) on Tuesday constituted an 11-member Commonwealth Games Association of India (CGA of India) under its president Narinder Batra for the 2020-21 season.

Besides Batra, the committee also includes senior IOA officials R K Anand (senior vice president), Anil Khanna (senior vice president), Rajeev Mehta (secretary general), and

Anandeshwar Pandey (treasurer).

VD Nanavati, Adille Sumariwala, Kuldeep Vats, Ajay Singh, Dushyant Chautala and Ajit Banerjee are other members of the panel.

Union minister and Archery Association of India president Arjun Munda and National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) chief Raninder Singh are special invitees to the committee.

As per the

requirements of the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF), every Commonwealth country needs to have its own Commonwealth Games Association to deal with matters related to sporting activities among its member nations.

So, the CGA of India will deal with the CGF regarding any matters related to Commonwealth nations, including the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games.

## Tripura's COVID-19 tally reaches 4,067

**AGARTALA, JUL 28 (PTI):** Tripura's COVID-19 tally breached the 4,000-mark on Tuesday after 147 more people tested positive for the infection, officials said.

West Tripura district reported 40 fresh cases, Sepahijala 41, Gomati 22, Khowai 12, North Tripura 18, Dhalai nine, South Tripura district three and Unakoti two, they said.

Of the total 4,067 COVID-19 patients in the state, 2,467 have recovered and 18 migrated to other states.

The number of active cases in the state stands at 1,565 and fatalities at

17, they said.

Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb in a tweet on Monday night said, "Alert ~147 People found COVID-19 POSITIVE out of 4027 samples tested".

Deb in another tweet said, "Happy to share that 93 COVID-19 patients have been discharged today from various District CCCs & DCHs after their test results came negative."

The chief minister, who also holds the health portfolio, thanked people of the state for their "spontaneous response" to a three-day complete lockdown that came into effect on Monday

to contain the spread of COVID-19.

"I thank all the people of Tripura for their spontaneous response on the first day of three-day lockdown announced by the government to contain the spread of COVID19.

I also appreciate the efforts of COVID-19 warriors and entire administration," Deb wrote on Twitter.

Meanwhile, a week-long door-to-door survey started from Monday morning to identify COVID-19 patients in the state. Health workers screened a total of 1,59,854 houses and

collected 2,271 samples on the first day.

"Among them, 90 people have been found COVID-19 positive," the chief minister said.

He also appreciated the service of the healthcare workers for carrying out the survey.

"Our Healthcare workers never Give Up their spirit & are keeping the fight against COVID19 one step ahead. Kudos to the efforts of Asha & Anganwadi workers who are visiting houses for COVID19 survey in remote areas despite of bad weather & poor road condition caused by heavy rains," Deb tweeted.

## 11 die in lightning strikes in West Bengal

**KOLKATA, JUL 27 (PTI):** At least 11 people died and four others injured in lightning strikes in West Bengal's Bankura, Purba Bardhaman and Howrah districts on Monday, as thunderstorms affected parts of the southern areas of the state, official sources said.

Five people each died in Bankura and Purba Bardhaman, and one person in Howrah district.

In Bankura, two persons, including a woman, died in Onda and Bankura Sadar police

station areas when lightning struck the fields where they were working, sources said.

Two others also died in Onda area, and another one in Gangajalghati.

Three persons died in separate thunder strikes in different villages under Galsi police station area of Purba Bardhaman district, when they were working in the fields, sources said.

Lightning also struck a piece of farmland at Dubrajhat under Khandaghosh police station area leaving a



woman dead.

One person died and four others were injured when lightning struck them when they were bathing in a pond at Talit village under Dewandighi police station area, sources said.

In Howrah district's

Bagnan area, a 50-year-old man died in a thunder strike as the farmer took shelter under a tree during a thunderstorm.

The Met department has forecast rain or thunderstorm in some places of South Bengal on Tuesday.

### 22 Assam Rifles personnel among 23 fresh COVID-19 cases in Mizoram

**AIZAWL, JUL 28 (PTI):** Twenty-two Assam Rifles personnel are among 23 more people testing positive for COVID-19 in Mizoram, officials said on Tuesday.

The fresh infections have taken the northeastern state's caseload to 384, they said.

Twenty-two Assam Rifles personnel posted at Zokhawsanga near Aizawl and a civilian who had recently returned from Nepal have tested positive for COVID-19 at the Zoram Medical College on Monday night, a statement issued by the State Information

and Public Relation Department said.

Of the 384 cases, 191 are active while 193 people have recovered, officials said, adding the recovery rate of patients in the state stands at 50.26 per cent.

Aizawl district has reported the highest number of COVID-19

cases at 205, followed by Lunglei (71), Siaha (26) and Lawngtlai and Mamit (21 each), they said.

As of now, Hnahthial, Saitual and Khawzawl districts are coronavirus-free, the officials said.

Mizoram has tested 20,053 samples for COVID-19 till Monday, they added.



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**VIDEO NEWS SECTION**

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## NSCN (R) militant arrested in Arunachal

**ITANAGAR, JUL 28 (PTI):** A cadre of the NSCN (Reformation) outfit has been arrested in Arunachal Pradesh's Changlang district, police said on Tuesday.

Acting on a tip-off, a joint team of Assam Rifles and CRPF personnel

launched an operation and nabbed the militant in Changlang town on Monday evening, district Superintendent of Police (SP) Mihin Gambo said.

The arrested militant has been identified as Noksom

Tangha, the outfit's self-styled revenue in-charge of Changlang town, he said.

Tangha, a resident of New Sallang village in the district, was actively involved in an extortion racket being carried out by NSCN

(R), the officer said.

A motorcycle and a mobile phone were seized from his possession, he said.

A case has been registered with the Changlang police station against the accused, Gambo added.

## Train cancelled due to lockdown in Bengal

**KOLKATA, JUL 27 (PTI):** The Howrah-Mumbai CSMT special train, which was earlier rescheduled to leave Howrah on July 29, will short originate from Rourkela on July 30, a South Eastern Railway official said here on Monday.

Service of the 02810 Howrah-Mumbai CSMT special will remain suspended

between Howrah and Rourkela on July 29 as per the new schedule, the official said.

The decision has been taken owing to complete lockdown in West Bengal on July 29, the official said.

The train will commence its journey for Mumbai from Rourkela at 2.11 am on July 30, he said.

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# Premier League’s richest tighten grip after season of slow-burn stories

**BARNEY RONAY**  
**LONDON, 28 JUL [THEGUARDIAN]:** Well, we made it then. It was the worst of times. And either side of that, it was also the worst of times. Professional sport has never staged anything quite like the football season just past, 11 months of competition capped by that midsummer interlude where suddenly televised football became a contractual bind cranked out through gritted teeth to pay the bills, Premier League clubs going through the motions like a leather-thonged private dancer making eyes at the table of TV execs in hope of a second series.

Plague, death and economic collapse aside, from a sporting point of view the most remarkable part of the 2019-20 Premier League season was that it maintained a degree of uniform quality throughout. As ever the level of competition was decent, not bad, OK; a reliable advert for the homogenised global pop culture product that is elite level English football.

Liverpool supporters will rejoice in the spectacle of one of the great champion teams of the last quarter century. At the other end of the table Aston Villa’s survival was an absorbing piece of theatre. But for the rest of the field this was a slow-burn, unremarkable season, with little in the way of surprise, innovation, or genuine social mobility.

Never mind the shrill dramas of Super Final Sunday. The four wealthiest clubs at the start of the season are the four clubs that will play in the Champions League next year. Not,



it should be said, in exactly corresponding order. Liverpool defied a £100m revenue shortfall to finish 33 points clear of No 1 rich-listers Manchester United. So there’s that.

Otherwise there is little in the final Premier League table that couldn’t have emerged from an algorithm based on income and recent performances. Arsenal and West Ham underachieved on a revenue-to-points basis. Burnley continue to punch above their status. Sheffield United looked an excellent team.

There were spikes of unruliness: Norwich beat Manchester City and Watford beat Liverpool. But Norwich were also relegated after one hapless season, while Watford’s successful attempt to game the system finally choked on its own cuteness.

At the end of which the gap between first and 10th place was 45 points, maintaining an average 10 point increase in the gap between those places in the last four years, compared to the previous decade. The gap between first and fourth was 33 points, compared to 27 the year before, and 25, 17 and 15 in the three years before that.

This sense of settled

hierarchies becomes more pronounced every year. It should be a source of concern that there are currently no more than four teams in the league who might even contemplate winning it. In the circles beyond it is a fair guess to say more than 90% of current professional clubs have zero chance of winning the Premier League title ever again, barring some deus ex machina takeover by an unregulated spendthrift billionaire.

Does this matter? It is more open at the top than most other European leagues. Juventus have just won a ninth consecutive domestic title. Bayern Munich are up to eight. Paris Saint-Germain wield a similar tyranny in Ligue 1. At the same time this gap is likely to become more pronounced in all the major leagues, as revenue streams dry up, and as access to the Champions League becomes a dividing line between the drowned and the saved. Those who have gambled on debt versus income are in for a dose of enforced austerity. The status of the Premier League as a premium global product will rest for now on those established powers, their ability to produce and procure star players.

It should be said the champions look in excellent health. Liverpool are a powerful machine, in need of little more than a service and the odd high-end spare part. It would be a surprise not to see the title retained, and the sense of a genuine act of dynasty-building confirmed.

Manchester City will be stronger. Courtroom vindication will provide both impetus and, no doubt, a mild flood of money to spend. Beyond which it is hard not to conclude that this has been a poor Premier League field, as evidenced by the fact Leicester’s pre-Christmas cavaliers were Liverpool’s closest challengers all season.

There has been some hopeful talk that Manchester United might be a genuine force next year, something that would seem more likely if the Premier League were a five-a-side competition. Unfortunately it is also necessary to field a fully competent backline. Chelsea have riches in midfield and some exciting new arrivals. Both of these teams will have their hand strengthened by a seat at the top table in a time of retrenchment elsewhere. Further down it seems likely financial

caution will only increase the sense of leagues within leagues. Tottenham and Arsenal, weakened by the financial slowdown, look some way off now. The sense of a large block of clubs hanging in there, content simply to harvest the broadcast money, will become ever more profound.

Perhaps a less spendthrift environment will reinforce the idea that chemistry, careful coaching and good husbandry is still the best way to succeed.

Leeds’ arrival will provide the league with a distinctive on-field presence, and Marcelo Bielsa with the funds to explore the limits of his systems-based football.

And despite that sense of middling standards, the Premier League has been tactically interesting this year. For the first time since the first Premier League season none of the top three goalscorers played for the top three clubs, a measure perhaps of the way the angles and rhythms of attack have broadened out. The full-back role continued to evolve, to the extent Trent Alexander-Arnold probably requires a new designation, right-back giving way to ball-strike-flank-gallop-man, or right-side-wing-creation-vector.

For now domestic football will be hugely glad of the extended break, with the new season not due to start until 12 September.

Before then we have the prospect of a 10-week summer transfer window; the progress of which is likely to confirm that sense of hierarchies reinforced, of spenders versus savers, and of a league being pulled a little further apart at both ends.

# Planning for Olympics in a pandemic has echoes of 1920 Games

**DUSSELDORF, JUL 28 (AP):** Olympic athletes competing for gold medals in a world reeling from a pandemic? It won’t be the first time. A century before the Tokyo Games were postponed because of coronavirus, the Olympics were held in the Belgian city of Antwerp following the Spanish flu pandemic.

The 1920 Games were meant to symbolize a recovery from World War I, not a health crisis. Belgium, a battleground for the opposing powers, was the host country and the five rings of the Olympic flag flew at an opening ceremony for the first time.

“They released doves, although these were not necessarily doves of peace, because these were doves which had served in the war and they were released by military men,” Roland Renson, a Belgian sports historian, told The Associated Press.

Both the pandemic and the war were epitomized by Aileen Riggan, a 14-year-old American diver who won a gold medal.

Riggan first took up competitive swimming after becoming sick with the Spanish flu, and she went on a tour of a World War I battlefield after winning gold in the 3-meter springboard.

She took a German helmet and some bullets as souvenirs, but got a shock when she examined one of the many boots lying in the churned-up mud.

“I picked up one that had a foot in it, so I dropped it in a hurry,” she recalled later.

The coronavirus has blocked Antwerp’s attempt to mark the centenary. A ceremony in March due to feature the King of Belgium and the president of the International Olympic Committee was canceled.

Despite taking place in the wake of a major war, reconciliation at the Antwerp Olympics had its limits. Germany and its wartime allies didn’t compete, nor did Bolshevik-controlled Russia. They weren’t officially banned, simply not invited.

One Swedish figure skater (then in the Summer Olympics before the Winter Games started in 1924) was reportedly forbidden from performing to

German music.

There were financial problems, too. Ingenious shortcuts like making a pool from a ditch in the city fortifications Riggan and other athletes hated the cold, dark water helped keep costs down, but the Belgian organizing committee still lost money and left behind unpaid debt.

“Antwerp has never cherished its Olympic heritage because of the debacle,” Renson said.

The postponement of the Tokyo Olympics to 2021 is estimated to cost Japan at least 2 billion.

The Spanish flu swept around the world from 1918 until early 1920, killing an estimated 50 million people, though war and poverty made a precise count impossible.

Older people make up a large share of the coronavirus death toll, but the Spanish flu was a particular threat to younger people. That included the soldiers gathered in often squalid conditions as WWI ended.

The flu-infected troops in France and Belgium and then hitched a ride when they were demobilized. Parties to welcome soldiers home became infection hot spots.

Seven Olympic athletes are believed to have died from the Spanish flu, according to records provided by Olympic historian and physician Bill Mallon.

They include three WWI veterans as well as Martin Sheridan, a New York policeman who was born in Ireland and won gold medals for the United States in the discus and shot put over multiple early Olympics.

“This flag dips to no earthly king,” Sheridan reportedly said at the 1908 London Olympics when the U.S. team refused to lower its flag in a sign of respect to the British royal family.

The comment was first published decades later and its veracity is disputed, but the United States continues the tradition of not dipping the flag at Olympic ceremonies.

Mallon and other researchers have identified 48 cases of COVID-19 among Olympians, with 19 deaths attributed to the disease.

For Belgium, the Spanish flu was another setback to rebuilding

after the devastation of WWI. However, Renson said he has not found any direct impact from the pandemic on Olympic preparations.

The Antwerp Olympics were meant to mark new beginnings, but many traditions from before the war remained.

Athletes had to be amateurs, but that rule often meant mediocre competitions between wealthy gentlemen. Working-class people were alienated and many events were poorly attended, with the exception of soccer.

Belgians loved cycling but snubbed the Olympic races for more exciting professional events, Renson said. Some sailing classes had only one entry, meaning the crew simply had to finish to earn a gold medal.

Times were changing, though. It was the Olympic debut for Finnish distance runner Paavo Nurmi, whose scientific approach to training and race strategy helped him to nine gold medals in his career, including three in Antwerp.

Sports were increasingly a full-time occupation, even if that meant bending the rules on amateurism.

“The American rowing team, these were all Navy men and they trained every day. So you can ask questions whether they were amateurs or not,” Renson said.

“Amateurism was a means to exclude working-class people, simple as that. Paavo Nurmi was not a saint. He was a pure professional.”

The 1920 Olympics excluded many women, too. Two years later, female athletes staged their own breakaway Women’s Olympic Games. That eventually forced the International Olympic Committee to move closer to gender equality.

Many Olympic champions from 1920 are little remembered today, but the games were a symbolic resurrection of sports in adversity.

“In a minimum of time, they organized the games, but they were relatively improvised games,” Renson said.

“They had to do it with the means they had at their disposal, and they were at that time far from abundant in a city so heavily hit by war.

# IPL governing council meeting on August 2; tournament schedule set to be finalised

**NEW DELHI, JUL 28 (PTI):** The Indian Premier League’s Governing Council will meet on August 2 to give a final shape to the schedule and other arrangements for the eagerly-awaited T20 showpiece to be held in the UAE this year.

The tournament, forced out of India due to the raging COVID-19 pandemic, will be held from September 19 to November 8 in the UAE.

“The IPL governing council will meet on August 2,” IPL Chairman Brijesh Patel told PTI.

Another top official of the BCCI said that the eight franchises will get a clear picture of the tournament’s modalities during the meeting.

“It is expected that franchises will be handed the SOP (Standard Operating Procedure)



after the meeting,” the senior official said on condition of anonymity.

The meeting, expected to be attended by top BCCI brass, including President Sourav Ganguly and secretary Jay Shah, would address concerns of various stakeholders.

The tenures of both Ganguly and Shah are over but the two have sought a relaxation in

the Lodha Committee-recommended cooling off norms from the Supreme Court, which will hear the matter on August 17.

Also, most likely, this edition of the IPL would have less number of double-headers which would be beneficial for broadcasters.

Ways to negate the loss of gate money for the franchises, since the matches will be

played before empty stadiums in a bio-secure environment, will also be a major topic of discussion.

While it is expected that most of the franchises will send their recce teams to the UAE to check out the facilities as well as the bio-secure environment that can be created, there are concerns that remain, including accommodation plan and

catering services.

Another tricky issue that is likely to come up is whether families of the players would be allowed to accompany them.

A senior franchise official had told PTI said that it will be “criminal” to keep players away from their families for two months and that too in a sanitised environment.

“During normal times, the wives and girlfriends, join the players during a specified period but this is a completely different scenario. If families travel, can they be confined to rooms without being able to move around normally?” an official asked.

“There will be players who have kids aged between 3 to 5 and how do you keep them in a room for two months?” he added.

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# Experimental COVID-19 vaccine is put to its biggest test

The biggest test yet of an experimental COVID-19 vaccine got underway Monday with the first of some 30,000 Americans rolling up their sleeves to receive shots created by the U.S. government as part of the all-out global race to stop the pandemic.

The glimmer of hope came even as Google, in one of the gloomiest assessments of the coronavirus's staying power from a major employer, decreed that most of its 200,000 employees and contractors should work from home through next June — a decision that could influence other big companies.

Final-stage testing of the vaccine, developed by the National Institutes of Health and Moderna Inc., began with volunteers at numerous sites around the U.S. given either a real dose or a dummy without being told which.

"I'm excited to be part of something like this. This is huge," said Melissa Harting, a 36-year-old nurse who received an injection in Binghamton, New York. Especially with family members in front-line jobs that could expose them to the virus, she added, "doing our part to eradicate it is very important to me."

Another company, Pfizer Inc., announced

late Monday that it had started its own study of its vaccine candidate in the U.S. and elsewhere. That study also aimed to recruit 30,000 people.

It will be months before results trickle in, and there is no guarantee the vaccines will ultimately work against the scourge that has killed over 650,000 people around the world, including almost 150,000 in the U.S.

"We've been sitting on the sidelines passively attempting to wear our masks and social distance and not go out when it's not necessary. This is the first step of becoming active against this," said Dr. Frank Eder of Meridian Clinical Research, the company that runs the Binghamton trial site. "There's really no other way to get past this."

As if to underline how high the stakes are, there were more setbacks in efforts to contain the coronavirus.

In Washington, the Trump administration disclosed that national security adviser Robert O'Brien has the virus — the highest-ranking U.S. official to test positive so far. The White House said he has mild symptoms and "has been self-isolating and working from a secure location off site."

The move to restart the national pastime ran into trouble just five days into the long-delayed season: Two major league baseball games scheduled for Monday night were called off as the Miami Marlins coped with an outbreak — the Marlins' home opener against the Baltimore Orioles, and the New York Yankees' game in Philadelphia, where the Marlins used the clubhouse over the weekend.

As for relief from the economic damage done by the virus, Republicans on Capitol Hill rolled out a \$1 trillion package that includes another round of \$1,200 direct payments but reduces the extra \$600 a week in federal unemployment benefits that expire for millions of Americans on Friday. Republicans proposed \$200 a week, saying the generous bump discourages people from returning to work. Democrats call the added benefits a lifeline for those who have lost their jobs.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and White House chief of staff Mark Meadows worked through the weekend on the GOP proposal and have agreed to negotiate with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Democratic Senate

leader Chuck Schumer. House Democrats passed a \$3 trillion relief package a couple of months ago.

In Europe, rising infections in Spain and other countries caused alarm only weeks after nations reopened their borders in hopes of reviving tourism. Over the weekend, Britain imposed a 14-day quarantine on travelers arriving from Spain, Norway ordered a 10-day quarantine for people returning from the entire Iberian peninsula, and France urged its citizens not to visit Spain's Catalonia region.

Scientists set speed records getting vaccines into massive testing just months after the coronavirus emerged. But they stressed that the public shouldn't fear that anyone is cutting corners.

"This is a significant milestone," NIH Director Francis Collins said after the first test injection of Moderna's vaccine was given, at 6:45 a.m. in Savannah, Georgia. "Yes, we're going fast, but no, we are not going to compromise" on proving whether the vaccine is safe and effective.

"We are focusing on speed because every day matters," added Stephane Bancel, CEO

of Massachusetts-based Moderna.

After volunteers get two doses a month apart, scientists will closely track which group experiences more infections as they go about their daily routines, especially in areas where the virus is spreading unchecked.

The answer probably won't come until November or December, cautioned Dr. Anthony Fauci, NIH's infectious-diseases chief.

Among many questions the study may answer: How much protection does just one dose offer compared with the two scientists think are needed? If it works, will it protect against severe disease or block infection entirely?

Don't expect a vaccine as strong as the measles vaccine, which prevents about 97% of measles infections, Fauci said, adding he would be happy with a COVID-19 vaccine that's 60% effective.

Several other vaccines made by China and by Britain's Oxford University began smaller final-stage tests in Brazil and other hard-hit countries earlier this month. But the U.S. requires its own tests of any vaccine that might be used in the country.

Every month through

the fall, the government-funded COVID-19 Prevention Network will roll out a new study of a leading candidate, each with 30,000 volunteers.

The final U.S. study of the Oxford shot is set to begin in August, followed by a candidate from Johnson & Johnson in September and one from Novavax in October.

That's a stunning number of people needed to roll up their sleeves for science. In recent weeks, more than 150,000 Americans filled out an online registry signaling interest, Collins said. But many more are needed.

NIH is working to make sure that the study isn't just filled with healthy, younger volunteers but includes populations hit hardest by COVID-19, including older adults, those in poor health and African-Americans and Latinos.

"We really are going to depend upon that sense of volunteerism for individuals from every different corner of society if we're going to really find out how this vaccine, and its potential to end this terrible pandemic,

is go to work in each of those groups," Collins said.

## Malaysia's ex-PM Najib guilty in 1st trial for 1MDB looting

**KUALA LUMPUR, JUL 28 (AP):** Former Prime Minister Najib Razak was convicted on Tuesday of crimes involving the multibillion-dollar looting of a Malaysian state investment fund that brought down his government in a shocking election ouster two years ago.

Najib was calm and stone-faced as he became the first Malaysian leader convicted. He has vowed to appeal the verdict that could bring many years in prison.

The ruling in the first of his five corruption trials came five months after Najib's Malay party returned to government as the biggest bloc in an alliance that took power from the reformist government that ousted Najib's in 2018.

Analysts said the ruling would bolster the prosecution's case in Najib's other trials and would signal to the business community the Malaysia's legal system has strength in tackling international financial crimes.

"I find the accused guilty and convict the accused of all seven charges, Judge Mohamad Nazlan Ghazali said after spending two hours to read out an elaborate ruling. Some of Najib's supporters waiting outside the courthouse cried when they learned of the verdict.

Najib, 67, faces between 15 and 20 years plus hefty fines for each of the seven charges and has vowed to fight to the end. He has said he was misled by rogue bankers and the case against him is political.

I want justice. I want to clear my name," he wrote on Facebook late Monday. After this, we will go to the Court of Appeal. I am ready."

A scion of one of Malaysia's most prominent political families, he faces 42 charges in five separate trial and could face years in prison.

Najib's lawyers were asking the judge to delay their arguments on sentencing until next

week.

The current trial involved a charge of abuse of power, three charges of criminal breach of trust and three money laundering charges involving the transfer of 42 million ringgit ( 9.8 million) from SRC International, a former 1MDB unit, into Najib's bank accounts.

The judge agreed with prosecutors that Najib had overreaching control of SRC, failed to rebut the allegations against him and that prosecutors had established beyond reasonable doubt that Najib misappropriated money for his own use.

The conviction would serve as a solid foundation for the prosecution in ensuing 1MDB-related trials, said Oh Ei Sun, a senior fellow with Singapore's Institute of International Affairs.

He said the ruling also would strengthen the credibility of Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin, even though he now relies on Najib's party for support.

Muhyiddin was fired as Najib's deputy five years ago to the date of Tuesday's verdict for speaking out on the 1MDB scandal.

Najib's party is the biggest bloc in the current Malay nationalist alliance that has governed since March with a shaky, wafer-thin majority in parliament.

The ruling was absolutely good for Malaysia, said analyst Bridget Welsh, honorary research associate with University of Nottingham Malaysia.

I think that there is a sense of euphoria among the citizens that justice is being served, among the majority of Malaysians, Welsh said "Keep in mind that majority of Malaysians voted (in 2018) for political change, and the 1MDB case was a catalyst in that. The 1MDB case damaged Malaysia's reputation, and I think today worked towards restoring that

## Head of China CDC gets injected with experimental vaccine

**BEIJING (AP):** The head of the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention says he has been injected with an experimental coronavirus vaccine in an attempt to persuade the public to follow suit when one is approved.

"I'm going to reveal something undercover: I am injected with one of the vaccines," Gao Fu said in a webinar Sunday hosted by Alibaba Health, an arm of the Chinese e-commerce giant, and Cell Press, an American publisher of scientific journals. "I hope it will work."

The Associated Press reported earlier this month that a state-owned Chinese company injected employees with experimental shots in March, even before the government-approved testing in people — a move that raised ethical concerns among some experts.

Gao did not say when or how he took the vaccine candidate, leaving it unclear whether he was injected as part of a government-approved human trial. He did not respond to requests for comment.

The claim underscores the enormous stakes as China competes with U.S. and British companies to be the first with a vaccine to help end the pandemic — a feat that would be both a scientific and political triumph.

China has positioned itself to be a strong contender. Eight of the nearly two dozen potential vaccines in various stages of human testing worldwide are from China, the most of



any country.

Gao declined to say which of the vaccines he was injected with, saying he didn't want to be seen as "doing some kind of propaganda" for a particular company.

Last month, Gao was a coauthor on a paper introducing one candidate, an "inactivated" vaccine made by growing the whole virus in a lab and then killing it. That candidate is being developed by an affiliate of state-owned SinoPharm.

The company previously said in an online post that 30 employees, including top executives, helped "pre-test" its vaccine in March, before it was approved for its initial human study. Scientists vehemently debate such self-experimentation, because what happens to one or a few people outside a well-designed study is not usable evidence of safety or effectiveness.

Chinese state media have also reported that employees of state-owned companies going abroad are being offered

injections of the vaccine.

Gao said he took the injection to instill public confidence in vaccines, especially amid a tide of rising mistrust that has fueled conspiracy theories and attacks on scientists.

"Everybody has suspicions about the new coronavirus vaccine," Gao said. "As a scientist, you've got to be brave. ... If even we didn't do it, how can we persuade the whole world — all the people, the public — to be vaccinated?"

Andrew Rennekamp, an editor at Cell and one of the moderators of Gao's webinar, said, "This is a brave thing to do, and it shows his faith in what he believes is the safety of the vaccine and his commitment to the science and to public health."

Even as China is among the leaders in the global race for a vaccine, it is also striving to overcome years of drug scandals — the latest coming in 2018 when authorities recalled a rabies vaccine and later announced that batches of children's DPT vaccines, for diphtheria,

pertussis and tetanus, were ineffective.

Gao himself had also been under heavy scrutiny for the China CDC's initial handling of the coronavirus outbreak, both at home and abroad. He largely vanished from public view for months, resurfacing again in an interview with state media in late April.

Recently, Gao has been involved in research on the coronavirus.

As vaccine research continues, China's CDC is now looking into potential immunization programs, trying to figure out whether to prioritize children, the elderly or healthcare workers, he said.

Gao's revelations come at a time of heightened geopolitical tensions fueled by the outbreak. Beijing's delays in warning the public and releasing data at the beginning of the outbreak contributed significantly to the coronavirus's spread, while President Donald Trump and other American politicians have made

unsubstantiated claims that the virus escaped from a laboratory in Wuhan, the central Chinese city where it was first detected.

Tensions have flared to the point where it's now disrupting research, leading to frustration among scientists who work with Chinese collaborators. The Trump administration has moved to withdraw the U.S. from the World Health Organization,

and has cut funding to research initiatives studying coronaviruses in China.

Gao said repeatedly in his lecture that he wanted more cooperation between the U.S. and China, pleading for unity even as relations between Beijing and Washington plummet to new lows.

"We don't want to have China and the U.S. separated scientifically," Gao said. "We've got to work together."

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## Tenet' to be released internationally before US theatre debut in September

**LOS ANGELES, JUL 28 (PTI):** Filmmaker Christopher Nolan's much-anticipated espionage thriller *Tenet* will release internationally before opening in the US, due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic that's keeping the cinema halls closed.

Warner Bros. has announced that the film, starring John David Washington and Robert Pattinson, will debut internationally starting on August 26 before opening in select cities in the US over Labor Day weekend on September 3.

According to Variety, the film will be released in 70 overseas territories, including Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Korea, Russia and the United Kingdom by the end of August.

The studio does not have any plans yet to release *Tenet* in China.

Earlier this month, Warner Bros. Pictures Group chairman Toby Emmerich had said that the studio would not be giving the *Tenet* a traditional global day-and-date release.

The film, also featuring Elizabeth Debicki, Kenneth Branagh, Aaron Taylor-Johnson, Michael Caine, Clemence



Poesy, Dimple Kapadia and Himesh Patel, was originally scheduled to release on July 17.

During the pandemic, the release of the film was pushed twice. Following the coronavirus outbreak in the US, the movie was pushed to July 31 and was then moved to August 12.

## The Witcher' prequel series in the works at Netflix

**LOS ANGELES, JUL 28 (PTI):** Netflix has announced *The Witcher: Blood Origin*, a limited series expanding the universe of its fantasy series *The Witcher*.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, the six-part, live-action series is a prequel to the streamer's Henry Cavill-led show, which premiered last year in December.

Lauren Schmidt Hissrich, who is the showrunner on "The Witcher" series, is attached as the executive producer on the prequel.

Declan de Barra will serve as the showrunner.

*Blood Origin* will be set in an elven world 1,200 years before the world of *The Witcher* and will tell the origin story of the first Witcher and the events that led to the "conjunction of the spheres," when the worlds of monsters, men and elves merged to become one.

As a lifelong fan of fantasy, I am beyond excited to tell the story *The Witcher: Blood Origin*. I've always been fascinated by the rise



and fall of civilizations, how science, discovery, and culture flourish right before that fall

"The Witcher: Blood Origin" will tell the tale of the Elven civilization before its fall, and most importantly reveal the forgotten history of the very first Witcher, de Barra said in a statement.

Hissrich said it would be exciting to explore

and expand *The Witcher*' universe.

I am so thrilled to collaborate with Declan and the Netflix team on *The Witcher: Blood Origin*. It's an exciting challenge to explore and expand *The Witcher* universe created by Andrzej Sapkowski, and we can't wait to introduce fans to new characters and an original story that will enrich our

magical, mythical world even more, she said.

The series is scheduled to shoot in the UK, though cast and a specific date has not been revealed.

Earlier this year, Netflix had announced an animated spin-off film titled *The Witcher: Nightmare Of The Wolf*, focusing on the origin story of Geralt's mentor and fellow Witcher Vesemir.

## Michael Kopech files for divorce from Vanessa Morgan

**LOS ANGELES, JUL 28 (PTI):** "Riverdale" star Vanessa Morgan and her husband, professional baseball player Michael Kopech, are separating.

The news comes just days after Morgan revealed that she is expecting her first child with Kopech.

According to TMZ, Kopech, 24, filed for divorce on June 19 in Morris County in northeast Texas.

In her pregnancy announcement post, Morgan had said that she is expecting a baby boy but made no mention of Kopech.

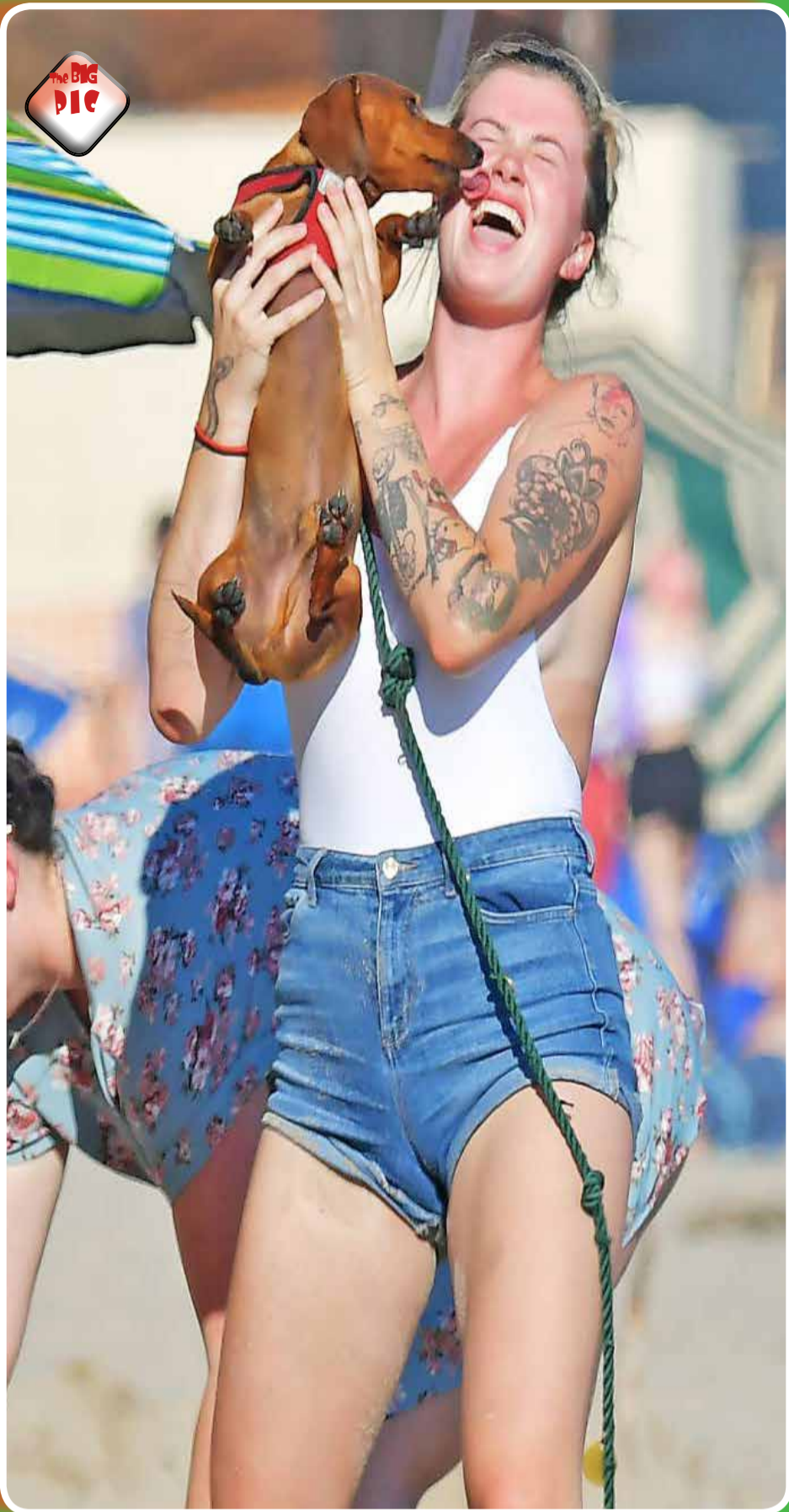
"I am overjoyed to be welcoming my baby boy into the world this January. It's almost like everything I thought mattered in this life has completely changed...

"We're here for such a greater purpose and life is so precious, Morgan wrote alongside photographs and videos from a party of close friends and family where the gender of the baby was revealed.

Morgan married Kopech, 24, in an intimate ceremony in Florida earlier this year.



## KISSES! The model, Ireland Baldwin's dog licked her face on the beach.



## Oprah Winfrey lands new interview series at Apple TV Plus

**LOS ANGELES, JUL 28 (PTI):** Media mogul Oprah Winfrey has set up an interview series at streaming platform Apple TV Plus.

Titled *The Oprah Conversation*, the show will debut on the streaming service on July 30, reported Variety.

The series will feature discussions with today's foremost newsmakers, thought leaders and masters of their craft.

For the first episode titled *How to Be an Antiracist*, Winfrey will be joined by author/professor Ibram X Kendi to speak with white readers confronting their own racism.

Guests in subsequent episodes will include Emmanuel Acho, host of video series *Uncomfortable Conversations With a Black Man*, and Equal Justice Initiative founder Bryan Stevenson.



This marks the third show that Winfrey is hosting for Apple TV Plus, after *Oprah Talks COVID-19* and *Oprah's Book Club*.

### ARIES:

Today the cards are speaking about 'seva' or the virtue of selfless service, which involves an act of kindness without the expectation of any kind of reciprocation or reward. It's time to plant the seeds of goodness with the inner knowing that you've got the benevolent forces to rely on. Remember, no contribution is too big or small, and not everything can be measured in terms of human currency. The time and energy you dedicate are just as important to raising the frequency of this planet.

Tip: The cards are encouraging you to engage in selfless service.

### TAURUS:

Once again, the cards are urging you to be mindful of your sharp tongue. You don't want to say something in the heat of the moment that you cannot take back later. For a moment—just a moment—put yourself in the shoes of the other person. Ask yourself how you'd feel if somebody behaved in the same manner with you. Let your heart grow with love and compassion, Taurus. Know that the good intentions you plant now will come to bear magnificent fruits.

### GEMINI:

Sometimes, you have to lead with your heart. At other times, you have to let your rational side take over. Now is not the time to sugarcoat anything, especially if you have been wronged. Stand up for yourself, and stand up strong. Often we think our karma depends merely on actions like kindness and compassion alone. However, learning to respect and honour ourselves is just as important to our ascension/spiritual growth.

### CANCER:

What if we're all just Buddhas in blue jeans? A part of the cosmos that's experiencing consciousness in human form? Today, instead of judging somebody based on their external appearance or bringing your ego into the equation, listen with an open heart to what they have to say. Pearls of wisdom are likely to come your way in the garb of the ordinary. Cancerians on the brink of settling down could find themselves stuck between the old and the new.

### LEO:

The truth is, you know exactly what you need to do. By swinging back and forth over the same decision you're dishonouring yourself. Let's not get started on all the time you could be wasting in the process. Today the cards are urging you to follow your heart and leave everything else to the Universe. While you're at it, let go of the voice in your head that's telling you you've got to put the needs of others before your own.

### VIRGO:

We all have an image of what our happily-ever-after looks like, and a partner with whom we'd like to share this blissful life. These visuals are anything but random. They come from a higher plane of consciousness, and are in alignment with the life we're meant to create for ourselves. So don't let your 3D self gaslight you into believing you're aiming too high or that your dreams are unrealistic. Keep the vision of the life you desire in your mind's eye as you leave 'the how' and 'the why' to the Universe. For some of you the process of making

space may involve letting go of a half-love.

### LIBRA:

The pursuit of knowledge continues to be a big theme in the Libra HQ. There is not enough time to learn all the things you want to in this lifetime! Some of you may also feel inspired to delve deeper into kitchen/herb magick, or into earth-centred practices. As a descendant of Venus, you'll find that making love and beauty potions comes easily to you. But it's not just about fancy ingredients, is it? It's about the intent with which you are creating them.

### SCORPIO:

Whoever started the rumour that there aren't enough hours in the day was clearly lying. Today, you're being asked to stop glorifying being busy and aim at finding balance between the material and spiritual planes of existence. Sometimes, that means sitting down to meditate even when you're not in the mood to. It's amazing how the simple practice of connecting with your breath can help you experience stillness.

### SAGITTARIUS:

Mercury may have straightened up his act, but there are a whole bunch of planets that are still in retrograde including Saturn, Jupiter, and Pluto. In other words, clearing past karma continues to be a theme. Today, you're being asked to remember the real reason things didn't work out with a certain someone, and why this relationship isn't worth another shot. Learning to break this cycle is a part of your soul lesson, Sagittarius.

### CAPRICORN:

This is a time of inner illumination, Capricorn, of feeling a sense of oneness with the divine forces. You know that you're never alone, and that you have the power to call upon your spirit team when you're receding into the darkness. The cards are urging you to set some time aside for meditation and mindfulness, every single day, to make a conscious effort to strengthen this connection. On a side note, the dreams and visions are about to get trippier too, and you're going to love every bit of it!

### AQUARIUS:

The Universe is abundant in every way. Lack, on the other hand, is a result of the overactive human imagination. This is something you've learned the hard way. But the 2.0 version of you trusts the mysterious forces and is choosing to look at all that is good in your existence, thereby giving it the power to multiply. Remember, there is more than enough to go around, Aquarius. Some of you could be preparing for an intimate wedding ceremony, one that includes your closest friends only.

### PISCES:

They say suffering is synonymous with the human plane of existence, but is suffering all that there is? Do we live our lives in utter darkness, only to experience the light in fleeting moments? Not unless you want to, Pisces. Today, the cards are reminding you of your own power to shift your vibration. Each thought we put out there is charged with intention, which ultimately creates our reality. In other words, our life is the most precious canvas we will ever have the opportunity to make magic with.