



**BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN PLANS BROADWAY RETURN OF HIS ONE-MAN SHOW**  
pg 08

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**  
pg 04

**CHEF MOLLY YEH'S LOCKDOWN LIFE FULL OF RECIPES, BABY FIRSTS**  
pg 08



# Summit TIMES

Vol 06 | Issue 146 | Gangtok | Wednesday | 09 June 2021

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

RNI No. SIKENG/2016/69420

Pages 8 | RS. 5

**SKM mocks Bhaichung prioritizing 9-a-side football ground over 300-bed hospital**



**OM PRAKASH CHETTRI NAMCHI, 08 JUN:**

Sikkim Karantikari Morcha responded sharply to Hamro Sikkim Party's criticism of the State Government's plans to develop a 300-bed hospital at Namchi Public Ground.

Addressing a press conference here, SKM senior vice president, Bhojraj Rai, remarked that it was unfortunate the HSP's Bhaichung Bhutia has his priorities so muddled that he cannot see the benefit of converting a small ground, a 9-a-side football field, into a 300-bed hospital at a time when the health infrastructure needs to be bolstered not just for the present pandemic but also for future exigencies.

He further contended that the SKM Government took this decision only after an alternative 11-sided public ground for Namchi at Boomtar, Singithang. And there is also Bhaichung Stadium which is nearing completion and awaiting inauguration which has been delayed due to the present pandemic, he added.

"If Bhaichung has such strong sentiments for football, then he should have complained when the previous government delayed construction of Bhaichung Stadium for nine years," Mr Rai added.

He also held forth that Bhaichung could face deformation charges for his allegation that the government was working on percentage and commissions. Mr Rai demanded that either Bhaichung present evidence to back his claims or apologise to the government.

Advisor Satish Chandra Rai added that the new hospital will not only serve South Sikkim but will also come as a boon for West Sikkim. Bhaichung Bhutia, he said, was an icon and a source of inspiration for young footballers and hence should be more responsible towards the people and not level allegations without proper information.

## Even as Covid claims two more, recoveries continue to outnumber new cases in Sikkim

**SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 08 JUN:**

Sikkim continued to turn the Covid wave today with the State recording, for the second consecutive day, more recoveries than new cases. 286 formerly Covid-positive people completed their prescribed home isolation period and returned to their normal lives in the 24 hours ending 8AM Tuesday.

Over the same period, Sikkim reported 255 new cases of Novel Coronavirus from the testing of a smart 3,026 samples. What is also reassuring for the State is that the Test Positivity Rate [the number of samples returning positive for Covid] has come down to 8.4% over the past week from a time when it was going past 30% on daily bases.

12,894 of the 17,425 cases of Covid detected in the State thus far have already made full recoveries. There are currently 4,018 active Covid cases in the State, of whom only 188 have symptoms severe enough to require hospitalisation and 22 of them are admitted in Intensive Care Units for Covid patients at CRH-Tadong and STNM Hospital, Gangtok. 3,820 of the active cases are under facility of home isolation. 238 of the confirmed cases have since migrated to other states.

While 2,061 samples were screened through rapid antigen testing in the State on Monday, of which 106 returned positive, another 148 persons were reported positive in RT-PCR testing of 964 samples and one tested through TruNat was.

Out of the 255 new cases, 98 were registered in East District, 44 in West District, 07 in North District and South Sikkim took the top position on daily infections with 106 new cases. It is informed that East District recorded a daily positivity rate of 11.47%, 10.2% for South District, 4.5% for West District and 4.5% for North District.

What remains a matter of concern though is that Sikkim continues to lose people to the virus and today, two more deaths of Covid patients were reported. Yesterday, it may be recalled, was a day with no Covid deaths in Sikkim - something that had not happened for 44 days. Covid's death toll in Sikkim now stands at 275, of which 139 deaths occurred in the past month and half that the second wave has been here.

While one more Covid patient passed away at STNM Hospital, a Covid-positive person succumbed to the coronavirus infection while in home isolation in East Sikkim.

While one more Covid patient passed away at STNM Hospital, a Covid-positive person succumbed to the coronavirus infection while in home isolation in East Sikkim.

While one more Covid patient passed away at STNM Hospital, a Covid-positive person succumbed to the coronavirus infection while in home isolation in East Sikkim.

**Covid vaccination for 18-44 age-group to begin tomorrow**

**SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 08 JUN:**

Covid vaccination for people in the 18-44 age-group will resume on Thursday, 10 June, and this time, online slots will be opened only for the vaccination sites at Thakurbaru and STNM Hospital in Gangtok and 20 slots at Mangan while vaccination everywhere else will be through on-site registration as per the priority list set by the State Government, a press communique from Health Department informs.

Slots for online registration [at Thakurbaru, STNM Hospital and Mangan] will open at 8AM as against the 6AM schedule in the last phase.

The release goes on to state that information on vaccination has been shared with panchayats, councillors, Health personnel in the districts and ASHA and AWW who should be contacted before one goes for vaccination.

## CM reviews slew of initiatives in education sector

**SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 08 JUN:**

Chief Minister PS Tamang, took a detailed review meeting of Education Department on 07 June, 2021, at Samman Bhawan, a press release from the Education Department informs.

The meeting was attended by Minister, Education Department, KN Lepcha, Additional Chief Secretary, Education GP Upadhayaya, Secretary, Education Anil Raj Rai, Secretary, Sikkim State Teachers' Recruitment Board (SSTRB), all Directors of Education Department and also officials of Department of Personnel.

The meeting discussed in detail about progress on various fronts in the Department including construction of various projects, review of Education Service Cadre, promotion of officers in the Education Service Cadre, appointment of Adhoc teachers, one-time transfer of adhoc teachers, promotion of school heads, regularization of adhoc services of those adhoc teachers who have completed 8 years of continuous service, progress in online education in both schools and colleges, review of land donor scheme, appointment of AEOs, review of vocational education and



ICT scheme, review of Samagra Shiksha etc.

The Chief Minister made it very clear in the beginning that education, being a priority sector of the Government, no efforts shall be spared including adequate availability of fund for bringing about a perceptible change in the education. Chief Minister was very happy to know about around 40%-45% coverage of school children in online and digital education against all India average of 13% and more than 80% coverage of college students.

He was also happy to know that the Department has reinforced the Sikkim Edutech App as online resource platform, undertaken with the help of NIC, massive training of around four thousand school and college

teachers in use of platforms like Google meet, Google Classroom and Zoom and conducting the home-schooling.

He also instructed the Department to complete appointment of all school heads by end of August, 2021. He directed the Department to immediately undertake regularization of adhoc services of adhoc teachers who have completed 8 years or more through Sikkim State Teachers' Recruitment Board (SSTRB). He also discussed in detail the various grievances of school heads with regard to re-structuring of Education Service Cadre and assured to look into genuine issues.

He directed the Department to go for appointment of adhoc teachers in all four districts as per the vacancy strictly following NCTE

norms. He also directed the Department to un-

dertake one-time transfer of adhoc teachers to help those who are having genuine difficulties. However, in future no transfer of adhoc teachers shall be undertaken.

He also directed clearly the Engineering Cell to go for expeditious completion of all the projects avoiding time and cost overrun. One of the important discussions in the meeting was setting up of District Academic Monitoring Committee under an officer of seniority of Addi-

tional Director from the Education Service. This Committee will ensure that schools of all categories provide adequate academic input to ensure appropriate learning outcome and any school requiring hand-holding gets the required support.

Finally, the Chief Minister assured the Department of all possible help from the Government so that the students of the State do not suffer on account of prolonged closure of schools or any other problem.

## Education Dept begins Online Teacher Training on Digital Tools

**SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 08 JUN:**

The Education Department has begun an online teacher training programme aimed at supporting Government teachers across the State to learn the usage of digital tools for conducting online classes, a press release from Education Department informs.

Following the request of teachers from the districts, a decision was made at a department meeting on May 26, 2021 chaired by the Additional Chief Secretary, GP Upadhayaya to start such an initiative immediately and therefore the Information Technol-

ogy Section was directed to organise a training of teachers on how to conduct online classes. The IT Section's Additional Director, T Samdup formed a team of subject experts including Shri Subbiah Goundar, Joint Director Exams, Dr LP Sharma, Sr. Tech. Director /NIC and also partnered with the Progressive Learning Foundation (PLF), a local NGO. A google form to sign up for training was sent to all teachers in the State and there are more than 3800 responses till date.

The flagship session was held on June 07, 2021.

The programme will continue over the next

several weeks. All teachers interested in participating are kindly requested to contact their school-in-charge for the google form link or they may contact the IT Section/ Education Department, the release informs. At present, almost 90% of colleges in Sikkim have internet coverage. As per the request submitted by heads of the colleges, a customized online training on how to conduct better training using digital tools for lectures/faculties will be prepared by the IT section in consultation with teaching faculties and the Technical Directorate of Education Department.



**STATE BANK OF SIKKIM**  
(A Government of Sikkim Undertaking)  
**RECRUITMENT OF ASSISTANT MANAGER**  
IN STATE BANK OF SIKKIM

NOTIFICATION NO. SBS/AM/2021/01 Dated: 25<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

Applications are invited from eligible Indian Citizens of Sikkimese origin having Sikkim Subject certificate/Certificate of Identification for appointment as Assistant Manager (AM) in the State Bank of Sikkim.

### ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1	<b>Minimum qualification</b>	A. Degree of Bachelor and above from a recognized university with any one of the following as a major subject: (i) Business Economics, (ii) Accounting, (iii) Commerce, (iv) Financial Management/Finance, (v) Banking, (vi) Mathematics B. Minimum of one year of Certificate Course in Computer Application. OR A Degree of Bachelor or above in any discipline from a recognized university with minimum experience of five years of working in clerical cadre and above in any Banks in India.							
2	<b>Age Limit</b>	As on 01.04.2021 minimum age of the candidate should be minimum 21 years and maximum of 40 years for all category of candidates in accordance with the orders issued by the State Government from time to time.							
3	<b>Other Qualifications</b>	(a) Should have knowledge of any of the Sikkim State Languages. (b) Should be conversant with the customs and usages of Sikkim.							
4	<b>Number of Vacancies</b>	UR	BL	OBC (CL)	OBC (SL)	ST	SC	PT	TOTAL
		5	5	5	5	3	2	1	26
		out of which		out of which		out of which		out of which	
		W	BPL	W	BPL	W	BPL	W	BPL
		2	1	1	1	2	1	1	0
		1	1	1	1	0	1	0	8
									3

Prospective candidates will have to apply after carefully reading the notification regarding the process of examinations and interview, eligibility criteria, online registration processes, payment of prescribed application fee/intimation charges, pattern of examination, issuance of call letters etc. and ensure that they fulfil all stipulated criteria and follow the prescribed processes. To download notification and apply online, candidates should visit our official website [www.statebankofsikkim.com](http://www.statebankofsikkim.com).

### THE TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

Activity	Dates
On-line registration including Edit/Modification of Application by candidates	01.06.2021 to 30.06.2021
Payment of Application Fees/Charges	01.06.2021 to 30.06.2021
Dates for downloading of admit card, date of written exam shall be notified in due course through email, newspaper advertisement and bank's website etc. Candidates are advised to regularly keep in touch with the official SBS website <a href="http://www.statebankofsikkim.com">www.statebankofsikkim.com</a> and respective emails for details and updates.	

sd/-

(S.R.Karki)

CHIEF GENERAL MANAGER

GANGTOK THE 25<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2021.

Scanned by CamScanner

Mail us at [advertise@summittimes.com](mailto:advertise@summittimes.com) or call us at :03592-208698

## IHRC distributes essentials to Rangpo's frontline workers

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 08 JUN:**

International Human Rights Council (IHRC) Sikkim distributed face masks, hand sanitizers, drinking water and juice to the frontline warriors of Rangpo Check post and Mamring Outpost along with the workers working near the river

Teesta belt at Mining this morning, a press release informs.

IHRC State president, Ganesh Chettri along with members and other office bearers were present during the distribution. IHRC Sikkim has also decided to distribute food grains to the needy families in the area.



## Medical items distributed to North and South Regu PHSC

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 08 JUN:**

Zilla Panchayat member of Regu and Premlakha-Subaneydara Territorial Constituency, Tul Man Rai distributed medical equipments to Gram Panchayat members and health workers today, a press release informs.

After a short meeting held at Primary Health Sub-center Regu, items such as BP apparatus, thermal scanner, stethoscope, pulse oximeters, N-95 masks, surgical

masks, face shields, hand sanitizer, sanitizer jar and PPE kits were given to all Gram Panchayat members of Regu, ASHA workers, members of voluntary Covid-19 management committee and health care workers, MPHWS of both North and South Regu Primary health sub centers, a press re-lease informs.

Gram panchayats and MPHWS thanked the Zilla Panchayat, Tulman Rai for providing these items in remote rural areas through Zilla fund.



## Chamling unable to accept our achievements, SKM alleges

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 08 JUN:**

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha party has alleged that some opposition leaders are engaging in politics to create confusion and spread misinformation among the people even during the pandemic. The party further stated that Sikkim Democratic Front president, Pawan Chamling and some other opposition leaders have been trying to defame the government with false and fabricated allegations.

An SKM press release issued by its secretary, Ranjana Pradhan states that SKM government has been working tire-

lessly in the health sector to provide the best facilities and services to the people of Sikkim even in this pandemic period.

The release mentions that SKM used to think that the SDF president was an experienced leader who ran the government for 25 years but he has proved this wrong by his intolerance of people-centric work done by the SKM government during this pandemic.

Mr Chamling has already realized that SKM government has done more work than he did in 25 years of the SDF government but is not being able to accept it, the party has said.

Frontal organizations and workers of SKM have been providing relief and service to the people at their doorsteps during this lockdown period but instead of appreciating such efforts, Mr Chamling has been accusing such efforts of spreading the virus. The party has advised him to work in the interest of people instead of giving irresponsible statements.

SKM has also responded to statements made by Hamro Sikkim Party working president, Bhaichung Bhutia on the upcoming 300-bed hospital in Namchi and called it "humorous". The release adds that Mr Bhutia

should realize that the SKM government has brought about many improvements in the health sector of the state.

On the suggestion of Mr Bhutia to the government that Rs 80 crore allocated for Namchi Hospital should instead be used for procuring vaccines, SKM has said that Mr Bhutia need not worry and the government has made all arrangements for all infrastructure, equipment and vaccination for COVID-19. The release adds that SKM government has plans to establish not only one but many playgrounds but the health sector is a priority at present.

## Health Minister meets Singtam's new Nagar panchayats



**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 08 JUN:**

Khamdong Singtam MLA, Health Minister Dr MK Sharma, met the newly elected municipal Councillors of Singtam today, a press release informs.

Expressing his heartfelt congratulations and good wishes, he appealed to all to work in unity and in the interest of the public. In this meeting, Dr Sharma while praising

the various types of work started by the councillors during the pandemic, appealed to all to strictly follow the guidelines issued by the state government to break the chain of COVID.

## BJP Sikkim holds virtual meet



**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 08 JUN:**

Bharatiya Janata Party, Sikkim, organised a virtual meeting under the chairmanship of state president, DB Chauhan today, a press release informs.

The meeting was attended by the state executives, district executives, Morcha office bearers and Mandal Presidents. The meeting discussed various organizational and current issues.

The meeting also

discussed the historic announcement made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday. Prime Minister Modi had announced that a free covid vaccine would be provided to all the citizens of the country and 800 million people would be provided free ration till the month of November.

In addition, PM has also put an end to arbitrariness in private hospitals by announcing that they will not be allowed

to charge more than Rs. 150 as service charge for vaccination. BJP Sikkim today welcomed this historic and pro-people announcement and passed a motion of thanks to Prime Minister Modi and the Central Government.

Similarly, the party also discussed the issue of providing 500 oximeters for COVID-infected people in the state and discussed the strategy to reach out to those in need.

## "Vaccine waste will affect allocation": Centre's warning to States

**NEW DELHI, 08 JUN [NDTV]:** Covid vaccine allocation to states may be negatively affected by high wastage rates, the government said Tuesday as part of its revised guidelines for the national vaccination drive.

The guidelines said the government - which has re-taken control of the vaccination drive - will procure 75 per cent of vaccines produced in India and distribute them to states "based on criteria such as population, disease burden and progress of vaccination".

"Wastage of vaccine will affect the allocation negatively," the guidelines said.

The warning is likely to be viewed unfavourably by the states (and people whose vaccination chances may now depend on their government's efficiency) - particularly those already accused of wasting doses in the centre-states tug-of-war over supply of vaccines and slow pace of vaccinations.

Last month Jharkhand and Chhat-

tisgarh were accused of wasting around 37 and 30 per cent of supplied doses. BJP-ruled Madhya Pradesh was accused of wasting 11 per cent of doses. All three hit back; they said the data was faulty and actual wastage was only around five per cent.

The guidelines also stated that while vaccines will be provided free of cost to all people, private hospitals could buy the remaining 25 per cent to inoculate those willing to pay for their doses.

Allowing private hospitals access to a quarter of the country's supply is meant to "incentivise production by vaccine manufacturers", the government said, adding that states/UTs would have to be responsible for dividing available doses between hospitals across their territories.

Prices at which hospitals can buy the vaccines "would be declared by each manufacturer" the government added. Currently Covaxin costs ₹ 1,200 per dose for hospitals and Covishield ₹ 600. The centre buys the

same vaccines at ₹ 150 per dose.

India currently has three approved Covid vaccines - Covishield, Covaxin and Sputnik V (File)

These guidelines come a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the government was taking back control of the vaccination drive - a little over a month after it was opened to states.

The government has been heavily criticised for its vaccination policy, particularly after it was "liberalised" starting May 1; this meant states and private hospitals had to compete amongst each other to buy from limited domestic stocks at much higher prices than the government was paying.

In the government's defence, Prime Minister Modi on Monday pointed out that states had called for decentralising of the vaccine drive. The government earlier clarified that vaccines supplied by it would be free, but it said nothing about states and private hospitals having to pay much

more.

The earlier policy saw free vaccines for health-care/frontline workers and the 45+ age group, but left large sections of the 18-44 age group having to pay for their shots. This, in some cases, was around ₹ 1,500 per dose, triggering protests and inviting questions from the Supreme Court.

Last month the court flagged "various flaws" in the vaccination policy, which it called "arbitrary and irrational". It also asked why states had to pay more for the vaccines than the government, and demanded a report comparing foreign prices of domestically available vaccines.

The government has been given two weeks to file a response on this and several other questions, with the next hearing on this subject scheduled for June 30.

The government plans to vaccinate "all eligible people" - around 108 crore - by the end of the year. As of this morning, around 23.6 crore doses have been administered.

## Tripura registers GSDP growth amid Covid pandemic

**AGARTALA, JUN 8 (PTI):** Tripura has registered significant growth in Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) and per capita income in the 2020-21 fiscal as compared to previous years amid the pandemic, state Education Minister Ratan Lal Nath said on Tuesday. The growth of the economic parameters of the northeastern state is higher than the national average, the minister claimed.

The GSDP of Tripura was Rs. 59,752.61 crore in the last financial year, against Rs. 55,984.08 crore in 2019-20, Rs. 49,845.47 crore in 2018-19, Rs. 43,715.80 crore in 2017-18 and Rs. 39,479.40 crore in

2016-17, Nath told reporters.

The Per Capita Income of the state in 2020-21 increased to Rs. 1,31,128, which was Rs. 1,25,191 in 2019-20, Rs. 1,12,849 in 2018-19, Rs. 1,00,444 in 2017-18 and Rs. 91,596 in 2016-17, the minister said.

Around seven lakh people of the state would be benefitted following the recent announcement of the Reserve Bank of India on the restructuring of loans for individual and small borrowers, he said.

"It is a historic decision", Nath said.

"As a result of the decision, borrowers may restructure their installments and deadline for repaying the

loans. To avail this facility, the borrowers have to contact their respective banks or Micro Finance Institutions by September 30, 2021," he said.

In 2020-21 fiscal, as many as 6,92,050 people had taken loans of Rs. 16,884.65 crore from different banks under various schemes in the state.

Among them, 2,73,509 people got loans of Rs. 1,584.19 crore under Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana, and 1,036 persons received loans of Rs. 51 crore under the Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), Nath said, adding that the Credit Debit (CD) ratio has now reached 54 per cent in the state.

## 44 crore doses ordered: Centre after change in Covid vaccine policy

**NEW DELHI, 08 JUN [NDTV]:**

Forty-four crore doses of Covid vaccines will be made available to the country from August, the government today said amid a raging shortage that has forced a closure of vaccine centres in many states. These doses will be delivered between August and December 2021, the Union Health Ministry said.

The health ministry announcement -- that orders have been placed for 25 crore doses of Covishield and 19 crore doses of Covaxin to achieve universalization of vaccination -- came a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a fresh vaccine policy.

The new policy takes back the onus of vaccine purchase from the states. The finance ministry said today that the new programme will cost around ₹ 50,000 crore and the Centre has the necessary funds.

Last week, the government said it has booked 30 crore doses of Hyderabad-based Biological-E's Covid vaccine, which is undergoing clinical trial.

The procurement issue became a matter of huge controversy as the coronavirus ravaged the country in the second wave and exposed the massive shortcomings in the healthcare sector, especially in rural areas.

The Supreme Court strongly criticised the vaccine policy, calling it "prima facie arbitrary and irrational" and demanded a blueprint of the way ahead. The judges strongly hinted that a do-over was in order.

"Let me tell you from my experience as a Judge -- the ability to say that you're wrong is not a sign of weakness, but a sign of strength," Justice Chandrachud had said.

The Centre has repeatedly blamed the states for the vaccine policy of May that went awry, saying the states wanted to buy the vaccines and under the federal structure, the government was in no position to refuse.

"Many states demanded vaccinations to be decentralized. Some voices even questioned prioritising certain age groups, including the elderly," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in his address to the nation last evening.

Through the day today, the government and its officials provided repeated communications to the media -- on and off the record -- about the steps being taken to increase vaccine availability.

Mail us at  
advertise@  
summittimes.  
com  
or call us at  
03592-208698

# Relief provided to Yuksam residents in memory of Yangthang Rinpoche

PRITAM LAMA  
YUKSAM, 06 JUN:

Tulku Khentsey Serta Rinpoche from Yuksam West Sikkim came forward to help people in memory of Late Yangthang Rinpoche by distributing ration and essential items to the poor and needy in Yuksam and other villages. Essentials commodities including rice, edible oils, vegetables, lentils and other essential items including masks and hand sanitizers were distributed to the people.

Tulku Khentsey Serta Rinpoche said that Late Yangthang Rinpoche was a well-known compassionate Buddhist spiritual leader of the Nyingmapa sect of Tibetan Buddhism who practiced

compassion his whole life and was followed by millions.

"Inspired by Late Yangthang Rinpoche, we have started this initiative for the people in memory of the compassionate Yangthang Rinpoche. In Buddhism, compassion is an important practice. Buddhism is another name of compassion," said Tulku Khentsey Serta Rinpoche.

Yangthang Rinpoche's family has also been extending support to the people since the beginning.

Tulku Khentsey Serta Rinpoche has also donated Rs 50,000 to Yuksam COVID warrior volunteers and provided sanitizer spray machines and other items.



## Took him 4 months to listen to us: Mamata Banerjee on PM's vaccine announcement

KOLKATA, 08 JUN [PTI]: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said on Monday that the decision on vaccinating all above the age of 18 for free should have been taken long back and the delay has cost many lives. Reacting to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement of free vaccination for all adults, Ms Banerjee said that it took him four months to listen to the pleas of the states.

"Back in Feb '21 & multiple times thereafter, I'd written to the PM

stating our long standing demand to provide vaccines to ALL for FREE. Took him 4 months but after much pressure, he has FINALLY listened to us & implemented what we've been asking all this while," she tweeted.

"The well-being of the people of India should've been prioritized since the very start of this pandemic. Unfortunately, this delayed decision by PM has already cost many lives. Hoping for a better managed #Vaccina-



tionDrive this time that focuses on people & not propagandist," she added.

PM Modi announced that the central government will provide free coronavirus vaccines to

states for inoculation of all above the age of 18 from June 21, and asserted that vaccine supply would be increased significantly in the country in the coming days.

## Centre asks States to nominate more officers for Central deputation

NEW DELHI, 08 JUN [PTI]: The Centre has asked state governments to nominate more officers for central deputation at the level of deputy secretary, director and joint secretary, citing their shortage, according to an official communication.

It also asked them not to nominate officers, who are on the verge of promotion, that often necessitates their early repatriation to their cadre to avail the benefit.

"It may be ensured that the names of only those officers are forwarded who are likely to remain available under the Central Staffing Scheme for full tenure," said the letter issued by the personnel ministry.

Officers of the level of deputy secretary/director and above are usually appointed in central government ministries/departments (i.e. on central deputation) under the Central Staffing Scheme (CSS).

"It is, therefore, requested that larger number of officers may kindly be recommended for appointment at DS/Director/JS level under the Central Staffing Scheme so that the central deputation reserve/deputation reserves are duly utilised for this purpose," it said.



Referring to its communication issued December last year seeking officers for deputation to the posts under CSS and for the posts of Chief Vigilance Officers (CVOs) in central public sector enterprises (CPSEs) as well as in other organisations under central ministries/departments, the ministry said the number of nominations received so far has been "very minimal".

"The number of nominations received so far has been very minimal and as such the representation of officers from various cadres/services especially at DS/Director level is extremely low," said the letter dated June 4.

As you know, every cadre is allowed a deputation reserve to ensure that officers have the opportunity to work on deputation including that under the Central Staffing Scheme, which adds to their experience, it said.

"The utilization of this reserve is low and this underutilisation, particularly at Deputy Secretary/Director level, causes serious gaps in cadre management," said the letter also sent to secretaries of central government ministries/departments.

This aspect would also be kept in view by Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) while considering cadre

review proposals, to be received in future, it said.

The cadres that have not been forwarding adequate nominations for Central Staffing Scheme at various levels may have to settle for less number of additional Senior Duty Posts in future by way of corresponding reduction, the ministry asserted.

It is also requested to ensure that the officers who are at the verge of promotion to Senior Administrative Grade (SAG)/Higher Administrative Grade (HAG), as may be relevant, during the year are not nominated, often necessitating their early repatriation to avail of promotion in the cadre, the letter said.

## No internet, Mizoram students climb hill to catch signal for online test

AIZAWL, 08 JUN [NDTV]: A bunch of college students in a remote village in Mizoram are trekking up and down a hill daily. Reason: they have to take their online semester exams and the Internet reception is either non-existent or poor.

The lack of Internet connectivity in the remote Mawhrei village in Saiha district, about 400 kilometres from Aizawl, has forced seven Mizoram University students to climb the Tlao Tla hill, the only spot near the village with decent Internet reception.

A makeshift bamboo hut with banana leaves on top provides them protection from inclement weather. They sit huddled together inside the hut and write their undergraduate exams.

"Mawhrei is a remote

village in Saiha district and is completely surrounded by hills, so there is no Internet connectivity in our village," says KL Vabeihruasa, a student of the village.

The university is conducting the semester exams online in June for over 24,000 undergraduate students across the state.

At a time when the nation is waiting for a 5G network, this village with a population of 1,700 just has an erratic 2G connectivity.

"Today we came to see how the students are writing the exams on hill top. There is no 4G network in the village, but here the network is stable...we appeal to the government to solve this problem," said N Beirasachai of the Mara Students' Organisation.

## Internet applauds COVID-19 Warriors crossing Ladakh river in an earth mover



New Delhi, 08 Jun [NDTV]: Healthcare workers across the country have been at the forefront of the COVID-19 battle for the past 18 months. At great personal risk, doctors, nurses, and allied service workers at hospitals and clinics have put up a brave fight against the pandemic. A recent example -- caught on camera -- was that of one such team being carried across a Ladakh river in the loader of an earth mover.

The photo of the incident was tweeted by Ladakh MP Jamyang Tsering Namgyal. Of the four healthcare workers in the photo, two are seen in PPE kits.

It only proves that while personal safety and long working hours are common issues across the spectrum, some must also brave other obstacles to reach people in need.

Along with the image he posted on Twitter, the BJP leader wrote, "Salute to

our #CovidWarriors. A team of #Covid warriors crossing the river to render their services in rural Ladakh. Stay Home, Stay Safe, Stay Healthy and Cooperate the Covid Warriors."

Given the region's terrain, the photo shows the extent to which these workers go to while performing their duties as caregivers.

It was no surprise then that the tweet was widely shared, with users praising the frontline warriors for their dedication. Within a few hours, the photo was 'liked' over 7,700 times and 'retweeted' nearly 1,000 times.

Several Twitter users thanked healthcare workers around the country.

The driver of the vehicle must also be appreciated, reminded one user.

Several users also said this was proof of the frontline workers' commitment.

Some also said such terrains must be identified and infrastructure developed there.

www.summittimes.com | news@summittimes.com | advertise@summittimes.com

## Punjabi singer Jazzy B's Twitter account blocked on govt request

NEW DELHI, 08 JUN [NDTV]: Twitter has blocked four accounts in India - including one belonging to Canadian-Punjabi singer Jazzy B, who has frequently tweeted in support of farmers protesting the government's agriculture laws and, in December last year, joined thousands camped on the borders of the national capital.

The accounts were blocked - they have been 'geo-restricted', meaning they can still be accessed from IP addresses outside the country - after a legal demand from the government on Sunday. "When we receive a valid legal request, we review it under both the Twitter Rules and local law. If the content violates Twitter's rules the content will be removed from the service. If it is determined to be illegal in a particular jurisdiction, but not in violation of the Twitter Rules, we may withhold access to the content in India only," Twitter said in its statement.

"In all cases, we notify the account holder directly so they're aware that we've received a legal order pertaining to the account. We notify the user(s) by sending a message to the email ad-

dress associated with the account(s), if available," the statement added.

According to technology news website TechCrunch, all four accounts have posted material critical of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government or in protest against the farm laws.

Twitter posted confirmation of its action on the Lumen database - an online archive that analyses legal complaints and requests for removal of content to ensure transparency.

This is not the first time Twitter has been told to block accounts tweeting on the farmers' protests.

In February around 250 accounts - including that of Caravan magazine, against whose editors Delhi Police had filed an FIR relating to the Republic Day violence, other journalists and opposition leaders - were blocked for several hours after a "legal demand" from the government.

Sources said the request came from the Home Ministry and law enforcement agencies, and was made to prevent "escalation of law and order (situation) in view of the ongoing farmer ag-



itation. The blocking of accounts this week comes amid pressure on Twitter to comply with new rules for social media firms; rules Twitter has flagged as "a potential threat to freedom of expression".

On Monday the company - which faced raids by the Delhi Police last month after it tagged a BJP leader's tweet as "manipulated media" - said it needed more time to comply with these rules.

That was after a thinly-veiled threat last month; the government warned Twitter to "stop beating around the bush and comply" instead of "dictating terms" to the world's largest democracy.

Ostensibly de-

signed to make companies like Twitter and Facebook more accountable for content posted on their websites, the rules have been criticised as an example of the Modi government's efforts to silence criticism and freedom of expression or speech.

The government, in turn, has criticised Twitter for trying to undermine the country's legal system by its actions and deliberate defiance, and returned the 'muzzling of free speech' allegation.

Non-compliance with the new IT rules will result in Twitter losing the intermediary status that grants immunity from liabilities over third-party data they hosted.

In other words, they could be liable for criminal action in case of complaints.

# HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?

email us: [news@summittimes.com](mailto:news@summittimes.com)

## Domestic Violence

*Move beyond scripted tokenisms. Do something real*

In an ideal world, the lockdown would have provided couples in abusive relationships to address the problem infecting their lives and allow the pause to outside triggers caused by the pandemic to explore, to borrow partially from IB Rai, the ordinariness of normalcy. But we don't live in an ideal world, because in such a world, agencies responsible to rescue victims of domestic abuse would also have upped its game and devised more ways to reach out and intervene. But that is not happening either. What we have instead are experts around the world flagging an uptick in instances and severity of domestic abuse and individuals and institutions here echoing the sentiments. That's a start, but hardly enough if victims are required to reach out to the same networks, which, let's accept it, even in pre-pandemic times, was only of limited efficacy. It was still something though, but in the complicated web of lockdown notifications, is even more hamstrung. Much more should have been done. Much more needs to be done.

It's no secret that domestic abuse is rampant in Sikkim; no secret either that it is only after the victim has reached such a desperate situation that seeking help from strangers at the end of a helpline is the only straw left for her. This is also because the regular social networks which we promote as cushions and nets to help people in distress turn a blind eye to domestic abuse. The problem is real. There have been instances in Sikkim when a wife has been beaten to beaten to death by her spouse. These are rare instances, but what is not rare is the trauma of the victims or their families. Occasionally, victims have taken law into their own hands because even when called in, the keepers of law failed in their responsibility to not only secure justice, but even keep victims safe. Domestic violence is never a one off case. It only follows then that neighbours and the elders of the society ignore the ugliness they must all hear by convincing themselves that they have no 'business' getting involved because it is a 'family matter'. This hesitation claims lives, destroys families, batters self esteem and scars too many families permanently.

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

While this might explain the situation, it does not make it acceptable.

It is important that organisations responsible for women's welfare and empowerment reach out wider awareness on where people can lodge complaints of domestic violence. Complaints, whether from the victim or anonymous, should fetch immediate response and the concerned agencies in turn should have trained counsellors and access to police assistance to reach the victims and rescue them. This, more so in these times of pandemic and pandemic-induced lockdowns. There are many theories on why domestic violence is so common and what factors trigger it. One of these explanations looks at external factors in the offender's environment, such as family structures, stress and social learning. When domestic violence is ignored by everyone even when it is obvious, the perpetrator sees it as an endorsement and continues with the deviance. By putting in place systems which proactively encourage people not to ignore this abomination, at least one causative factor would have been addressed.

Agreed, domestic violence is too widespread and complicated to offer any easy solutions, but a start has to be made somewhere and what is suggested above is as a good a place to begin as any.

To book ad-space, contact SummitTIMES at GANGTOK:

For circulation details Contact: (Sandeep) 9734152451

& for Advertisement booking at 9933427505 or at office no 03592 208698. Mail us at advertise@summittimes.com

SILIGURI:

Mr. Mani Rai, M/s. Space Ads, B.R. Ambedkar Building, Room No.7, 1st floor. Opp. Ganga Hotel. Hill Cart Road. Siliguri - 03. Ph. 9832318644/ 9800682989/ 9153035100 or mail at mani\_siliguri@yahoo.co.in.

KOLKATA OFFICE:

Irshad Ali/ Imteeyaz. Synapse, 6, Madan Street, Mezzine - 2, 2nd floor. Kolkata - 700072. Ph. 033-22124348/ fax 033-22124337/ mob. 9830547774/ 983108397. E-mail: contact.synapse@gmail.com/ irshad\_ali123@rediffmail.com

# How Virus Detectives Trace the Origins of an Outbreak – and Why it's so Tricky

MARILYN J. ROOSSINCK  
THECONVERSATION.COM

Every time there is a major disease outbreak, one of the first questions scientists and the public ask is: "Where did this come from?" In order to predict and prevent future pandemics like COVID-19, researchers need to find the origin of the viruses that cause them. This is not a trivial task. The origin of HIV was not clear until 20 years after it spread around the world. Scientists still don't know the origin of Ebola, even though it has caused periodic epidemics since the 1970s.

As an expert in viral ecology, I am often asked how scientists trace the origins of a virus. In my work, I have found many new viruses and some well-known pathogens that infect wild plants without causing any disease. Plant, animal or human, the methods are largely the same. Tracking down the origins of a virus involves a combination of extensive fieldwork, thorough lab testing and quite a bit of luck.

**VRUSES JUMP FROM WILD ANIMAL HOSTS TO HUMANS**

Many viruses and other disease agents that infect people originate in animals. These diseases are zoonotic, meaning they are caused by animal viruses that jumped to people and adapted to spread through the human population.

It might be tempting to start the viral origin search by testing sick animals at the site of the first known human infection, but wild hosts often don't show any symptoms. Viruses and their hosts adapt to each other over time, so viruses often don't cause obvious disease symptoms until they've jumped to a new host species. Researchers can't just look for sick animals.

Another problem is that people and their food animals aren't stationary. The place where researchers find the first infected person is not necessarily close to the place where the virus first emerged.

In the case of COVID-19, bats were an obvious first place to look. They're known hosts for many coronaviruses and are the probable source of other zoonotic diseases like SARS and MERS.

For SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, the nearest relative scientists have found so far is

BatCoV RaTG13. This virus is part of a collection of bat coronaviruses discovered in 2011 and 2012 by virologists from the Wuhan Virology Institute. The virologists were looking for SARS-related coronaviruses in bats after the SARS-CoV-1 pandemic in 2003. They collected fecal samples and throat swabs from bats at a site in Yunnan Province about 932 miles (1,500 kilometers) from the institute's lab in Wuhan, where they brought samples back for further study.

To test whether the bat coronaviruses could spread into people, researchers infected monkey kidney cells and human tumor-derived cells with the Yunnan samples. They found that a number of the viruses from this collection could replicate in the human cells, meaning they could potentially be transmitted directly from bats to humans without an intermediate host. Bats and people don't come into direct contact very often, however, so an intermediate host is still quite likely.

**FINDING THE NEAREST RELATIVES**

The next step is to determine how closely related a suspected wildlife virus is to the one infecting humans. Scientists do this by figuring out the genetic sequence of the virus, which involves determining the order of the basic building blocks, or nucleotides, that make up the genome. The more nucleotides two genetic sequences share, the more closely related they are.

Genetic sequencing of bat coronavirus RaTG13 showed it to be over 96% identical to SARS-CoV-2. This level of similarity means that RaTG13 is a pretty close relative to SARS-CoV-2, confirming that SARS-CoV-2 probably originated in bats, but is still too distant to be a direct ancestor. There likely was another host that caught the virus from bats and passed it on to humans.

Because some of the earliest cases of COVID-19 were found in people associated with the wildlife market in Wuhan, there was speculation that a wild animal from this market was the intermediate host between bats and humans. However, researchers never found the coronavirus in animals from the market.

Likewise, when a related coronavirus was identified in pangolins confiscated in an anti-smuggling operation in southern China, many leaped to the conclusion that SARS-CoV-2 had jumped from bats to pangolins to humans. The pangolin virus was found to be only 91% identical to SARS-CoV-2, though, making it unlikely to be a direct ancestor of the human virus.

To pinpoint the origin of SARS-CoV-2, a lot more wild samples need to be collected. This is a difficult task – sampling bats is time-consuming and requires strict precautions against accidental infection. Since SARS-related coronaviruses are found in bats across Asia, including Thailand and Japan, it's a very big haystack to search for a very small needle.

**CREATING A FAMILY TREE FOR SARS-CoV-2**

In order to sort out the puzzle of viral origins and movement, scientists not only have to find the missing pieces, but also figure out how they all fit together. This requires collecting viral samples from human infections and comparing those genetic sequences both to each other and to other animal-derived viruses.

To determine how these viral samples are related to each other, researchers use computer tools to construct the virus's family tree, or phylogeny. Researchers compare the genetic sequences of each viral sample and construct relationships by aligning and ranking genetic similarities and differences.

The direct ancestor to the virus, sharing the greatest genetic similarity, could be thought of as its parent. Variants sharing that same parent sequence but with enough changes to make them distinct from each other are like siblings. In the case of SARS-CoV-2, the South African variant, B.1.351, and the U.K. variant, B.1.1.7, are siblings.

Building a family tree is complicated by the fact that different analysis parameters can give different results: The same set of genetic sequences can produce two very different family trees.

For SARS-CoV-2, phylogenetic analysis proves particularly difficult. Though tens of thousands of SARS-CoV-2 sequences are now available, they don't differ from one another

enough to form a clear picture of how they're related to each other.

**THE CURRENT DEBATE: WILD HOST OR LAB SPILLOVER?**

Could SARS-CoV-2 have been released from a research lab? Although current evidence implies that this is not the case, 18 prominent virologists recently suggested that this question should be further investigated.

Although there has been speculation about SARS-CoV-2 being engineered in a lab, this possibility seems highly unlikely. When comparing the genetic sequence of wild RaTG13 with SARS-CoV-2, differences are randomly spread across the genome. In an engineered virus, there would be clear blocks of changes that represent introduced sequences from a different viral source.

There is one unique sequence in the SARS-CoV-2 genome that codes for a part of the spike protein that seems to play an important role in infecting people. Interestingly, a similar sequence is found in the MERS coronavirus that causes a disease similar to COVID-19.

Though it is not clear how SARS-CoV-2 acquired these sequences, viral evolution suggests they arose from natural processes. Viruses accumulate changes either by genetic exchange with other viruses and their hosts, or by random mistakes during replication. Viruses that gain a genetic change that gives them a reproductive advantage would typically continue to pass it on through replication. That MERS and SARS-CoV-2 share a similar sequence in this part of the genome suggests that it naturally evolved in both and spread because it helps them infect human cells.

**WHERE TO GO FROM HERE?**

Figuring out the origin of SARS-CoV-2 could give us clues to understand and predict future pandemics, but we may never know exactly where it came from. Regardless of how the SARS-CoV-2 jumped into humans, it's here now, and it's probably here to stay. Going forward, researchers need to continue monitoring its spread, and get as many people vaccinated as possible.

*[the writer is Professor of Plant Pathology and Environmental Microbiology, Penn State]*

## COVID Nails: These Changes to Your Fingernails May Show You've Had Coronavirus

VASSILIOS VASSILIOU, NIKHIL AGGARWAL & SUBOTHINI SARA SELVENDRAN  
THECONVERSATION.COM

The main signs of COVID-19 are fever, a cough, fatigue and a loss of your sense of taste and smell. Signs of COVID-19 in the skin have been noted too. But there's another part of the body where the virus appears to have an impact: the fingernails.

Following a COVID-19 infection, for a small number of patients the fingernails appear discoloured or misshapen a number of weeks later – a phenomenon that's been dubbed "COVID nails".

One symptom is a red half-moon pattern that forms a convex band over the white area at the base of fingernails. This seems to present earlier than other COVID-related nail complaints, with patients noticing it less than two weeks after being diagnosed. Multiple cases have been reported – but not many.

Red half-moon nail patterns like this are generally rare, and previously haven't been seen so close to the nail base. So having this pattern appear like this could exclusively be an indication of a COVID-19 infection.

The mechanism underlying this half-moon patterning remains unclear. A possible cause could be blood vessel damage associated with the virus itself. Alternatively, it may be due to the immune response mounted against the virus causing mini blood clots and discoloration. Importantly, these marks don't appear to be anything to worry about, as patients are otherwise asymptomatic – although it is unclear how long they stay for, having lasted from between one week to over four weeks in the cases reported.

**SIGNS OF PHYSICAL STRESS**

A few patients have also found new horizontal indentations in the bases of the nails of their fingers and toes, which are known as Beau's lines. These tend to appear four weeks

or more after a COVID-19 infection.

Beau's lines occur when there is a temporary interruption in nail growth due to a physical stress on the body, such as an infection, malnutrition or side-effects of medications such as chemotherapy drugs. While it's plausible that they're caused by COVID-19, they're definitely not an exclusive symptom of the disease.

As nails grow between 2mm and 5mm a month on average, Beau's lines tend to become noticeable four to five weeks after the physical stress happens – as the nail grows, the indentation is revealed. The timing of the stressful event can be therefore estimated by looking at how far the Beau's lines are from the nail base. There's no specific treatment for Beau's lines, as they tend to eventually grow out if the underlying condition has resolved.

Currently, the available evidence suggests that there's no association between the severity of COVID-19 infection and the type or extent of nail changes.

**OTHER UNUSUAL FINDINGS**

The above are the two more common COVID-related nail complaints, but researchers have recorded some other unusual occurrences as well.

One female patient's nails loosened from the nail base and eventually fell out, three months after her infection. This phenomenon is known as onychomadesis and is thought to happen for similar reasons to Beau's lines appearing. This patient didn't receive treatment for these changes as new healthy nails could be seen growing underneath those that detached, indicating that the issue was beginning to resolve itself.

Another patient, 112 days after testing positive, witnessed orange discoloration to their nail tips. No treatment was giv-

en and the discoloration had still not resolved after a month. The underlying mechanism behind this is unknown.

And in a third case, a patient had horizontal white lines appear on their nails that don't disappear with pressure. These are known as Mees' lines or transverse leukonychia. They appeared 45 days after testing positive for COVID-19. These tend to resolve with nail growth and do not require treatment. Mees' lines are thought to be caused by the abnormal production of proteins in the nail bed due to systemic disorders.

**A MYSTERY – FOR NOW**

Although these three conditions all followed a COVID-19 infection, because we only have limited patients to look at in each case, it isn't possible to say yet whether they were caused by the disease. It is entirely possible that all three are unrelated to the condition.

Indeed, even with the Beau's lines and red half-moon pattern, there is still a long path to confirm a definite link between these changes and COVID-19 as well as the mechanisms behind them. For all these conditions, we'll need many more cases to be reported before we can say with certainty that there's a link.

Plus, even if there is a causative link, it's important to remember that not all patients with COVID-19 will have these nail conditions. And some of these abnormalities may not necessarily mean someone has had COVID-19. At best, we should regard these as potential indicators of a past infection – and not definitive proof.

*[Vassilios Vassiliou is Senior Clinical Lecturer in Cardiovascular Medicine, University of East Anglia; Nikhil Aggarwal is Visiting Researcher in Medicine, University of East Anglia; Subothini Sara Selvendran is Visiting Researcher in Medicine, University of East Anglia]*

# Even as virus reaches rural Nepal, results of PCR tests take up to five days

**ARJUN POUDEL**  
**KATHMANDU, 08 JUN [KATHMANDUPOST]:** Yug Nath Adhikari, a resident of Dadathok of Bidur Municipality, Nuwakot had given swab samples for polymerase chain reaction tests on Thursday for Covid-19 tests. But he got the test report only on Sunday evening. It was positive.

"I have fever, sore throat, and body aches," Adhikari, who is 53 years old, told the Post over the phone from Nuwakot. "It takes several days to get the test report in our village."

Like Adhikari, there are patients with fever, sore throat, body aches and other Covid-19-like symptoms in almost every household in his village. But despite having given their swab samples, they have not been in home isolation and been moving around the village.

With such a situation in villages, doctors fear of coronavirus infections spreading in the rural region.

"The purpose of tests is not served if it takes several days to get the results," Dr Biraj Karmacharya, an epidemiologist, told the Post. "This is a very sensitive matter. Neither will the infection come under control nor can we lessen the loss."

Adhikari's swab had been sent to Trishuli Hospital for testing. But its testing capacity is limited. Besides Nuwakot, swabs collected in neighbouring Dhading and Rasuwa districts are also tested at the hospital.

As tests in villages are not widespread, no one knows about the actual extent of the spread of infections in the villages and doctors warn that a huge human toll

can occur in the coming days in rural places.

"Infections have started to spread rampantly in the villages of hills in recent days," Dr Anup Subedee, an infectious disease expert, told the Post. "A huge human toll can occur there, as tests are not being performed in sufficient numbers and health facilities and health workers are scarce there."

Adhikari said that a positive test report of his neighbour came back only after five days and the infected got himself isolated from his family members only after he got his report.

"I had been doing my regular chores like cooking food, going to the fields to chase away monkeys and elsewhere as the need arises," Adhikari said. "I know most of the symptoms I have match with the symptoms of those tested positive to coronavirus."

Adhikari's wife has not got herself tested for the coronavirus yet. According to him, both of them could not leave their homestead to give samples at the same time.

"There is the menace of the monkeys and someone has to be home to look after the cattles," he said.

The situation is similar in the neighbouring district of Rasuwa.

"I had given swab samples on Thursday but I am told that I tested positive only on Sunday night," Keshav Devkota, a resident of Katanje in Kalika Rural Municipality, told the Post.

Devkota too had a fever. He is worried about the transmission of the virus to other family members but he continues to live with them.

"Coronavirus test reports must be provided within 24 hours," said Karmacharya. "If the infected



person does not get a report even in five days, the report will have no meaning. Infections will have spread in wider communities until the report comes."

Doctors say that even if the infected people do not meet other people, if those who come in close contact with the infected keep moving freely, the chance of infections spreading in villages is high.

"It will be very difficult to control the pandemic the way we are working now," Dr Arun Kumar Koirala, a public health expert, told the Post. "Every minute has meaning in the pandemic. Taking too long in providing test reports means an increased chance of infections spreading in society."

With Nepal's countrywide capacity to conduct polymerase chain reaction tests limited to about 20,000, the Ministry of Health and Population began to increase antigen tests in villages on May 27 with 1.7 million test kits received from donors.

Officials claimed that around 25,000 antigen tests, results for

which take about an hour, would be performed every day.

But in the 12 days since May 27, only a total of 36,768 tests have been conducted of which 9,411 were positive—a positivity rate of 26 percent. The highest number of tests was reported on June 4 with 6,631 tests of which 2,029 were positive.

On Monday, 5,901 antigen tests were performed throughout the country of which 1,102 tested positive.

Health Ministry officials, however, claim that much more antigen tests are being performed than being reported as there are problems in data collection.

"Thousands of antigen tests are being performed every day but we are not getting reports from the local units," Mahendra Prasad Shrestha, chief specialist at the Health Ministry, told the Post. "Reports of polymerase chain reaction tests come in time, but it takes time for health workers deployed in villages to send reports in case of antigen tests."

But if the positivity rate of antigen testing—which in itself is not considered as reliable as polymerase chain reaction tests—is anything to go by, the virus has spread in villages and doctors warn that the situation could get out of control.

"Testing also means knowing the infection status based on which containment measures can be taken," said Koirala, who is also a professor at Pokhara University. "Authorities should help the infected people get isolated and deploy mechanisms already in existence up to village levels to monitor the movement of the infected people, their health conditions and other related issues."

As rural Nepal lacks health facilities, health workers and other infrastructure, doctors warn that loss of lives will increase for lack of timely care.

On Monday, 3,370 new infections were reported from 12,002 polymerase chain reaction tests. Likewise, the Ministry of Health and Population said 92 had died of Covid-19 complications, taking the country's total death toll to 7,990.

From a high of 9,317 cases a day on May 11, the number of daily new infections has come down significantly but this is no reason for complacency.

"It is not the time to be happy for the decline in new cases," said Subedee. "It is natural for new cases to decline in big cities, where infection spreads early, but that does not mean the risk is over and people are not getting infected."

Although the number of patients in cities like Kathmandu has been coming down with the

lockdown in place since April 29, more hospital beds are being occupied by village residents.

"Even as the number of new cases has declined in recent days, all the intensive care unit beds, ventilators and emergency beds of our hospital are packed with seriously ailing patients," Dr Sagar Rajbhandari, director at the Sukraraj Tropical and Infectious Disease Hospital, told the Post. "Seriously ailing patients are being brought from Makwanpur, Gorkha and other districts, which is proof of infection penetrating deep in the rural areas."

The hospital has 28 intensive care unit beds, including 21 ventilators and 20 emergency beds in the emergency ward.

"What is worse is that patients are seeking treatment only when they become seriously ill," said Rajbhandari.

The situation is similar at Bir Hospital.

"The number of seriously ailing coronavirus patients at Bir Hospital had reached 198 to 200 at one time and declined to 116 some four days ago," said Karki of Bir Hospital. "But in the last four days, the number of serious cases has been rising steadily. We have 139 critical patients at the hospital at present."

Doctors warn that there must be preparations in place as prohibitory orders will be lifted.

"Authorities should start preparations to deal with the new surge after the relaxation of the prohibitory orders and lessen the loss from the infection being spread in remote villages," said Subedee. "A massive testing campaign should be launched, which has not happened since day one."

## Conservationists, locals criticise plans to relocate Kathmandu's cremation site from Pashupati

**ANUP OJHA**  
**KATHMANDU, 08 JUN [KATHMANDUPOST]:** Conservationists, locals and heritage activists have accused the Pashupati Area Development Trust of planning to relocate the cremation area from Aryaghat and Bhashmeshwar to elsewhere and warned that they would not tolerate such a move.

The Trust is planning relocation of the centuries-old Bagmati River-side cremation area that extends from the east to the south of the Pashupatinath temple as per a master plan, said Norottam Baidya, a former treasurer of the Trust who is currently an assembly member of the Bagmati Province.

"The plan was made in haste and is not acceptable in any way," said Baidya, who is also a resident of the Pashupati area.

"If they want to relocate the cremation grounds from Pashupatinath to elsewhere, then they should also move the Pashupatinath Temple to the new location, because Lord Shiva and cremation grounds are inseparable," exclaimed Baidya aggressively.

He said the Trust might have come up with the relocation idea due to the overwhelming number of bodies coming to Pashupati for cremation during the Covid-19 pandemic. "Earlier also the trust had made such plans. But, they should understand that this pandemic will not last for long and they should make separate cremation arrangements when the flow of the bodies is high," said Baidya.

The Trust has come under controversy on several occasions in the past due to its unilateral decisions without consulting heritage experts and conservationists.

Most recently, in February, amid widespread criticism from local residents, heritage conservationists and priests, the Trust had replaced the silver Jalahari, a receptacle, at the base of the main Shivalinga inside the temple with a golden one. President Bidya Devi



Bhandari herself had witnessed the installation of the 96kg golden receptacle a few hours after a Supreme Court order to stay the installation.

In 2019, the trust started the restoration of the earthquake-damaged Vishwaroop Temple using reinforced concrete and erected 12 pillars, but it was forced to stop the work after widespread criticism and protest by heritage activists and locals. Similarly, in December 2017, the trust drew criticism for using concrete to rebuild the Jayabageshwari temple. And just five months ago, it drew flak for demolishing one of the four Shivalayas in the Pashupati area, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

"Now a master plan for the Pashupati area is being worked out under the chairmanship of Chandra Mani Adhikari, and the trust is secretly working to relocate the cremation grounds from Pashupati. This is utterly unwarranted," said Baidya.

The government has allocated Rs 350 million for developing the master plan of the Pashupati Area Development Project by including it under the national pride projects.

When the Post contacted Pradeep Dhakal, the member-secretary of the Pashupati Area Development Trust, he indirectly indicated that they have a plan to relocate the cremation grounds from Pashupati.

"At present, a maximum of 30 bodies can be cremated per day

at the cremation ghats at Pashupati, but during the peak of the pandemic over 200 bodies were brought for cremation. So we were compelled to cremate many bodies in the grounds away from the ghats," said Dhakal. "That is why we are looking for alternative places to cremate bodies. But pyre cremation at Aryaghat will continue," said Dhakal, whose four-year tenure as member secretary is ending in mid-August.

A report by the state-owned Rastriya Samachar Samiti quoting Dhakal has said that the Trust plans to relocate the cremation ghats except for the two at Bhashmeshwar on the bank of the Bagmati River to the east of the Pashupatinath Temple.

Kedar Man Bhandari, chairperson of Pashupatinath Sewak Sangh and one of the priests at the Pashupatinath temple, claimed that there is a huge corruption involved in the plan to move the cremation ghats.

"Dhakal's term at the Trust is ending in two months, so he is not concerned about the plan that goes against the centuries-old cremation tradition at Pashupatinath. He doesn't bother about people's sentiments," said Bhandari.

Bhandari said if the Trust makes such a decision then it would meet with a strong public backlash.

At present, there are 12 cremation ghats—two at Bramhanal and 10 at Bhashmeshwar along the bank of the Bagmati River. Besides these, there are two electric and one semi-electric crematoria.

## Suvendu Adhikari meets Amit Shah

**NEW DELHI, JUN 8 (PTI):** BJP MLA and Leader of opposition in West Bengal assembly Suvendu Adhikari on Tuesday met Union Home Minister Shri @AmitShah ji," Shah's office tweeted with a picture of the home minister and the West Bengal leader.

In his first meeting after becoming the leader of opposition in the state assembly, Adhikari also met Union minister Man-

sukh Mandviya. He is also scheduled to meet BJP national president J P Nadda, party sources said.

Adhikari may also have a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a source said.

The Leader of opposition in West Bengal assembly said in a tweet that he discussed with Shah several matters concerning the state and

sought his blessings for Bengal.

"Honourable HM assured, he was and he will be there for Bengal always," he said.

Adhikari had defeated TMC supremo and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in a closely fought battle in Nandigram during the state assembly polls held in March-April this year.

**DONATE BOOKS FOR NOBLE CAUSE  
TO BUILD LIBRARY**

*If anyone willing to donate books or support through Finance, than you are most welcome*

**"GIVING IS NOT JUST ABOUT  
MAKE A DONATION,  
ITS ABOUT MAKING  
DIFFERENCE"**

For more Details Contact ; 6294745117,8768809862

Email ; chitishchettri7@gmail.com

**SummitTIMES**

**One more England player under scanner for racist tweet in teenage: Report**

**LONDON, JUN 8 (PTI):** One more current England player is being investigated by the country's cricket board for his allegedly racist remarks on Twitter as a teenager after Ollie Robinson was suspended for similar conduct.

The old tweets of the player in question were unearthed by wisden.com, which did not reveal the identity of the cricketer since he had not reached the age of 16 at that time.

The website posted screenshots of the tweet without revealing the player's identity.

".....your going out with a asian," the player seem to have posted with hashtags of #asian-throughandthrough #hweollo #chinky.

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) is now investigating the matter.

"It has been brought to our attention that an England player has posted historic offensive material on their social media account. We are looking into it and will make a further comment in due course," an ECB spokesperson was quoted as saying by the website.

The offensive posts came to fore hours after the ECB suspended Robinson pending a investigation into his racist tweets in 2012 and 2013.

Robinson, who scored 42 runs and took seven wickets on his Test debut against New Zealand, has already apologised for his behaviour after his old tweets emerged.

England's Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden, however, criticised the ECB's decision to suspend Robinson, calling it "over the top". The country's Prime Minister Boris Johnson also agreed with him.

Dowden contended that Robonson's tweets were a decade old, "written by a teenager" but agreed that they were offensive and wrong.

England head coach Chris Silverwood earlier emphasised on the need of proper education in fight against discrimination.

"We all get things wrong at times. It's what we do and how we act. That's where the education comes in," he said.

# Chhetri overtakes Messi, one goal away from entering all-time top-10

**DOHA, JUN 8 (PTI):** Indian football talisman Sunil Chhetri has surpassed Argentina's global superstar Lionel Messi to become the second-highest active international goal-scorer with 74 strikes, adding another feather to his illustrious career.

The 36-year-old Chhetri achieved the staggering feat with his brace against Bangladesh in the joint preliminary qualifying round match for 2022 FIFA World Cup and 2023 AFC Asian Cup here on Monday night.

The seasoned striker, who helped India register their first win in six years in World Cup qualifiers, now stands only behind Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo (103) in the active international goal-scorer list.

Chhetri leads Barcelona star Messi by two goals and sits a place above Ali Mabkhout of the UAE, who is third on the list with 73 strikes to



his name. Messi scored his 72nd international goal in a World Cup qualifier against Chile last Thursday, while Mabkhout added to his tally against Malaysia, also last week. At the Jassim Bin Hamad Stadium on Monday, Chhetri broke the deadlock in the 79th minute when he headed in AshiqueKuruniyan's cross

from the left, and then sealed the victory by curling in a shot from long range in added time. The India captain is also just goal away from entering world football's all-time top-10. He is behind Hungary's SandorKocsis, Japan's KunishigeKamamoto, and Kuwait's Bashar Abdullah, who all have 75 goals.

Delighted with the team's victory and Chhetri's record, All India Football Federation (AIFF) president Praful Patel lauded the captain for leading from the front. "Our @IndianFootball skipper Sunil Chhetri adds another feather to his illustrious cap as he overtook Lionel Messi to become the second-highest active

international goalscorer with 74 goals. "A big congratulations to Captain Fantastic & wishing him many more accolades in the future," Patel tweeted. The AIFF boss also praised the team on the convincing win that was built on Chhetri's brilliance. "Congratulations #BlueTigers on an awe-

some win over Bangladesh today & fabulous performance by skipper @chetrisunil11 who lead from the front & paved the path to victory. "Your hard work & determination was visible on the field. Wishing you all the very best in the upcoming game!"

Chhetri's twin strikes meant India registered their first win in what was turning out to be a forgettable World Cup qualifying campaign in many years. It was also India's first victory in World Cup qualifiers away from home in 20 years.

With the win, India rose to the third spot in Group E with six points from seven games.

India will next lock horns against Afghanistan in the qualifiers on June 15.

The side is already out of contention to qualify for World Cup 2022, but the Blue Tigers can still can make it to the Asian Cup in China.

**Japan, Australia extend runs; Kyrgyzstan without a keeper**

**SEOUL, JUN 8 (AP):** While players from Japan, Australia and Syria were extending winning streaks, a defender from Kyrgyzstan was having some difficulty handling a new assignment in Asian qualifying for the 2002 World Cup.

Kyrgyzstan was forced to play a second-round qualifier with a defender in goal on Monday because all three of the national team's goalkeepers were self-isolating following a COVID-19 outbreak.

AizarAkmatov instead played between the posts, allowing one goal in a 1-0 loss in Group F to Mongolia, which is ranked 192nd of FIFA's 211 teams. OyunbaatarynMijiddorj scored in the 34th minute for Mongolia, which posted its second win in eight matches but remained in last spot.

At the top of the group, Japan beat Tajikistan 4-1 for its seventh victory in seven matches in this stage.

Japan had already secured a place in the third round of qualifying.

KyogoFuruhashi, Takumi Minamino, Kento Hashimoto and Hayaokawabe all scored for Japan, while EhsoniPan-shanbe scored for Tajikistan the first goal Japan has conceded in 549 minutes.

Syria became the second team to advance to the third round with a 3-0 win over Guam in Sharjah, its seventh successive win in Group A.

Australia had a 5-1 win over Taiwan for its sixth straight victory in Group B, staying five points clear of Jordan. The Australians can move into the next round with a win on Friday over Nepal. Goals from Harry Souttar, Jamie Maclaren, Trent Sainsbury and two from Mitchell Duke secured the points, with Gao Wei-Jie scoring for Taiwan after 62 minutes.

"The performance was very good," Australia's head coach Graham Arnold said.

The Australians have a run of four games without in two weeks, so squad rotation is part of the process.

"We had a very inexperienced team that was given an opportunity only a couple of senior players around them, Arnold said. "They handled everything really, really well."

Only the eight group winners progress automatically to the third round, which is set to start in September, along with the four best second-place teams.

China is eight points behind Syria and can only hope to finish second in Group A despite a 2-0 win against the Philippines. The goals came from Wu Lei and Wu Xinghan.

"It was a tough game and a good win," China coach Li Tie said.

"There are still two games left but we are focused only on the next one."

## Germany warms up for Euro 2020 with 7-1 rout of Latvia

**DUSSELDORF (GERMANY), JUN 8 (AP):** Germany warmed up for the European Championship with a 7-1 rout of Latvia in its last friendly game before the tournament. Kai Havertz was involved in three of Germany's five first-half goals on Monday before making way for Chelsea teammate Timo Werner for the second half, and Thomas Muller also scored his first since he was recalled to the team in time for the tournament that starts on Friday.

Latvia reported a positive result for the coronavirus among the team hours before kickoff.

Germany will face tougher opposition in its opening game against world champion France in Munich on June 15. Germany also faces Portugal and Hungary in Group F.

But Germany coach Joachim Low can't have asked for more from his side as it produced a complete and concentrated performance before the team leaves



Tuesday for its tournament base in Herzogenaurach in Bavaria.

"It will be difficult to play against us," said captain Manuel Neuer, who became the first Germany goalkeeper to reach 100 appearances. He was applauded before the game by some 1,000 spectators permitted amid coronavirus restrictions.

Low started with his strongest available team in the absence of the

injured Leon Goretzka. Toni Kroos was back after recovering from the coronavirus, partnering Ilkay Gundogan in midfield, with Bayern Munich midfielder Joshua Kimmich moving over to the right wing. Atalanta's Robin Gosens started on the left.

Antonio Rudiger, Mats Hummels and Matthias Ginter formed the defense, while there were three up front, too, with Muller and Havertz sup-

porting striker Serge Gnabry.

Havertz flashed a shot just wide as the hosts began with intent. Gnabry and Muller had good chances before Gosens made the breakthrough in the 20th. It was the Atalanta player's first goal for Germany and went in off the underside of the crossbar after he played a one-two with Havertz.

Havertz was involved again as Gundogan made it 2-0 a minute later, but

there was no let-up with Low's players pressuring and harrying their opponents on the rare occasions they didn't have the ball.

Kimmich hit the post before Muller scored. Havertz then forced an own goal from Roberts Ozols and there was still time before the break for Hummels to set up Gnabry to score Germany's fifth with the outside of his boot.

Werner got the sixth

five minutes into the second half before Germany's intensity dropped amid more changes with half an hour to play.

Aleksejs Saveljevscapitalised on the drop in concentration to score Latvia's consolation with a shot inside the left post in the 75th, but Leroy San replied a minute later for Germany.

**EASY FOR UKRAINE** Andriy Yarmolenko scored twice including a penalty as Ukraine eased to a 4-0 win over 10-man Cyprus in its final warm-up game for the tournament.

The visitors' hopes of an upset were effectively ended when Andreas Panayiotou was sent off after conceding the first of two penalties in the 36th minute. Oleksandr Zinchenko scored the other penalty and Roman Yaremchuk got the other goal.

Ukraine is in Group C with Austria, the Netherlands and North Macedonia.

Also, the Faeroe Islands routed Lichtenstein 5-1 and Andorra drew with Gibraltar 0-0.

## Interim Brazil soccer boss says he won't fire coach Tite

**SAO PAULO, JUN 8 (AP):** The interim president of the Brazilian soccer confederation said that he will not fire national team coach Tite even though his players have yet to publicly say whether they will play in the upcoming Copa America.

The 82-year-old Antonio Carlos Nunes took charge of the confederation on Sunday after its ethics committee suspended Rogrio Caboclo for 30 days. Nunes was appointed as the oldest serving vice president and faces an immediate crisis because of the controversial decision to move the Copa America to Brazil from Argentina at the last moment, despite the country being ravaged by the coronavirus pandemic.

The tournament is set to start Sunday, but Tite



said after a World Cup qualifying win against Ecuador on Friday that he and his players will not declare until Tuesday whether they will participate.

That had led to some calls for Tite to be replaced, but Nunes on Monday said he has no plans to change coaches.

"I say it like this: aren't we winning? We won Copa America in 2019. And now we are almost qualified for the World Cup. ... As the saying goes, you don't change a team that is winning," Nunes told newspaper O Liberal.

"I am a friend of Tite's," Nunes added.

"I couldn't speak with Tite on Sunday. I wanted to tell him the decisions are with me now. I like his work very much, he is serious."

Tite on Monday refused to say whether he will stay in charge for the Copa America.

Brazilian media reported this past weekend

that Caboclo considered removing Tite from his job for allegedly failing to control his players. But on Friday the soccer executive was formally accused of sexual harassment by a former staffer, who provided recordings of conversations and text messages that appear to incriminate him.

Caboclo denies any wrongdoing. His suspension is expected to be extended as the committee investigates the accusation.

Tite said Caboclo had not threatened to fire him but declined to comment on the ethics committee's decision.

"We know how important it is, the seriousness of the case," Tite said.

"But it is not down to us."

Speaking to ESPN Brasil, Caboclo said he never wanted to fire Tite

and that the players had not discussed boycotting the Copa America.

"That never happened," Caboclo said.

"We will be all together in the 2022 World Cup."

Nunes, though, in his interview acknowledged that there are "players that do not want to play" the Copa America.

Brazil offered to host the tournament after co-hosts Colombia and Argentina were dropped.

More than 470,000 Brazilians have died so far from the coronavirus and analysts expect another wave of the virus to hit Brazil by late June.

Nunes was also president of the Brazilian soccer confederation between 2017-19 after Caboclo's predecessor, Marco Polo Del Nero, was banned by FIFA for corruption.

**CONTACT SUMMIT TIMES REPORTERS SINGTAM 8170070813 MANGAN/DIKCHU 9832612485/9434011213 GANGTOK 8116388176 9832424750 8016270440 NAMCHI 9832048410**

# Canadian police say Muslim family targeted by deadly attack

**TORONTO (AP):** A driver plowed a pickup truck into a family of five, killing four of them and seriously injuring the other in a deliberate attack that targeted the victims because they were Muslims, Canadian police said Monday.

Authorities said a young man was arrested in the parking lot of a nearby mall after the incident Sunday night in the Ontario city of London. Police said a black pickup truck mounted a curb and struck the victims at an intersection.

"This was an act of mass murder perpetrated against Muslims," Mayor Ed Holder said. "It was rooted in unspeakable hatred."

The extended family issued a statement identifying the dead as Salman Afzal, 46; his wife Madiha, 44; their daughter Yumna, 15; and a 74-year-old grandmother whose name was withheld. The hospitalized boy was identified as Fayez.

"Everyone who knew Salman and the rest of the Afzal family know the model family they were as Muslims, Canadians and Pakistanis," the statement said. "They worked extremely hard in their fields and excelled. Their children were top students in their school and

connected strongly with spiritual their identity."

A fundraising webpage said the father was a physiotherapist and cricket enthusiast and his wife was working on a PhD in civil engineering at Western University in London. Their daughter was finishing ninth grade, and the grandmother was a "pillar" of the family, the page said.

The family said in its statement that the public needs to stand against hate and Islamophobia.

"This young man who committed this act of terror was influenced by a group that he associated with, and the rest of the community must take a strong stand against this, from the highest levels in our government to every member of the community," the statement said.

Nathaniel Veltman, 20, was in custody facing four counts of first-degree murder. Police said Veltman, a resident of London, did not know the victims.

Detective Supt. Paul Waight said police had not determined if the suspect was a member of any specific hate group. He said London police were working with federal police and prosecutors to see about potential terrorism charges. He declined to



detail evidence pointing to a possible hate crime, but said the attack was planned.

About a dozen police officers combed the area around the crash site looking for evidence Monday. Blue markers on the ground dotted the intersection.

"We believe the victims were targeted because of their Islamic faith," Police Chief Stephen Williams said. "... There is no tolerance in this community who are motivated by hate target others with violence."

Canada is generally welcoming toward immigrants and all religions, but in 2017 a French Canadian man known for far-right, nationalist views went on a shooting rampage at a Quebec City mosque that killed six people.

One woman who witnessed the aftermath of

the deadly crash said she couldn't stop thinking about the victims. Paige Martin said she was stopped at a red light around 8:30 p.m. when a large pickup roared past her. She said her car shook from the force.

"I was shaken up, thinking it was an erratic driver," Martin said.

Minutes later, she said, she came upon a gruesome, chaotic scene at an intersection near her home, with first responders running to help, a police officer performing chest compressions on one person and three other people lying on the ground. A few dozen people stood on the sidewalk and several drivers got out of their cars to help.

"I can't get the sound of the screams out of my head," Martin said. From her apartment,

Martin said she could see the scene and watched an official drape a sheet over one body about midnight. "My heart is just so broken for them," she said.

Zahid Khan, a family friend, said the three generations among the dead were a grandmother, father, mother and teenage daughter. The family had immigrated from Pakistan 14 years ago and were dedicated, decent and generous members of the London Muslim Mosque, he said.

"They were just out for their walk that they would go out for every day," Khan said through tears near the site of the crash. "I just wanted to see."

Qazi Khalil said he saw the family on Thursday when they were out for their nightly walk. The families lived close

to each other and would get together on holidays, he said.

"This has totally destroyed me from the inside," Khalil said. "I can't really come to the terms they were no longer here."

The National Council of Canadian Muslims said Muslims in Canada have become all too familiar with the violence of Islamophobia. "This is a terrorist attack on Canadian soil, and should be treated as such," council head Mustafa Farooq said.

Nawaz Tahir, a London lawyer and Muslim community leader, said, "We must confront and stamp out Islamophobia and Islamic violence — not tomorrow, today, for the sake of our children, our family, our communities."

The mayor said flags would be lowered for three days in London, which he said has 30,000 to 40,000 Muslims among its more than 400,000 residents.

"To the Muslim community in London and to Muslims across the country, know that we stand with you. Islamophobia has no place in any of our communities. This hate is insidious and despicable — and it must stop," Prime Minister Justin Trudeau tweeted.

## Nepal resumes vaccination campaign with doses given by China

**KATHMANDU, NEPAL (AP):** Nepal resumed its stalled coronavirus vaccination campaign on Tuesday with 1 million doses given by China after the Himalayan nation made international pleas for help with a shortage of doses.

Thousands of people, all 64 years old, lined up at vaccination centers even before they opened. People aged 60 to 63 are scheduled in coming days.

Nepal's vaccination campaign began in January but was stalled when neighboring India suffered a coronavirus surge and banned exports of the AstraZeneca vaccine it produces. Nepal had received 1 million AstraZeneca doses donated by India and paid for 2 million more but never received half the shipment.

That left 1.4 million people over age 65 who received an initial dose of AstraZeneca vaccine still uncertain if they will receive their second.

China's first donation of 800,000 doses of Sino-pharm vaccine in March was snapped up quickly.

Desperate Nepal made several pleas to foreign governments and international donor agencies. President Bidhya Devi Bhandari made calls to the Chinese leader and wrote

to the presidents of India, the United States and Britain.

Another 1 million doses donated by China arrived this month.

"I am the happiest person today. I finally got the vaccine and I am now protected," businessman PawanKhanal said at a Kathmandu vaccine center. "I want to really thank the government."

"Not only me, but my family is also a lot safer now because we got our vaccine," said another recipient, GopalShrestha, who came with his wife.

City and health officials said they had been frustrated because of not being able to provide answers to people desperately seeking vaccines. "Everybody wants to get vaccinated and protect themselves," said Saroj-DhojMulmi, a city council member.

Nepal's coronavirus cases are declining after a lockdown imposed when infections surged. In April and May, hospitals were treating patients in corridors, parking garages and waiting areas while struggling with shortages of medicine and oxygen.

The 4,472 new cases of COVID-19 reported on Monday were about half of the daily numbers reported last month.

## Mixed city of Arabs and Jews remains on edge after violence

**LOD, ISRAEL (AP):** Israeli security forces guard the streets of Lod, weeks after rioters torched patrol cars, synagogues and homes. Attackers who killed an Arab and a Jewish resident are still at large. And a mayor whom some blame for setting the stage for some of the worst domestic unrest in Israeli history remains in office.

Israel and Hamas reached a truce two weeks ago to end 11 days of fighting in the Gaza Strip. But the roots of the upheavals that wracked Israel's mixed Jewish-Arab cities during the war have not been addressed, leaving those communities on edge.

"It's hard for me to say what tomorrow will be like. To say that I will have the same trust, it's hard to say," said Rivi Abramowitz, a Jewish resident of Lod's predominantly Arab Ramat Eshkol neighborhood.

Lod, about 16 kilometers (10 miles) southeast of Tel Aviv, next to the main international airport, is home to 77,000 people. About a third are Arabs — many of them descendants of Palestinians who formed the majority of the city before a mass expulsion amid the 1948 war around Israel's creation.

An urban landscape of low-rise housing projects from the 1950s and '60s, the working-class city also is a bastion of hard-line Jewish politics. In the March 23 election, staunchly nationalist parties, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party, won more than 60% of the vote in Lod.

Any tensions were largely below the surface — until last month.

Clashes between Jerusalem police and Palestinian protesters in and near the Al-Aqsa Mosque, one of Islam's holiest sites, and the planned eviction of Palestinians from homes in an east Jerusalem neighborhood drove some Arab residents of Lod into the streets in protest.

On the night that war began between Israel and Hamas, the shooting of an Arab man by a Jewish resident of Lod touched off over a week of violence, and the city was placed under a state of emergency.

Similar disturbances, fueled by longstanding Arab grievances over discrimination and lack of opportunities, quickly spread to other mixed areas across the country.

In Lod, two residents were killed: Musa Hassuna, 32, by a suspected Jewish gunman, and Yigal Yehoshua, 56, by a suspected group of Arab attackers. No charges have been filed in either case, and police say investigations are ongoing.

Some Arab residents point to the election of Mayor Yair Revivo eight years ago as a turning point. Revivo has close ties with a religious nationalist movement known as the "Torah Nucleus," which promotes what it calls Jewish values in impoverished cities.

Critics say Revivo, a member of Likud, has incited hate against Arabs, advanced discriminatory policies and empowered the Torah Nucleus in harmful ways. The

group's presence in Lod goes back some 25 years, but its numbers have swelled from two founding families to over 1,000 families today.

Before the rioting, Revivo railed against "Arab crime" in his city, calling it an "existential threat to the state of Israel."

"Jewish criminals have a drop of compassion. Arab criminals, you don't understand, don't have any inhibitions," he told Radio 103 in December.

In April, he urged the government to launch a military-style operation to clamp down on the "nightmare of gunfire, explosions, fireworks and calls to prayer amplified abnormally at 4 a.m."

In a letter to Israel's police chief and public security minister, Revivo described "an atmosphere of terror, a Wild West" perpetrated by Arab residents.

Days before the May 10 riots, Revivo toured Lod with Itamar Ben Gvir, an ultranationalist lawmaker with anti-Arab views, outraging Arab residents.

Ruth Lewin-Chen of the Abraham Initiatives, a nonprofit group based in Lod that promotes co-existence, said its Arab population has grown increasingly frustrated. She cited socioeconomic disparities between Jews and Arabs, violent crime and the absence of effective policing, planning and housing policies. She also pointed to the growing influence of the Torah Nucleus.

Many Arabs in Lod view the group with suspicion because of its

ties with the West Bank settler movement. Some Arab residents refer to all of them collectively as "settlers."

During the unrest, Arabs targeted property belonging to the religious nationalist community. In response, armed West Bank settlers and other ultranationalists mobilized to Lod, fanning the flames. "We are observing from the religious Zionist community. I don't see why we're put into the rubric of 'settlers,'" said Abramowitz, who has lived in Lod for six years with her husband, who was born in the town and whose parents were among the founders of the Torah Nucleus. "Nobody has come to throw out anybody."

Arab politician Mohammed Abu Shikri said that in his decades on Lod's city council, "I've never seen a mayor of a mixed city of Arabs and Jews who incites against Arabs, brings in settlers."

"I've known eight Lod mayors," he said. Until Revivo, "the mayors always had good relations with the Arabs."

Arabs comprise about 20% of Israel's population and are citizens with the right to vote. But they have long suffered from discrimination, and their communities are often plagued by crime, violence and poverty. They largely identify with the Palestinian cause, leading many Israelis to view them with suspicion.

A 2018 report by the Israel Democracy Institute noted disparities in Arab representation in mixed municipalities.

Although Arabs make up 30% of Lod's popu-

lation, only 14% of municipal employees are Arabs, with only four on the 19-member city council. The city hasn't had an Arab deputy mayor in four decades, the report said.

"What does this say about the place of Arabs in the city?" asked Lewin-Chen. Lod lacks almost any facilities

for "shared communal life," she said, and city hall does little to bring Jews and Arabs together.

A rare exception seems to be the Maccabi-Lod boxing club, where Jewish and Arab athletes trained together. "Here we are like family," said coach Yaacov Wallach.

**to book advertisements in SummitTimes call 03592-208698, 9734152541, 9647102692, advertise@summittimes.com,**



# SummitTIMES

BEYOND THE NEWS

Sikkim SCAN | Capital TIMES | Neighbourhood WATCH | Sports & Specials | ElseWhere | ETCETERA

*It's easy to relax...*

*When you can trust the News.*

To book ad-space, contact SummitTIMES at

**GANGTOK:**

For circulation details Contact: +91-974987695, +91-9647102692

& for advertisement booking at +91-993427909 or at office no 03592

204498. Mail us at advertise@summittimes.com

**SILIGURI:**

Mr. Mani Rai, M/o. Space Ads, B.R. Ambedkar Building, Room No.7, Tel: 983108397, E-mail: contact.synapsis@gmail.com/irshad.aj123@gmail.com

**Phone:**

03592-208698

+91-9832556698

+91-9832080753

**www.summittimes.com**

news@summittimes.com

summittimes@gmail.com

advertise@summittimes.com

**VIDEO NEWS SECTION**

Facebook.com/SummitTimesOnline

980682989/9153035100 or mail at manirai@summittimes.com

**KOLKATA OFFICE:**

Irshad Ali/Imteyaz Synapsis, 6, Motion Street, Mezzine - 2, 2nd floor, Kolkata -

700072, Ph: 033-22124340/ fax 033-22124337/ mob: +91-9830547774/ +91-

983108397, E-mail: contact.synapsis@gmail.com/irshad.aj123@gmail.com

**Address:**

Santa Bhawan Complex, Church Road

Near Diesel Power House (DPH)

Gangtok, East Sikkim, 737101

# Chef Molly Yeh's lockdown life full of recipes, baby firsts

**FORT LAUDERDALE, FLA. (AP):** Somewhere between testing beet and carrot juice, blueberries and mint in search of the precise hues for a four-tiered rainbow cake celebrating her daughter's first birthday in spring 2020, Food Network star Molly Yeh was forced by COVID's gathering storm clouds to abruptly cancel the party she'd spent six months planning.

The food blogger and author of "Molly on the Range" had already sketched the tablescape, sent hand-drawn invites incorporating the vegetable theme, and crafted cute marzipan carrots as cake toppers.

Since then, the 32-year-old Yeh has balanced the daily frustrations and isolation of quarantine life with the many joyful firsts of her toddler, Bernie. The constant that has held it together is food, or in Yeh's case, tahini. She's fond of incorporating her favorite ingredient in original recipes that fuse her Chinese and Jewish heritage.

"Food has truly taken on a different meaning, both in starting a family and also in the pandemic," says Yeh, who lives on a sugar beet farm with her husband and baby near the Minnesota-North Dakota border.

The young family never went to a restaurant and rarely ordered takeout, cooking from scratch and finding delight in Bernie's milestones, despite monotonous routines and seemingly endless household chores.

"There were so many special moments that were happening in this terrible thing around us," says Yeh, who recently caught up with The Associated Press while in town for the South Beach Wine and Food Festival. "Imagine your first time smelling and tasting fresh bread, your first time baking cookies."

The kitchen became the source of field trips and experiments. There was a fake vacation to Florence, Italy, where the family pulled out the pasta maker and made homemade pizzas. There was a day trip to the Italian Alps, aka a nearby hill where they sledged on an inflatable unicorn. And blissful spa days were coconut baths with a face mask and book during Bernie's nap time.

Yeh, the star of Food Network's "Girl



Meets Farm" show, has been a bright spot in a gloomy year for many viewers, with her infectious smile, recipe mash-ups (think harissa honey labne, hummus dumplings, kale matzo pizza, and bacon and egg drop soup), and endearing habit of liberally dousing desserts with homemade sprinkles or marzipan.

Pretzel challah was among the first recipes that gained traction on her blog "My Name is Yeh." And she's delighted to report that her daughter's art canvas of choice is painting egg wash on a braided loaf.

Yeh has experienced a rough pandemic year full of pitfalls and pivots like the rest of us. She shackled up with her in-laws while overseeing a massive home renovation, and started work on a new cookbook, "Where The Eggs Are," featuring easier, go-to weekday meals.

While these recipes are less fussy, Yeh has never shied away from celebratory and sometimes labor-intensive dishes. She grew up in the kitchen with her mother, making everything from scratch, finding comfort in the rituals and routines — perfect preparation for pandemic life.

Early in 2020, as Americans baked their way through the uncertainty, Yeh's older cake recipes became popular again, including carrot cake with hawaij (a Middle Eastern spice) and tahini caramel frosting; chocolate cake with halva filling and tahini

frosting; and mini pumpkin loaf cakes with cream cheese glaze and candied bacon.

The new mom admits she struggled when she realized she's not the fun parent. "It's become clear that Nick is the fun one, dancing and singing and spinning her up in the air," she says.

But food has fixed that too.

"I get to see Bernie's face when she eats my chicken noodle soup, and I get to fill the house with the smell of mac and cheese when she wakes up from her nap," she says.

Yeh met her husband when they were students at Juilliard, and made her debut at Carnegie Hall as a percussionist at age 17. Her father, John Bruce Yeh, plays clarinet with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and was their first Asian-American member when he joined in 1977.

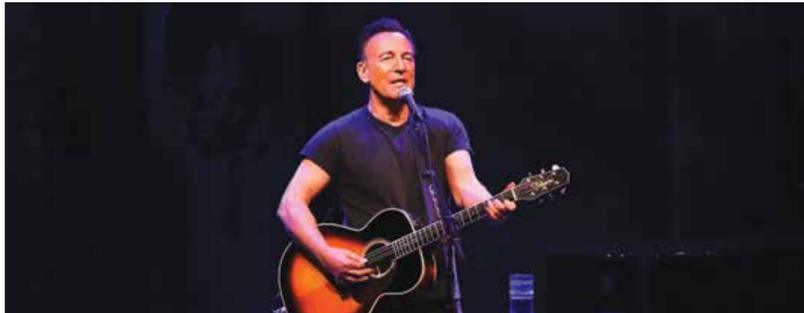
One of her favorite moments on her show was cooking chicken pot stickers, scallion pancakes with maple syrup slaw and, of course, a sprinkle cake, before performing a Bach invention with the man she calls her biggest musical inspiration.

"It's that same creative, special, joyous feeling that I get making cake and making food for other people that I get from playing music for people that I love," said Yeh. "If life can be a lot of those moments strung together, that's a life I want to live."



**COFFEE RUN!** The actress, Emma Roberts steps out in an athleisure outfit and a Starbucks drink while exploring the Boston neighborhood.

## Bruce Springsteen plans Broadway return of his one-man show



**NEW YORK (AP):** The Boss just can't quit Broadway. Bruce Springsteen will return to Broadway this summer for a limited run of his one-man show "Springsteen on Broadway." Performances at the St. James Theatre begin June 26 with an end date set — at least for now — for Sept. 4.

"I loved doing 'Springsteen on Broadway' and I'm thrilled to have been asked to reprise the show as part of

the reopening of Broadway," the rocker said in a statement.

"Springsteen on Broadway" debuted in 2017 and was extended three times, finally closing in late 2018. Columbia Records put out a two-disc soundtrack of "Springsteen on Broadway" and a filmed version of the show is on Netflix.

In the show, Springsteen performs 15 songs — includ-

ing "My Hometown," "Thunder Road," and "Born in the USA" — and tells stories about growing up in New Jersey. Some of the stories will be familiar to readers of his autobiography, and he even reads from it. His wife, Patti Scialfa, accompanies him for "Brilliant Disguise."

Audience members will be required to provide proof of full COVID-19 vaccination in order to enter the theater.

## Music fans flock to Albania's beach festival despite virus

**RANA E HEDHUN, ALBANIA (AP):** The Albanian beach site had everything in one place: pine trees, sand, sea, nearby mountains and days of nonstop music.

"It's very rare that you got all of those things together at one time," said the director of the open-air Unum music festival, Grego O'Halloran. As an Englishman living in Ibiza, Spain — another magical beach music scene — he knows what he is talking about.

"Albania is the hidden gem of Europe," he added. "(It's) an hour, two hours, from almost all of Europe and it's so beautiful and undiscovered."

Organizers sold all 10,000 tickets for the June 3-7 festival featuring 50 international

and local musicians, as people jumped at the chance to hear nonstop music for five days at Thrown Sand beach, 75 kilometers (45 miles) northwest of the capital, Tirana.

Organizers claimed that everyone at the festival was free of COVID-19 but offered no proof for those claims and no virus checks were apparent.

The main stage near the beach was on top of a sailboat, while another was under the pine trees close to the beach. Tattoos were not required for fans but many sported one or more. Fans came from all across Europe, even as far away as Uruguay.

Last year the festival was cancelled due to the pandemic. This year organizers found

it difficult to get musicians from around the Europe due to virus restrictions, but they prevailed.

"(It's) awesome ... crazy ... insane to see so many people in one place ... (after) sitting in one room in your apartment alone in lockdown," said German fan Katia Mueller.

The event was possible because of Albania's low contagion rate. It recorded only two new infections on Saturday. The Foreign Ministry noted there were no pandemic restrictions for anyone wanting to come to Albania.

Albania has many pristine beaches on its 480-kilometer (300-mile) coastline along the Adriatic and Ionian Seas, and during the last few years tourism has

turned into a key industry for one of Europe's poorest countries.

Neighboring Albanians from Kosovo remain the main source of tourists so far, often accompanied by Polish and Czech groups, Serbs and Belarusians.

Franco Rodrigues of Uruguay follows a lot of music and knew many of the musicians at the festival, which he hoped was the beginning of a worldwide return to live events.

"It's great that finally we can come back and play again," he said.

The motto of the festival was for people to become "One" and unite over music. Some said music was more important than most people realized.

### ARIES:

It's that time of the year again. That time when Mercury—and a bunch of other planets—are in retrograde, and we're experiencing a case of mixed signals. Instead of trying to gauge the situation based on facts, figures, and numbers, look within. Ask yourself how you really feel. Your inner compass is pointing in a certain direction, and it's time for you to follow it, Aries.

### TAURUS:

With a solar eclipse on June 10 and a bunch of planets in retrograde, June 2021 promises to be one of the most complex months this year as per the astrological omens. It's but natural to feel the effects of the glitchy matrix no matter what sign you are born under: Taurus, in your case, it is interpersonal relationships that could become a cause of discontentment.

### GEMINI:

Here's the thing, Gemini: you'll never fully understand the struggles of another person just as they will never have the complete picture of what you are going through. So, go easy on the judgements. Find a way to listen more than you speak. Watching you hold space for an open and honest conversation will inspire them to let go of resistance and meet you halfway.

### CANCER:

Cancer, you've been around this block several times

before, where you have doubted your own instinct and allowed the voices of others to get the better of you. Today, you're being asked to reclaim your power, move past the duality, and find that space of oneness within. Have an open and honest conversation with yourself. The truth is, you already know what you need to do and the steps that will help you arrive at the desired destination.

### LEO:

Sometimes, it feels like everybody else is purchasing that dream house, investing in fancy cars, having children and generally getting ahead of you in the game. But, a game is what it is, Leo. An illusion that we've been made to believe is our reality. So look beyond the veil and remember who you are and why you came here. This will help you recognize that everything is as it is supposed to be and that you are progressing at the right pace.

### VIRGO:

We've all grown up with stories about who we are and who we can be. Stories that keep us stuck in the matrix by preventing us from understanding our true potential. But, the eclipse season has been all kinds of magical for you, as it is helping you uncover your truth. Remember, you are \*not\* your limitations. So consciously replace the outmoded beliefs with those that reaffirm your power.

### LIBRA:

You could continue playing the blame game if you wanted

to. But, in doing so, you will be denying yourself of your power. So, take charge of your life \*and\* your role in the grand scheme of things. This will help you turn the wheels where things have been stuck. When it comes to interpersonal relationships, practice patience.**SCORPIO:** You are many things, Scorpio, but mediocre is certainly not one of them. The cards are reminding you of your own power and potential. The spirit that possesses the capacity to soar despite the many challenges. So embrace the warrior within and make that bold move that you're being called to. Only good things can happen from now on. Trust this and move forward without an ounce of doubt.

### SAGITTARIUS:

That this is a time of pandemonium is not news to you, Sagittarius. But you cannot save the world single-handedly, even if you wanted to. So keep your lofty goals aside for a minute as you direct your attention towards your soul crew. There are friends and family members who need your immediate assistance. Adopting the spirit of selfless service will help you become a beacon of hope for them.

### CAPRICORN:

It's time for a cup of truth tea, Capricorn: the guilt is only serving as a means to lower your vibration. So free yourself from the baggage that you have been carrying as you remember that you did what you thought was

best given at that time. If you're feeling weighed down by what you said to another person, hold space for an open and honest conversation. Trust that they will understand your side of the story, even if you face resistance from their side initially.

### AQUARIUS:

What's the story you are repeating? Are you hung up on the "things don't work out for me" narrative? The Universe is eavesdropping, Aquarius. So be mindful of the beliefs you are putting out there. What the cards want you to remember today is that you are the co-creator of your reality, one who possesses the power to heal their life and transform their Destiny. Find a way to move forward despite the past failures and know that there is a bright future waiting for you up ahead.

### PISCES:

While we all practice the art of manifestation to some extent or the other, why is it that only a few are able to get their hands on all that they desire? Here's something most practitioners tend to leave out when they're speaking about the law of attraction: that things will only take form in our reality if they are a vibrational match. So instead of obsessing over what you don't have, focus on what you do and what you possess the potential to create. Consider this as your chance to turn your challenges into opportunities, Pisces.