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# SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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## Health Dept team calls on Governor



### SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 06 JUN:

Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Dr MK Sharma accompanied by Principal Secretary Health and Family Welfare Department, K Sreenivasulu and other officials today called on Governor of Sikkim, Ganga Prasad at Raj Bhavan. Principal Secretary to the Governor, SD Negi was also present on the occasion.

It was a courtesy call by the Minister and his departmental team to apprise the Governor on the recent developments following the detection of few COVID-19 positive cases in Sikkim and the operationalisation of VRDL at STNM Hospital, a Raj Bhavan press release informs.

Minister Health informed that the department has put in a strong and efficient mechanism to stop any possibility of outbreak of COVID-19 in the State and is

fully prepared for the cases detected from among the Sikkimese being brought back at present. He further provided the detailed information on how people being brought from outside are being monitored at the individual level during the process of facility quarantine, testing, home quarantine and eventual release to normal life. He also mentioned about the performance and testing capability of VRDL at STNM, inaugurated recently which has given edge to the State's preparedness in its fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Governor expressed his pleasure on the state of preparedness and the strategy that Sikkim has adopted in its battle against the pandemic. He further acknowledged the dedication and service of all frontline warriors for ensuring that Sikkim remains the safest place at this hour of crisis.

## 4 test positive in one day, Sikkim now has 7 COVID-patients cases

### SAGAR CHHETRI GANGTOK, 06 JUNE:

Four new positive cases of COVID-19 were reported in the state on Saturday taking the total number of Coronavirus cases here to seven. All of them are returnees.

Two women from South Sikkim and two males from East Sikkim tested positive today and questions are now being asked about the inordinate delay in results for the two women which ended up exposing others to risk of infection.

In his health bulletin posted today, Health Department Director General and Secretary, Dr PT Bhutia, informed



that the two women from South Sikkim had completed their 14-day mandatory facility quarantine and had been sent to home quarantine.

It transpires that while they were still at the facility quarantine, their swab samples were collected for RT-PCR testing which was still being done at North Bengal Medical College and Hospital in Siliguri.

NBMCH, it may be recalled, is swamped with a backlog of samples to test and had held back testing samples from Sikkim.

The samples of the two women were in the delayed lot and the results arrived in Sikkim only today. By this time, they had already been released from the facility quarantine and sent for home quarantine.

They were informed of the results and have now been shifted to the isolation ward at STNM Hospital here.

Dr Bhutia informs that the two ladies, aged 29 and 37, were lodged in the facility quarantine at Kamrang Boys' Hostel.

Meanwhile, in East Sikkim, two men tested positive as well.

One is a 22-year-

old male with contact history to the Mumbai returnee who had tested positive on 04 June, the other is the 21-year-old nephew of the Delhi returnee who had tested positive on 03 June. It may be recalled, that the latter had earlier tested negative in the TruNat screening test. It may be mentioned here that the TruNat screening test can return negative results up to ten days since infection. The RT-PCR test is the only definitive test for COVID-19 returning accurate tests from the moment of infection itself.

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## 6 SNT buses ferry 209 Nepal nationals to Kakarvitta from Gangtok

### SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 06 JUN:

On the request of the Ministry of External Affairs and in coordination with the Embassy of Nepal in New Delhi, the State Government today facilitated the evacuation of 209 Nepal nationals from Sikkim on Saturday morning.

An additional District Magistrate, Jamyang C Namgyal, informed media-persons today that 235 Nepalese citizens had registered to return home to their country of whom 83 did not turn up

for the evacuation this morning while 51 others registered only this morning desiring to return. They were accommodated in the six SNT buses arranged to ferry them till the Indo-Nepal border town of Kakarvitta.

The ADC added that with Sikkim itself grappling with a huge rush of returning Sikkimese, there was a scarcity of public transportation hence strict social distancing could not be maintained in the buses for the returning Nepal



nationals.

He however added that since Sikkim falls in the Green Zone, this arrangement should not pose any danger of infection.

The 209 Nepalese citizens were billed Rs 300 per head for the bus ride.

Speaking to the media-persons, one of the returnees, Kishore Baniya of Ilam, eastern Nepal, said they were happy that the Sikkim government made it possible for them to return home. He also shared that they did not face any hardships during

the lockdown and that after the lockdown was partially lifted on 03 May, they were also able to earn a livelihood.

Worry for family back in Nepal was cited as the reason they so eagerly signed up when evacuation was offered.

## LTVC wants CM to intervene and bring Sushmita and her family home

### SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 06 JUN:

Limboo Tamang LVoluntary Committee [LTVC] submitted a memorandum to the Chief Minister on Saturday requesting him to intervene and facilitate the entry of Sushmita Subba and her family into Sikkim.

The family, it may

recalled, hails from Sajong, Rumtek, and had travelled to Nepal on a family emergency. They managed to return on 02 June only to arrive at Rangpo check-post and learn that Sikkim was allowing only residents with

Certificates of Identification or Voter Cards. The family has neither document but their residence here has been confirmed by their panchayats and former MLA.

An LTVC press release mentions that he organization was in constant touch with Ms Subba and fully empathized with her situation.

The organisation

has forwarded a copy of the letter to the Chief Secretary and Secretary, Home Department.

"We the entire Limboo community along with those concerned Sikkimese citizens would be extremely thankful to you for your kind interference in the above matter," the letter adds.

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## WED at Tiffin Dara and Biodiversity Park

**SUMMIT REPORT  
NAMCHI, 06 JUN:**

The World Environment Day was observed at Tiffin Dara and Biodiversity Park near Damthang on 05 Jun, 2020 wherein a plantation drive was conducted by South Territorial Division, South Social Forestry Division, South Wildlife, Environment and Soil Conservation Division and South Non-Timber Forest Produce Division.

The plantation drive was organised by Forest and Environment Department, South Sikkim, with the theme 'Himalayan Biodiversity' and the slogan 'Time for Nature'. The plantation drive was conducted along the Samdruptse road stretch in Tiffin Dara followed by another plantation drive in Biodiversity Park

near Damthang, South Sikkim. Around 170 saplings of flowering plants namely Camelia and Ghurpis were planted on the Samdruptse road stretch by the officials and staff of concerned department along with members of NGOs. Around 150 saplings of Rhododendron species were also planted in Biodiversity Park near Damthang.

The World Environment Day was organized by Forest & Environment Department South Sikkim in collaboration with Ghurpisey Joint Forest Management Committee (JFMC).

The event was participated by DFO Environment & Social Conservation, Paljor Ongda Bhutia, DFO Wildlife,



Tshering Denka, DFO Social Forestry, Marmit Lepcha and DFO Territorial, Peggyla Tshering Venchungpa.

Apart from plantation, the department in coordination with Human Resource Development Department Namchi also initiated a painting competition on the biodiversity theme for students of class twelve (XII) of five selected schools of South District, the participant schools

were selected by Human Resource Development Department and the selected schools are Namchi Senior Secondary School, Namchi Girls Senior Secondary School, Nandugaon Senior Secondary School, Jorethang Senior Secondary School and Ravangla Senior Secondary School informed DFO Environment and Soil Conservation, Paljor Ongda Bhutia. Due to the guidelines of

COVID-19 being followed, the students will be sending their paintings online after which the entries will be shortlisted and selected, added the officer. Meanwhile, on the occasion of World Environment Day the National Campaign on Tinospora Cordifolia (Gurjo) was also held wherein the saplings of the plant were distributed to the participants.

## Dy Speaker and AgriMinister plant saplings at Melli-Aching

**Gyalshing, 05 Jun (IPR):**

The Deputy Speaker, Sikkim Legislative Assembly (SLA), Sangay Lepcha and the Minister for Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services, IPR and Printing and Stationery Departments, LokNath Sharma planted saplings of Cherry species in a plantation drive organised by



72Bn SSB Melli-Aching (Yuksom) at Pachebong under YuksomTashiding

Constituency (W). The District Collector West, Karma R Bonpo, 36

Bn SSB, RN Mishra and other officials also planted saplings to celebrate World

Environment Day 2020 with the theme of "Celebrate Biodiversity".

After the plantation, Dy Speaker, Sangay Lepcha and Minister Sharma had an interaction with the District Level Officers, Commandant Mishra and Sr Officials of SSB in a brief session held at SSB premises. Minister Sharma also advised to make use of left out barren land for cultivation purpose.

## Sikkimese boy wins ImagineIF award of Boston Scientific



**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 06 JUN:**

A final year Science Engineering student of Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology (SMIT), PhuTshering Bhutia, has been selected for "2019 ImagineIF Development Excellence Award" for his efforts in supporting NPD Material Library along with R&D team at Boston Scientific, a US

based multinational company, a press release informs. Born and brought up in Gyalshing, West Sikkim, PhuTshering is an alumnus of Government Senior Secondary School, Pelling, West Sikkim. He has already been recruited by Microsoft during the on-campus college placement in 2019, the release mentions.

ImagineIF

innovation challenge is a venture-style approach to fund breakthrough ideas from employees through the program where the organization challenge employees to think through ways to advance the solutions to enhance customer and patient experience.

PhuTshering was interning with Boston Scientific

and for his final semester major he worked on the project "NPD Material Library".

For the above, he and his team have been awarded the prestigious ImagineIF award of Boston Scientific, a US based multinational company engaged in manufacturing of medical devices used in interventional medical specialties, including

interventional radiology, and interventional cardiology.

Director, SMIT, Prof DrAshis Sharma, along with the faculty of Computer Science Engineering Department, SMIT has congratulated PhuTshering for his achievements. "He has not only made SMIT proud, but the entire State of Sikkim," Dr Sharma said.

## Cong wants Sushmita and family to be allowed back home

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 06 JUN:**

Sikkim Pradesh Congress Committee has expressed deep concern on restrictions which were denying entry to Sushmita Subba and her family into Sikkim from Rangpo check-post.

The party points out that they have been stranded on the wrong side of Rangpo since 02 June and left abandoned. The Congress has demanded that the State government take the initiative to allow Sushmita Subba and her family to their home

at Sajong, Rumtek, in East Sikkim. An SPCC press release states that there were no restrictions on many people residing in the state without any domicile documents hence it was unfair to stop this family on those grounds especially since they have a house here.

## 50 discharged from Namchi quarantine facility



**NAMCHI, 06 JUN (IPR):**

A total of 50 people were discharged from Namchi Girls Senior Secondary School Quarantine Facility today. The facility also received

various kinds of aid in the form of food and other necessary items from local community and individuals of Namchi. The authorities would like to thank them

for their support. Special mention goes to spouse of CM, Krishna Rai who donated foot paddle sanitizer and hand free auto sanitizer to the Quarantine Facility.

## Hate speech case against UP Dy CM, 4 others allowed to be dropped

**ALLAHABAD, JUN 6 (PTI):** A special court for lawmakers here has allowed the Uttar Pradesh government to withdraw a hate speech and assault case against Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya and four of his supporters lodged in Kaushambi district in 2011.

Special Judge Bal Mukund allowed the state government's application to withdraw a case.

Following the court order, the case was dropped against four other accused Vibhuti Narayan Singh, Jai Chandra Mishra, Yashpal Kesari, Prem Chand Chaudhari, who all were on bail.

The case against Maurya was lodged at Kotwali police station in Kaushambi allegedly for allegedly giving a provocative speech during an agitation, while his supporters were booked on

charges of assaulting a youth and making derogatory remarks against him.

The state government, however, decided to withdraw the case in 2018 and filed an application in the special court for lawmakers.

According to government's counsel, during a protest against the then government's actions and policies in September 2011, the accused had allegedly made derogatory remarks against the youth while he was passing through the area. As the youth raised objections, the accused allegedly manhandled him. The matter was resolved when a police team arrived and rescued the victim.

The FIR was lodged against five people under various sections of IPC. One of the accused, Devendra Singh Chauhan, died in 2015.

## 4 test positive....

Dr Bhutia informs that eight persons had travelled with a 29-year-old female in a bus from Odisha and then six others travelled with her from Siliguri to South Sikkim in a SNT bus and all contacts have been traced and will be tested tomorrow.

He mentioned that there were 16 contacts of the 37-year-old female patient and all have been traced and will be tested tomorrow.

Dr Bhutia adds that only one of the seven patients has displayed symptoms like mild fever and the rest are

asymptomatic. Meanwhile, patient-1, who completed 14 days in the isolation ward at STNM Hospital and was tested afresh

yesterday, is still COVID-positive. He continues to remain asymptomatic and what has everyone upbeat is that his viral load is very low.

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

**Contact: 9800201335**

### LAND FOR SALE

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

### LAND FOR SALE

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

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# World Environment Day observed at Bageykhola LPG plant

**SUMMIT REPORT**  
**Gangtok, 06 Jun:** World Environment Day was observed in LPG Plant Bageykhola on 05 Jun, 2020, a press release informs. The Environmental Pledge was taken amongst employees maintaining

strict social distancing norms. IOCL Chairman's Message of World Environment Day was shared with all. Plant Manager, Suman Tamang, also shared the significance of the day. Tree plantation and quiz contest were held on the day.



## Forest Dept celebrates World Environment Day in Gyalshing



**GYALSHING, 05 JUN (IPR):** Environment & Conservation

(West Division), Sikkim celebrated World Environment Day with the theme "Celebrate

Biodiversity" of Police West, at District Tashi Wangyal along Administrative with the officials Centre (DAC) also planted saplings of Rhododendron at DAC premises. The Minister-cum-Area MLA of Gyalshing Bermiok constituency, Lok Nath Sharma graced the occasion and planted a Sapling of Rhododendron species. The District Collector West, Karma R Bonpo, Superintendent

## World Environment Day celebrated at SSB Headquarters



**GANGTOK, 05 JUN [PIB]:** On the occasion of World Environment Day, Sashastra Seema Bal Sector Hqrs Gangtok conducted a

plantation drive at its Sector Headquarter Campus Marchak today and planted saplings under its "Green Earth Movement" & "Clean Campus,

Green Campus" campaign. The saplings were provided by State Forest department Singtham (Sikkim), also some saplings were prepared in campus nursery of Sector Hqrs Gangtok for the purpose. Plantation drive was started at 1100 hrs by B K Pal, Deputy Inspector General Sector

Hqrs SSB Gangtok. All ranks and family members and some local people participated in the drive. While addressing on this occasion, Mr Pal stressed upon the importance of World Environment Day and the basic mantra of Matsya Purana - A reservoir is like ten wells, a pond is equal to ten reservoirs. A son is worth as much as ten ponds and a tree is worth as much as ten sons was explained to highlight the importance of plantation. SSB fortnightly drive on plantation will be a regular affair on every second Thursday.

## RML reduces COVID-19 screening centre timings

**NEW DELHI, JUN 6 (PTI):** The RML Hospital will run the screening centre for COVID-19 patients for a reduced duration from Sunday to not "keep test results pending", an official said, days after the AAP alleged the Centre-run facility was giving out erroneous test results and delaying reports. "It has been decided that the screening centre for COVID-19 will function from 9am to 5pm with effect from June 7," read the order signed by Dr Minakshi



Bharadwaj, Medical Superintendent of RML Hospital, and issued on Saturday. Earlier the hospital operated the screening centre round-the-clock. An official said the hospital was receiving more samples than its

testing capacity. The reduced timings, the hospital administration hoped, would bring down the load. "In the last one week we have been receiving over 400 samples and, in fact, in the last two days sample collection crossed over 500 when our testing capacity is of 300-350 samples per day. We don't want to keep test results pending and thus have reduced the screening centre timings. The screening facility has been functioning

for 24 hours since February 1," the official said. On Wednesday, the AAP government alleged the hospital was giving out erroneous COVID-19 test results and violating government norms of submitting them within 48 hours. The hospital maintained there was no backlog anymore and regular quality checks were being done. By Friday, coronavirus cases in Delhi had crossed the 26,000-mark and the death toll jumped to 708, according to the city government.

# World Environment Day at Rakdong Tintek




**SUMMIT REPORT**  
**GANGTOK, 05 JUN:** World Environment Day was also observed today at Rakdong Tintek GPU in East Sikkim. The saplings of different species of

flowering and fruit bearing plants were planted under the aegis of BB Gurung, Zilla Panchayat in the presence of Tika Maya Pandey, Panchayat President along JFMC with other panchayat members, JFMC members, and the local gentries. The plantation drive was conducted in and around of the GPK premises and the alongside of Dikchu-Rakdong road.

## Arunachal shrines to remain closed till June 30

**ITANAGAR, JUN 6 (PTI):** The Arunachal Pradesh government has decided to keep all shrines closed in the state till June 30 to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

State Health Secretary P Parthiban in an official order on Saturday banned the opening of places of worship in the state till June 30. In the larger interest of the public and invoking of the Arunachal Pradesh Epidemic Disease, (Prevention of COVID-19) Regulations 2020, all religious institutions, places of worship shall remain closed till June 30, the order said. According to the new guidelines issued by the union ministry of home affairs, in the first phase of Unlock 1.0, religious places and places of worship for public, hotels, restaurants, other hospitality services and shopping malls will be permitted to open from June 8. The ministry on May 30 while extending the lockdown in the containment zones till June 30 said all economic activities can restart in a phased manner outside those zones. The union health ministry had said that it would issue standard operating procedures for those activities in consultation with the central ministries, the departments concerned and other stakeholders for ensuring social distancing and to contain the spread of COVID-19. The northeastern state till Friday recorded a total of 47 coronavirus cases of which 46 are active. One person was released from the hospital after being cured.



### What is Novel Coronavirus - nCoV?

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

#### Symptoms of nCoV


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

#### Precautions to Prevent nCoV

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

#### Treatment

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



If you seek help, you may call :

- Toll free no. 104
- District surveillance Officer
- EAST : 7028372100
- WEST : 9583297809
- NORTH : 9641957468
- SOUTH : 7407681463
- New STNM
- AMS : 9434711402

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



## Migrating People

*Understand why rural Sikkim wants to move to urban settings. And plan for it*

There has been frequent talk of rural-urban migration in Sikkim and efforts, on the lips and on paper, have been underway for a while now to contain it. It would be wonderful if disruptions or cessations of traditional ways of life could be stopped and people allowed environments in to pursue their ambitions and dreams in surroundings they are familiar with; but that, anyone will attest, is an impossible task. Things change, and even when the change is for the “better”, it requires adjustments and sacrifices, with migration being one of the options that many have to take.

Any effort to contain rural-to-urban migration would obviously require a clearer understanding of the causes. It is common to find poverty held up as the main reason prompting people to migrate to cities, a notion transmitted through the caricature renditions of the plight of the poor in mass-entertainment products. It is a believable explanation, but latest data available on migration in India does not hold up this belief. The poor are invariably temporary migrants, shipping out for temporary jobs and as seasonal labour; the more permanent migration in pursuit of opportunities is a luxury which only the better heeled and the more educated enjoy. In most cases, this is human resource which “leaves home” to study and train does so because it can afford to, and, on many occasions, never returns. And then there is the eye-opening data contained in the report released by the National Sample Survey Office suggesting that a third of all Indians are migrants in their present place of residence! Though one in every three Indians is a migrant, they are not all products of rural-urban migration. Most are not escaping the “drudgery” of rural India, but are, in almost all cases, pursuing gainful employment. There is a difference. Within these are of course those who migrate for marriage [found to be the case in most ‘non-local’ women], or because they have been forced out either by natural disasters or “developmental” projects.

If Sikkim is serious about working on rural-urban migration, it should first understand the exact, and not generalised, reasons for it. Urban amenities might be desired, but cannot by themselves be taken as reasons why people abandon villages. Chasing employment could be a reason, but migration is relatively permanent and that requires complementing opportunities and not just desires to keep rural folk in urban addresses. A data that the country prefers not to unravel, but Sikkim could do well to study and understand, is migration triggered by changes in rural settings. In many instances, land - a people’s mooring to the place - is lost, and with this anchor lifted, moving away becomes an easier decision to contemplate. The loss of land could as much be due to acquisition for projects as it could be because of change in landuse patterns. If farms are no longer of a size which make them sustainable, or when the traditional crops no longer harvest on a scale that makes economic sense, a shift is necessitated. Of course, there is also the general desire of every parent to provide better education and opportunities for children if they can afford it, and these opportunities continue to be available almost exclusively in urban setting even in Sikkim. It would be desirable if these facilities could reach the villages too, but that does appear to be happening any time soon, so the pull of the urban areas will remain strong.

Urban planning will hence have to factor these realities into its projections for future years and this will require cross-disciplinary and inter-departmental coordination and planning on a scale that the State has not displayed an aptitude for thus far. Very soon, Sikkim, as the rest of the world, will also be looking at migrations forced by climate change as well and it will be advisable for the State to try and begin the processes to project possible scenarios and start adequate preparations for it. It is important to bear in mind that not all rural-urban migration can be stopped, but what can definitely be achieved is for the urban spaces to be planned better to not only accommodate ‘influx’, but also provide them with better basic facilities and more respectable opportunities.

# Epidemics have often led to discrimination against minorities – this time is no different

MARK HONIGSBAUM

THECONVERSATION.COM

Pandemics are not only biological phenomena but also social phenomena. Throughout history, pandemics have been powerful engines of social change, exposing inequalities in the distribution of health and wealth, and prompting calls for the reform of social institutions.

In this respect, the mass protests sweeping the US in the wake of the death of George Floyd can be seen as a symptom of a deeper social pathology, one that has been brought to the fore by the coronavirus pandemic and President Trump’s blundering response to the health crisis sparked by COVID-19.

When Derek Chauvin was caught on video pinning George Floyd to the ground as he pleaded “I can’t breathe”, the image could not help but resonate with the way coronavirus has also been disproportionately choking the life out of African-Americans. As the Nigerian novelist and poet Ben Okri told the BBC: “The pandemic itself is about the very issue of breathing. I think that helped to strike a chord in people.”

Figures from the non-partisan APM Research Lab show that, on average, black Americans have been dying of coronavirus at nearly three times the rate of white Americans. In the UK, according to the Office for National Statistics, blacks are four times more likely to die from COVID-19 than white people.

The disparity may be due to several factors, including lower levels of vitamin D in BAME groups. But there is little doubt that poverty and job insecurity, coupled with the stressful living conditions of black people, who are overwhelmingly concentrated in decrepit inner-city areas, also plays a role. (In Washington DC, for instance, the death rate among blacks is six times as high as for whites.)

Harvard philosopher and activist Cornel West has said that the racial health disparities revealed by COVID is a demonstration of America’s “failed social experiment”. Whether or not you accept this verdict, these disparities are prompting questions about the fitness of the US public health system and America’s ability to protect its most vulnerable and disadvantaged citizens from contagious diseases.

NOT THE FIRST TIME

Something very similar happened in 1849 when America was swept by cholera. Then, as today, the epidemic fell most heavily on the inhabitants of impoverished inner-city areas. In downtown Philadelphia, as Charles Rosenberg recalls in *The Cholera Years*, “a free couple of color” were found dead of cholera in a room measuring just four and a half by seven foot.

It was the same in the Five Points area of New York, where Irish immigrants were packed into rudimentary timber dwellings lacking running water and sanitation. The Irish bore 40% of the mortality. By contrast, wealthy

New Yorkers from Protestant backgrounds generally escaped the ravages of cholera by fleeing to the country.

In 1832, when “Asiatic cholera” first arrived in the US, Americans assumed that religious virtue and the rustic simplicity of American life would protect them from this scourge from the east. But after 1849, New Yorkers could no longer ignore the connection between cholera and poverty.

And when in 1854 the English physician John Snow demonstrated that cholera was transmitted in water, the case for sanitary reform became overwhelming. Recognising that cholera was linked to overcrowding, unhygienic housing, and poor sewerage disposal, American sanitarians pressured boards of health to provide cities with safe water systems. Later, these boards became the models for local and state public health agencies.

More often, though, epidemics are occasions for discrimination against ethnic and social groups. When New York was struck by typhus in 1892, the city’s sanitary authorities blamed the outbreak on recent Jewish immigrants from Russia who had travelled in steerage and quarantined them on North Brother Island in the East River. By contrast, passengers who had travelled in the first-class sections of ships were not quarantined.

Discrimination was also the response in 1916 when cases of “infantile paralysis” erupted in New York. As I describe in my book, *The Pandemic Century*, the initial outbreaks of polio were centred on “Pig Town”, an Italian neighbourhood in South Brooklyn. Here, recent immigrants from Naples lived in tenements surrounded by piles of stinking garbage and free-roaming pigs.

As cases of polio multiplied and the papers filled with heartbreaking accounts of dead or paralysed infants, the publicity sparked a wave of anti-Italian prejudice. While Upper East Siders fled to their homes on Long Island, heavily armed policemen patrolled roads and rail stations to prevent Italians leaving the city. Health officers went door to door in Brooklyn to enforce isolation measures and hospitalisations.

In fact, non-paralytic cases of polio had most likely been circulating under the radar in the US since 1890. According to Yale historian Naomi Rodgers, only its appearance in epidemic form in New York was “new”.

CONSPIRACY THEORIES

Minority groups have, for the most part, gone along with restrictions on their liberty for the sake of the health of all. Yet when the freedoms of the majority are threatened, protest and violence often ensue. During the 1832 Russian cholera epidemic, for instance, the citizens of St Petersburg gathered in Sennaya square in protest at quarantines and cordons, which they considered a plot by the educated classes to repress the poor.

Accusing sanitary inspectors of spreading the disease, they sacked the city’s main cholera

hospital and called for the death of doctors, who they suspected of poisoning their wells. It was only when Czar Nicholas I appeared in the square and ordered the crowd to fall to their knees, that the rioting stopped.

Conspiracy theories about the role of the medical profession in spreading cholera also fuelled riots in Britain. According to the historian of medicine Samuel Cohn, Britain saw 72 such riots between 1831 and 1832 with crowds “in the thousands that threatened the lives of physicians”.

The difference was that in Britain doctors were accused of using cholera as a ruse to perform dissections. This practice was known in Britain as “burking” after the 1828 scandal in Edinburgh in which William Burke and William Hare murdered sixteen people and supplied the bodies to a lecturer in anatomy at the Royal College of Surgeons.

In the case of COVID-19, similar conspiracy theories have sparked protests by right-wing militias and anti-vaxxers convinced that coronavirus is a ruse to rob Americans of their liberties through the enforcement of social distancing measures. Perhaps the most striking feature of these protests is that the demonstrators are overwhelmingly white and unmasked. In the case of the storming of Michigan state capital in April, the militias also carried arms.

The protests now sweeping cities across the US and in other countries have seen a similar disregard for social distancing. But by contrast, many of these protesters have been wearing masks bearing the words “I can’t breathe” out of respect for the threat that coronavirus poses to their and other people’s health.

None have openly brandished guns. Despite this, they have been met with national guardsman armed with rubber bullets and egged on by a president seemingly determined to inflame the situation.

Little wonder that in Minnesota, where black people account for a third of COVID cases despite making up 6% of the state’s population, Minneapolis city council vice-president Andrea Jenkins drew a direct analogy between the violence visited on black communities by COVID and the death of George Floyd. “Until we name this virus [of racism],” she said, “we will never, ever resolve this issue.”

Unfortunately, the tragedy is that the anger being directed at police forces across the US now risks unleashing a second wave of COVID infections that could prove as destructive as the first.

*[the writer is Medical Historian and Lecturer in Journalism, City, University of London]*

# Trump’s use of religion follows playbook of authoritarian-leaning leaders the world over

LAURA R. OLSON

THECONVERSATION.COM

It was a striking moment: Donald Trump, Bible in hand, posing for photos in an apparent moment of political theater made possible by the dispersal of protesters through the use of tear gas. The president’s visit to St. John’s Episcopal Church, known as “the Church of the Presidents,” came immediately after giving a Rose Garden speech framing himself as “your president of law and order” and threatening to send federal troops to “restore security and safety in America.” The next day, Trump made another high-profile visit to a place of worship, this time Washington’s St. John Paul II National Shrine.

Coming at a time of social turbulence, critics accused Trump of following authoritarian-leaning world leaders by sidling up to religion to reinforce an image as a strongman defending a particular brand of tradition. Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington Mariann Budde said as much, commenting that Trump used the Bible at St. John’s “as if it were a prop or an extension of his military and authoritarian position.”

As a scholar who has researched the interaction of politics and faith for decades, I know how potent religion can be as a political tool.

A POWERFUL TOOL

Religion creates meaning in our lives by articulating values about how we relate to one another. But just as it can unite us, religion can also be a source of division – used to “other” people who are not of the faith and don’t share the same traditions and rituals.

When enough people perceive – or can be convinced – that traditional elements of the social fabric are at risk, religious signaling through the use of symbols and images can help would-be authoritarians cement their power. They present themselves as protectors of the faith and foes of any outsider who threatens tradition.

In Russia, this phenomenon is seen in President Vladimir Putin’s forging of a strategic alliance with the Russian Orthodox Church. For his part, Putin presents himself not just as a commanding leader, but also as a devoutly religious Russian. When he appears shirtless, for example, the large cross he wears around his neck is always visible. Meanwhile, the Church promotes traditional moral values and maintains a distance from the rest of the worldwide Orthodox Christian community, thereby separating the “truly Russian” from the outsider. In their most recent collaboration, Putin and the Church proposed amendments to the Russian constitution that would enshrine Russians’ faith in God, define marriage as the union of a man and a woman and, tellingly, proclaim “the great achievement of the [Russian] people in defense of the Fatherland.” These changes, all of which are intended to reinforce Putin’s base of support, would be jarringly nationalistic additions to the constitution.

Putin benefits from this insider-outsider dynamic in advancing his goal of restoring Russia to his vision of its past territorial glory. In justifying the Russian incursion into Crimea, Putin argued that the region had “sacral importance

for Russia, like the Temple Mount in Jerusalem for the followers of Islam and Judaism.” Defending and expanding Russian territory is a much easier sell if it is framed as the defense of the holy.

RELIGIOUS IMAGERY

We see a similar dynamic in India, where Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s grip on power relies in large part on his embrace of a version of Hindu nationalism that elevates Hindus as “truly Indian” insiders and singles out Muslims as outsiders.

Like Putin, Modi wraps himself in religious imagery. He makes high-profile visits to remote Hindu temples while electioneering and never wears green because of its association with Islam.

Modi’s Hindu nationalism cements his popularity among devout Hindus and builds public support for anti-Muslim policies, such as stripping the only majority-Muslim state in India of its autonomy and enacting a controversial new law preventing Muslim migrants from attaining Indian citizenship.

TRUMP AS SAVIOR

Trump has stumbled in attempts to portray himself as personally devout, declining to name a favorite passage from the Bible and stating that he has never sought forgiveness from God for his sins.

Nevertheless, public opinion polls have consistently shown that white Christians comprise the core of Trump’s base, although there are recent signs of a dip even among this key group.

And while it is important to note that many white Christians do not support Trump, 29% of evangelicals go so far as to say they believe he is anointed by God.

Where Trump succeeds is in presenting himself as a Christian nationalist, much as Putin and Modi style themselves as the stout defenders of their countries’ dominant religions.

One way Trump achieves this end is by making statements such as this one on the campaign trail earlier this year: “We’re going to win another monumental victory for faith and family, God and country, flag and freedom.”

In their new book “Taking America Back for God,” sociologists Andrew Whitehead and Samuel Perry contend that many of Trump’s white Christian supporters see him as their long-awaited savior – not just the protector of traditional religion, but also the defender of a bygone way of life.

In that imagined past, white men ruled the roost, families went to church every Sunday and outsiders knew their place. A deep-rooted desire for a return to that past may have been why Trump’s Make America Great Again slogan has proved so potent. As Yale scholar Philip Gorski has argued, that phrase can be interpreted to mean “making white Christianity culturally dominant again.” As such, we should not be surprised that in the current moment of crisis Trump is attempting to use religion to reinforce differences between his supporters and his opponents. Like Putin, he is posing as the defender of a particular version of a glorious past. And echoing Modi, he is doing this by building support through the denigration of the outsider.

*[the writer is Professor of Political Science, Clemson University]*



# Nagaland grapples with daily spike in COVID-19 cases

**KOIHMA, JUN 6 (PTI):** After remaining coronavirus-free as late as end of the last month, Nagaland is witnessing a jump in such cases everyday in nearly a fortnight time, owing to the influx of migrants from different infected regions of the country. After the detection of the first three cases on May 25, the figure is climbing with every passing day to reach 107 cases in the state on Saturday.

Official sources said all infected persons in the state are returnees from outside, who are presently lodged in government quarantine centres.

The north eastern state is yet to come out with recovery figure as the infected persons have not completed the 14-day mandatory quarantine period after which they will be subjected to repeat tests to ascertain their status.

Talking to PTI, Nagaland Secretary



for Health and Family Welfare, Kesonyu Yhome said, “All these cases are imported (people returning from outside the state). The good thing is that all of them are under the facility of the government and yet to mingle with the local residents, he said.

“The 14 days period of the COVID-19 positive patients is yet to be over because of which the recovery rate has been nil in the state,” the health secretary said.

On how the department has been managing the sudden spurt in positive cases, he said, The 14 days in government facilities and another 14 days of home quarantine

reports collected from various pharmacies about people buying medicines for flu.

On the existing health infrastructure and human resources to fight the pandemic, the official said as far as the health sector is concerned, Nagaland has never been comfortable or adequate with manpower.

A mention be made here that with no lab testing facility of COVID-19 samples, the state had been sending the samples to Assam and Manipur till May end. The BSL-3 lab was set up on May 21, while testing commenced from May 22.

“Though the number of positive cases are increasing and even if it rises up and reaches some level of stability in risk time, we can still manage to contain it, he said.

but if there is local transmission and huge increase of positive cases, we cannot say we are prepared, Yhome said.

The whole idea is to contain the virus within the quarantine facilities so that all those who have tested positive can go back healthy, asserted the health secretary.

He said in order to ramp up manpower, the government has already approved fresh appointments considering the inadequacy in the health sector.

While the process for immediate appointment of 27 doctors has begun, selection of more doctors and nurses during this pandemic situation is in the pipeline.

About infected persons, he said, most of the positive cases are asymptomatic and they are all young people.

“We are making efforts to keep them asymptomatic or up to the level of mild (cases) by keeping them in good health through vitamins and nutritious food, Yhome added.

## Arunachal sees over 17pc shortfall of its share of central taxes in April and May: Khandu

**ITANAGAR, JUN 6 (PTI):** Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu has said the state government witnessed a 17.81 per cent shortfall in receiving its share of the central taxes during the first two months of the current fiscal, leading to a resource crunch in its fight against the coronavirus outbreak.

The share of the central taxes expected per month was Rs 985.83 crore, he said.

“The actual receipt for April and May 2020 was Rs 1,620.56 crore at an average of Rs 810.28 crore per month.

“There has been a shortfall of 17.81 per cent in the last two months, which, if maintained throughout the year, would lead to an overall deficit of Rs 2,457.67 crore,” the chief minister said during an all-party legislators meeting on Friday.

The fund received from the Centre is a major contributor to the developmental process in the state as its own resource generation is limited, Khandu said.

He said the government is currently spending a substantial amount on strengthening the health infrastructure

in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, resulting in an additional burden to the state exchequer.

The government has spent Rs 45.73 crore so far to combat the COVID-19 outbreak and constituted a committee for revival of the state economy, he said.

“There has been an overall shortfall of 18.40 per cent in the release of the state’s share of the central taxes vis- -vis the recommendation of the 14th Finance Commission (FFC) during the period of 2014-2019,” Khandu said.

The share of Arunachal Pradesh estimated by the commission for the period between FY15 and FY20 was at Rs 54,090.14 crore but the actual receipt was Rs 44, 126.38 crore, he said.

“The state government has ensured the equitable distribution of resources across all the sectors of the economy during the 14th Finance Commission period.

“While the share of central taxes in the Centre’s budget estimate for 2019-20 was Rs 11, 571.10 crore but the actual release, as per the revised estimate, was Rs 8, 987.57 crore, which led to a Rs 2,583.53 crore (22.40 per cent) reduction,” he said.

The priority of the state government during the current fiscal is to complete all the ongoing projects, the chief minister said.

The meeting was attended by BJP MLAs including Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein, Home Minister Bamang Felix, Education Minister Taba Tedir, Health Minister Alo Libang, Arunachal Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) President Nabam Tuki, besides MLAs of NPP and JDU, sources said.

“The unforeseen situation arising out of the COVID-19 pandemic has forced the government to focus on the health infrastructure including other coronavirus related expenditure resulting in an additional burden to the state exchequer,” he said.

However, the government is committed to provide funds for salaries and pensions of its employees and wages of workers, and other priority sectors such as agriculture and horticulture to increase employment generation in the state, Khandu added.

## Six new COVID-19 cases in Manipur, total rises to 143

**IMPHAL, JUN 6 (PTI):** Six persons, who have recently returned from Mumbai, tested positive for COVID-19 in Manipur, taking the total number of cases in the state to 143, an official said on Saturday.

Of the total 143 COVID-19 cases, 91 are active while 52 infected people have recovered, the official said.

The six persons who tested positive are from Pherzawl and Churachandpur district, a statement issued by COVID-19 Common Control Room said.

All the six persons tested positive on Friday night, it said.

Meanwhile, 11 people have been discharged from hospital on Saturday after they tested negative for COVID-19, taking the total count of recovered patients in the state to 52, the statement said.

“The recovery rate in Manipur is 36.36 per cent,” it added.

## Assam reports 128 new COVID-19 cases

**GUWAHATI, JUN 5 (PTI):** Assam crossed the 2,200-mark in COVID-19 cases after 128 persons tested positive on Friday, Health and Family Welfare Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

With this, the total number of cases in Assam reached 2,243.

The state has 1,727 active cases, Sarma said in a tweet.

The new cases were reported from Dhubri (37), Dima Hasao (24), Darrang (13), Karimganj (9), Hailakandi (8), Cachar, Baksa, Nagaon (7 each), Sonitpur (5), Udalguri (3), South Salmara and Dhemaji (2 each), Nalbari, Barpeta, Bongaigaon, Chirang (1 each).

During the day, 50 patients recovered and were discharged from hospitals.

Of the total 2,243 cases, four have died, while 509 have been cured, Sarma said.

Besides, three more patients have migrated to other states, the minister said.

Meanwhile, Sarma inaugurated a chemotherapy facility at the Assam Medical College and Hospital.

“Pleased to share that I inaugurated the chemotherapy facility at Assam Cancer Care Foundation at AMCH, Dibrugarh in presence of my colleagues. Happy that linac based radiation will also begin from September. Compliments to team,” he tweeted.

To screen all the people coming from outside to the state, the government has imposed a mandatory institutional quarantine policy for everyone, barring some exceptions.

Assam has so far tested 1,33,029 samples for COVID-19 in seven laboratories in Assam, NIV in Pune and some outsourced laboratories, the Health and Family Welfare Department said in its daily bulletin on Thursday night.

## Boy kills self after a nightlong PUBG session: Police

**KOTA, JUN 6 (PTI):** A 14-year-old boy allegedly hanged himself to death on early Saturday morning shortly after he stopped playing PUBG throughout the night and went to sleep, said police.

Railway Colony police station’s in-charge Hansraj Meena said the boy, a class 9 student and son of an Army man, was found hanging from the grill of the ventilator in his bedroom on early Saturday morning.

Meena said according to the boy’s family members, the boy had downloaded the gaming programme on his mother’s mobile phone only three days back but had been playing the game virtually continuously for the last three days.

He kept on playing the game till 3 am in a room in which his brother was studying, said Meena, adding the boy went to adjoining to sleep after that.

His body was found hanging from the ventilator’s grill in the morning, he said, adding the boy was rushed to MBS Hospital, where he was declared brought dead.

No suicide note was recovered in the case, the SHO said.

The boy lived in Gandhi Colony in the city along with his mother and brother, while his father, a Tamil Nadu native and Army man, is currently posted in Arunachal Pradesh.

The boy’s body has been kept in hospital’s morgue for the postmortem, the SHO said.

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**Former  
footballer dies  
of COVID-19,  
toll touches 15**

**Malappuram (Ker), June 6 (PTI):** Former Santosh Trophy National Football Championship player, E Hamsakoya, who had tested positive for COVID-19, succumbed to the virus early Saturday at a hospital here, taking the toll due to the infection in the state to 15.

Native of nearby Parappanangadi, Hamsakoya (61) had settled in Mumbai. He and his family had come down to his hometown on May 21 and had been under quarantine.

Hamsakoya's five family members have also tested positive and are undergoing treatment.

Malappuram District Medical Officer Dr K Sakeena said Hamsakoya's wife and son showed symptoms of COVID-19 first and were admitted to the hospital. All possible medical care was given to the deceased, but he breathed his last early this morning, she said.

"His wife and son tested positive for the virus first in his family. Later, Hamsakoya was also tested positive for the virus and had been under treatment at the medical college.

His daughter-in-law and two of his grandchildren have also tested positive and are under medical observation," Dr Sakeena said.

A veteran footballer of the Malabar region, Hamsakoya had played for Maharashtra state in Santosh Trophy in the 1980s besides plying trade in famous clubs like Mohun Bagan of Kolkata. A wing back during his playing days, he was called up for the national team camp twice but never played for the country. "We mourn the loss of former footballer Hamza Koya, who lost his battle against COVID-19 in a Malappuram hospital today. He had represented Maharashtra in the Santosh Trophy, and had been called up for the National Team camps on 2 occasions," the All India Football Federation said in a tweet.

# MLB players say teams ‘depriving America of baseball games’

**NEW YORK, JUN 6 (AP):** Players accused teams of “depriving America of baseball games” as part of a money fight set off by the coronavirus pandemic and raised the possibility baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred might push ahead with a shortened season over the union’s objection.

Bruce Meyer, the union’s chief negotiator, sent a letter to Deputy Commissioner Dan Halem on Friday threatening that an attempt to play without an agreement could lead players to block any attempt to expand the playoffs and deny consent to neutral-site games in the postseason.

“The league’s cynical tactic of depriving America of baseball games in furtherance of their demand for unwarranted salary concessions is shortsighted and troubling,” Meyer wrote.

“Meanwhile, other leagues are moving forward with their plans for resumption.”

Meyer’s letter was first reported by The Athletic, and a copy was obtained by The Associated Press.

Major League Baseball made its initial economic proposal on May 26, offering an 82-game regular season



schedule and a sliding scale of cuts beyond the prorated shares of salaries the sides agreed to on March 26.

Players responded on Sunday with a 114-game regular season schedule running through October and no additional cuts. Each player would get about 70% of his original salary under the union’s plan and roughly 22-47% under MLB’s proposal, including USD 200 million tied to the postseason being completed.

“We are disappointed that you are purportedly shutting down negotiations after making one proposal demanding over USD 800 million in further pay cuts,” Meyer wrote.

“We reject your invitation at the end of the letter to negotiate against ourselves. We are similarly chagrined by your decision to carry through on Rob’s threat from last Sunday to intentionally play as few games

as possible unless players agree to your demand for pay cuts.”

MLB has proposed expanding the playoffs from 10 teams to 14, which would create at least six new games with broadcast rights to sell. The union offered to agree to a playoff expansion through 2021.

Both sides have said they hope to start the season around the beginning of July, and talks may intensify next week.

Before the pandemic, players were set to earn about 4 billion in salaries, not including signing bonuses, termination pay and option buyouts. Under the March 26 agreement, that would be cut to around USD 2 billion in an 82-game season.

MLB’s offer would lower salaries to USD 1.2 billion plus the USD 200 million for the postseason. The union’s proposal would leave salaries at USD 2.8 billion.

“The league needs to tell us immediately when it plans to start the season if it plans to do so unilaterally,” Meyer wrote.

“We assume the league understands that in the event of a unilateral implementation of a season by MLB there are numerous aspects of a season that the players association will not be under any obligation to agree to, most notably any changes to the existing playoff structure and the locations of playoff games. If you intend to seek the players’ agreement to any such changes, we suggest that you raise them expeditiously.”

Under the March agreement, the season cannot start without MLB’s consent until there are no government restrictions on playing in front of fans in home ballparks, no relevant travel restrictions in the US and Canada, and a determination by Manfred there is no health risk

to players, staff or spectators.

The sides committed to “discuss in good faith the economic feasibility of playing games in the absence of spectators or at appropriate substitute neutral sites.”

Halem had written to the union on Wednesday that “we do not have any reason to believe that a negotiated solution for an 82-game season is possible.”

“The commissioner is committed to playing baseball in 2020,” he added.

“He has started discussions with ownership about staging a shorter season without fans. Assuming that those discussions go well, we will notify you at the appropriate time of our intentions.”

Meyer criticized MLB for the pace of negotiations and for not responding to all of the union’s document requests, which include agreements between clubs and regional sports networks.

Some of the RSNs have elements of ownership overlapping teams and individuals who own teams. MLB claims that by playing in empty ballparks, it would lose USD 640,000 for each additional game. The union has challenged MLB’s analysis.

## When Galileo underwent quarantine!

**NEW DELHI, JUN 6 (PTI):** Italian astronomer-physicist Galileo Galilei had some torrid time in the 1630s - he was in poor health, faced a house arrest and a trial due to a controversial book and also had to undergo quarantine for almost a month because of the raging plague then, recounts a new book.

“Galileo and the Science Deniers” is a historical biography on the life of Galileo by astrophysicist Mario Livio which gives a glimpse into the life of a “man who was intellectually radical and well ahead of his time”.

Galileo’s journey as a scientist started in 1583, when he dropped out of medical school and began to study mathematics. By 1590, he already had the audacity to criticise Aristotle’s teachings on motion, according to which things moved because of a built-in impetus.

About 13 years later, following a series of ingenious experiments with inclined planes and pendulums, he formulated the very first “laws of motion” concerning free-fall, even though he would not publish those until 1638.

But Galileo’s several bold statements put him on a collision course with the Catholic Church and he was eventually pronounced “vehemently suspected of heresy” on June 22, 1633.

“Overall, if we examine the record of Galileo’s life in terms of his personal contentment, it traces something like an inverted-U shape, with a pronounced peak somewhere shortly after his numerous astronomical discoveries, followed by a fairly steep fall,” writes Livio.

In spite of his personal disagreements with some orthodox church dicta, as late as May 18, 1630, Galileo was still received in Rome as an honoured guest by Pope Urban VIII, and he left Rome under the impression that the Pope had approved the printing of his book “Dialogue on the Two Chief World Systems”, after only a few minor corrections and a change of title.

Overestimating the strength of his friendship with the Pope and underestimating the fragility of the delicate psychological and political position of the Pope at that turbulent post-Reformation era, Galileo continued to believe that reason would prevail, says Livio.

“In the preface to the book Galileo purported to discuss the Earth’s motion merely as a ‘mathematical caprice’, the text itself had a very different flavour. In fact, Galileo taunted and derided those who still refused to accept the Copernican view in which the Earth revolved around the Sun,” the book, published by Simon & Schuster, says.

For Galileo, however, the publication of the “Dialogo” (as the book is commonly referred to), marked the beginning of the end (of his life, not of his fame), says Livio.

“He was examined by the inquisition in 1633, pronounced a suspected heretic, forced to recant his Copernican ideas, and eventually placed under house arrest.

The ‘Dialogo’ was put on the Vatican’s Index of Prohibited Books, where it remained until 1835,” he writes. Left with no option despite his failing health, “Galileo departed for Rome on January 20, 1633, but because of the raging plague, he had to be quarantined before crossing from Tuscany into the Papal States, a stop which turned out to be painfully long and unpleasant”, he says.

“Consequently, he arrived to Rome only on February 12th, fortunately to the comfort and warm hospitality in the home of Tuscan Ambassador Francesco Niccolini and his wife.”

After meeting with a few Church officials for advice in the first few days, in the following weeks, Galileo barely left the house, since Cardinal Francesco Barberini advised him against socialising, for fear that it ‘could cause harm and prejudice’, Livio writes.

And then he faced trial. Galileo died in 1642 at his villa in Arcetri near Florence, after having been blind and bed-ridden for a while.

Livio says Galileo’s story may be more relevant today than ever before.

## I’m not short-tempered: Rabada

**KOLKATA, JUN 6 (PTI):** He might have landed in trouble for his on-field aggressive behaviour but South African speedster Kagiso Rabada says the perception that he is short-tempered is not true and it is just passion which drives him as a bowler.

The 25-year-old was suspended for the series-deciding final Test against England earlier this year after collecting a fourth demerit point in a 24-month period for celebrating too close to visiting captain Joe Root after claiming his wicket in the third Test.

“Lot of people feel like I’ve a short temper. I don’t

think so, it’s just passion. Also if you look at sledging it’s part of the game. That’s what every fast bowler does,” Rabada said during an Instagram Live chat with his IPL franchise Delhi Capitals on Friday.

“There’s no fast bowler who is going to be nice to a batter. It’s not like you being personal and telling people about their family or whatever.”

Following Rabada’s suspension, South Africa went on to lose the final Test and concede the series 1-3.

The pacer had collected two of his previous demerit points during the 2018 Test series against Australia

when he had screamed into David Warner’s face and brushed shoulders with Steve Smith.

The third incident was when he used provocative language in sending off India’s Shikhar Dhawan after dismissing him during an ODI in the same year.

Rabada was also banned for accumulation of demerit points during South Africa’s tour of England in 2017.

“You celebrate the wicket and after the game you are going to shake the guy’s hand and respect the craft. Most of the time, I’m not really aggro on the field. But that’s just International cricket. Every player wants to be the best.

That’s just the drive coming out,” he said.

“As cricketers we have put in a lot of work under pressure, the grind to play for people’s entertainment and also for ourselves. It’s nice to see when you get results. You just don’t play a game of cricket. It does not work like that.”

The lynchpin of South African attack said it is his emotions which makes him a dangerous bowler.

“Sometimes, an emotion can ignite you. And that’s when I feel like I’m the most dangerous because that’s when I let everything loose and stop thinking and everything becomes automatic. That’s for me when I bowl my best is when I’m not

thinking,” he said.

Having claimed the wicket of Virat Kohli as his maiden Test scalp in his debut at Mohali in 2015, Rabada went on to become the No 1 Test bowler in three years’ time. “It feels surreal. You just keep hearing stats, you did this and that. It was pretty amazing but nothing changes. You still have another game to play,” he said.

“You don’t think about award when you play. You just perform your craft, the awards are byproducts and can serve as motivation as well.”

Rabada said he would have loved to bowl to former greats Sir Vivian Richards and Sachin Tendulkar among others.



# French forces kill leader of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb

France said its forces have killed the leader of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, in a blow to the group behind a string of deadly attacks across the troubled Sahel region.

A b d e l m a l e k Droukdel was killed on Thursday in northern Mali near the Algerian border, where the group has bases from which it has carried out attacks and abductions of Westerners in the sub-Saharan Sahel zone, Defence Minister Florence Parly said Friday.

“Many close associates” of the Algerian -- who commanded several affiliate jihadist groups across the lawless region -- were also “neutralised”, she added.

Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) emerged from a group started in the late 1990s by radical Algerian Islamists, who in 2007 pledged allegiance to Osama Bin Laden’s Al-Qaeda network.

The group has claimed responsibility for numerous attacks on troops and civilians across the Sahel, including a 2016 attack on an upmarket hotel and restaurant in Burkina Faso, which killed 30 people, mainly Westerners.

The death of Droukdel -- once regarded as Algeria’s enemy number one -- could leave AQIM in disarray, French military sources suggested.

- Haven for jihadists - France has deployed more than 5,000 troops to combat jihadist groups in the region -- a largely lawless expanse stretching over Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger, where drugs and arms flow through porous borders.

Northern Mali is the site of frequent clashes between rival armed groups, as well as a haven for jihadist activity.

In 2012, key cities fell under the control of jihadist groups linked to Al-Qaeda, who exploited an ethnic Tuareg-led rebel uprising, leading to a French-led military intervention.

According to the UN, Droukdel was an explosives expert and manufactured devices that killed hundreds of civilians in attacks on public places.

He was sentenced to death in Algeria in 2013 for his involvement in the bombings of a government building and offices of the UN’s refugee committee in Algiers that killed 26 people and wounded 177.

The US said it had provided intelligence to help track down Droukdel, who was killed in Talhandak, northwest of the town of Tessalit.

“US Africa Command was able to assist with intelligence and... support to fix the target,” spokesman Colonel Chris Karns told CNN.

- ‘Charismatic, ruthless’ - France also claimed on Friday to have captured a leader of the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (EIGS) group, which carries out frequent attacks over Niger’s western borders.

“On May 19, French forces captured Mohamed el Mrabat, veteran jihadist in the Sahel region and an important cadre in EIGS,” Parly said on Twitter.

O p e r a t i o n s against EIGS “the other great terrorist threat in the region” are continuing, she added.

Mali is struggling to contain an Islamist insurgency that erupted in 2012 and has claimed thousands of military and civilian lives since.

Despite the presence of thousands of French and UN troops, the conflict has engulfed the centre of the country and spread to neighbouring Burkina Faso and Niger.

A source told AFP that some 500 jihadist fighters had been killed or captured by French troops in the region in recent months, among them several leading figures including commanders and recruiters.

Droukdel’s death is a symbolic coup for the French, a military source said.

He had remained a threat in the region, capable of financing jihadist m o v e m e n t s , even though his leadership had been contested, the source added.

## North Korea threatens to shut liaison office with South

SEOUL, JUN 6 (AP): North Korea threatened to permanently shut a liaison office with South Korea as it continued to condemn its rival for failing to prevent activists from sending anti-North Korean leaflets across the border.

The statement by North Korea’s ruling Workers’ Party on Friday came a day after the powerful sister of leader Kim Jong Un said her country would end a military agreement reached with South Korea in 2018 to reduce tensions if Seoul fails to stop the activists.

Kim Yo Jong also said North Korea could permanently shut the liaison office and a joint factory park in the border town of Kaesong, which have been symbols of reconciliation between the two countries.

D e s p e r a t e to keep alive a faltering diplomacy with North Korea, South Korea in response said it would push new laws to ban activists from flying leaflets by balloon to the North, which triggered a debate over freedom of speech.

But an u n i d e n t i f i e d spokesman of the Workers’ Party’s i n t e r - K o r e a n Affairs Department said Seoul’s promise lacked sincerity, and the scrapping of the liaison office will be the first in a series of North Korean steps that would cause extreme suffering for the South.

The statement also confirmed an elevated status for Kim Yo Jong, who was described as her brother’s top official for inter-Korean affairs.

Under her instructions, North Korea has decided as a first step to definitely withdraw the idling (North-South) joint liaison office housed in the Kaesong industrial zone, the statement said.

We do not hide that we have had long in mind decisive measures to fundamentally remove all provocations from the South and to completely shut down and remove all the contact leverage with the (South), said the spokesman of the party’s United Front Department.

Referring to the leaflets, the spokesman said the nonstop disposal of dirty rubbish from the South side has exhausted us so much as to come to a clearer conclusion that enemies are enemies after all.

O u r determination is to follow as far as the evil cycle of the confrontation leads while facing the situation squarely, because our path is always straight.

# Global race protests mark George Floyd’s death

Taking a knee, chanting and ignoring social distancing measures, outraged protesters from Sydney to London kicked off a weekend of global rallies Saturday against racism and police brutality.

The death during the arrest of George Floyd, an unarmed black man in the US state of Minnesota, has brought tens of thousands out onto the streets during a pandemic that is ebbing in Asia and Europe, but spreading in other parts of the world.

UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock spoke for many concerned officials as he tried to convince Britons not to gather for events involving more than six people this weekend, no matter the cause or their rage.

“Like so many people, I am appalled by the death of George Floyd. I understand why people are deeply upset,” the UK health minister said on Friday.

“But we are still facing a health crisis and coronavirus remains a real threat.”

Londoners intend to rally outside parliament on Saturday and hold a big demonstration in front of the US embassy on the opposite bank of the Thames River on Sunday.

- Dressed in black - A b o r i g i n a l p r o t e s t e r s p e r f o r m e d a traditional smoking ceremony at the start of a “Black Lives Matter” protest in Sydney, which was sanctioned at the last minute after initially being banned on health grounds.

Tens of thousands of Australians defied government orders to stay home regardless, holding up signs and wearing face masks marked up “I can’t breathe” -- the words Floyd kept repeating while handcuffed as a policeman knelt on his neck.

“The fact that they have tried to push us all back and stop the protest, it makes people want to do it even more,” said Jumikah Donovan, one of thousands who turned up thinking the Sydney ban was still in place.

Thousands more dressed in black to mourn Floyd’s death in Melbourne and other Australian cities.

Floyd’s death came during the spread of a disease that has disproportionately affected black people and ethnic minorities in global centres such as London and New York.

It also came in the throws of a historic economic downturn that has statistically affected the poor and marginalised the most.

This confluence, and accompanying outrage at US President Donald Trump’s partisan response, has refocused attention on the world’s racial divides like few other events since the 1960s.

The US embassy in London said it stood “united with the British public in grief.”

“We welcome this exercise of free speech, which contributes to constructive dialogue, education and change,” the embassy said of the London protests, adopting a more conciliatory tone than the one taken by Trump.

“There remains much work to be done.”

- Thousands defy bans - Memorial events and peaceful tributes were to stretch in Europe from Warsaw to Lisbon on Saturday, before shifting to major US cities and Canada’s Montreal.

In Paris, police banned a rally scheduled outside the US embassy compound and a second one on the Champs de Mars park facing the Eiffel Tower.

The Parisian authorities said the events denouncing police brutality were organised via social networks without official notice or consultation.

But on Tuesday, another banned rally in Paris drew more than 20,000 people in support of the family of Adama Traore, a young black man who died in police custody in 2016.

There were

also events scheduled Saturday across Britain, in Amsterdam, and for the second week running in major US cities.

Tens of thousands were expected in Washington, where Mayor Muriel Bowse renamed the area outside the White House “Black Lives Matter Plaza”.

With tensions soaring, several US police departments have launched investigations into officers who were recorded hitting, pushing or baton-charging protesters and some reporters -- including foreign ones.

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**PUP AND THE PARK!** Actress, Lucy Hale spent the afternoon at a park with her dog, Elvis, in Los Angeles.

## Kanye West creates college fund for George Floyd's daughter

**LOS ANGELES, JUN 5 (PTI):** Rapper Kanye West has set up a college fund to cover tuition for Gianna, the six-year-old daughter of George Floyd, the African-American man who died in the police custody in Minneapolis.

Floyd, 46, died on May 25 in Minneapolis, Minnesota after a white police officer knelt on his neck for nearly nine minutes in an encounter caught on video. The officer, Derek Chauvin has been charged with murder and manslaughter.

According to E! News, West's representative has revealed that the rapper has donated USD 2 million so far to charities associated with Ahmaud Arbery,

Breonna Taylor and George Floyd and has set up a college fund to cover tuition for Floyd's six-year-old daughter Gianna.

West has pledged to cover legal costs for the Arbery and Taylor families. And will be aiding black-owned businesses with financial contributions in his hometown of Chicago.

Arbery was shot while on a jog in February, while Taylor was killed in her home by police in March.

Following Floyd's death thousands have taken to the streets across the country to express their anger at the systemic racism and support the Black Lives Matter movement.

## Vikramaditya Motwane to adapt 'Black Warrant' into series

**NEW DELHI, JUN 6 (PTI):** After "Sacred Games", filmmaker Vikramaditya Motwane is set to bring the unheard stories of Tihar jail on screen with the series adaptation of "Black Warrant", publisher Roli Books announced on Friday.

Written by Tihar jail's longest serving superintendent Sunil Gupta and journalist Sunetra Choudhury, "Black Warrant" is a memoir by the law officer during his three decade long stint at the New Delhi prison.

The book looks back at some of the most famous criminals behind the bars including Ranga-Billa, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's assassin Satwant Singh and conspirator Kehar Singh, Kashmiri terrorist Maqbool Butt and the Nirbhaya rape case convicts among others.

Motwane, who had earlier served as showrunner on both the season's of Netflix's first India Original "Sacred Games", based on Vikram Chandra's 2006 book of the same name, said he is looking forward to adapt "Black Warrant".

"I am so delighted to be collaborating with Confluence Media and Roli Books on adapting this absolutely brilliant book into a series. Black Warrant' is sensational, dramatic, and riveting, and a terrific peek into the people and workings of India's largest jail," Motwane, known for films "Udaan" and "Lootera", said in a statement.

The series rights for the book have been jointly acquired by the filmmaker's production company Andolan Films and writer-journalist Josy Joseph's Confluence Media, the publisher said in press release.

# California says film, TV production can resume June 12



California will allow film, television and music production to resume from June 12 if conditions permit after months of lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic, the governor's office said Friday.

Film and television productions in the Golden State have been shuttered since mid-March. The reopening will be subject to approval by local health officers, the California Public Health Office said.

"To reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission, productions, cast, crew and other industry

workers should abide by safety protocols agreed by labor and management, which may be further enhanced by county public health officers," it said.

However it is not clear if major Hollywood studios will be able to resume operations from next week because Los Angeles county is one of the main coronavirus epicenters in California, recording about half the infections and deaths in the state.

To date, more than 125,000 cases and 4,500 deaths have been confirmed in California.

## HBO gives season two order for 'We're Here'



**LOS ANGELES, JUN 6 (PTI):** Unscripted series "We're Here" has been renewed for a second season by HBO.

The show features a trinity of drag queens -- Bob the Drag Queen, Eureka O'Hara, and Shangela, who are former contestants of "RuPaul's Drag Race".

In the series, which premiered on HBO in April, the trio travel across the United States to recruit small-town residents to

participate in one-night-only drag shows.

The season two renewal news was announced by Nina Rosenstein, executive vice president of HBO Programming, in a statement posted on the company's website.

"We're Here" resonates in ways we had hoped for but couldn't really have anticipated. The stories of our small-town drag daughters created an incredibly positive communal

experience.

"We can't wait for Bob, Shangela and Eureka to continue their journey helping others find their voice," Rosentein said.

The six-part series has been created by Stephen Warren and Johnnie Ingram, who also serve as executive producers alongside Warren, Ingram, and Eli Holzman and Aaron Saidman.

Peter LoGreco directed the first season and also executive produced.

# I put out a word everywhere that I am ready to work: Sushmita Sen

**MUMBAI, JUN 6 (PTI):** A reinvigorated Sushmita Sen returns to acting with Hotstar Specials "Aarya" and the actor says she wants to let all the filmmakers know that she is ready to work with them.

But her availability comes with a rider that she would say yes to only those projects that will help her grow as an artiste.

"I put out a word everywhere

that I am ready to work and I will give my everything. But I need something that will help me grow as an actor. If you give me that I will go out my way. I want to do good work," Sushmita said in response to a query from PTI during a virtual press conference.

Before she became an actor, Sushmita made India proud by winning the 1994 Miss Universe pageant. She was just 18 years

old when she became the first Indian woman to win the beauty competition.

Two years later, she made her Bollywood debut with Mahesh Bhatt's "Dastak", which she followed up with blockbusters like "Zor", "Biwi No 1", "Aankhen", "Main Hoon Na" and "Maine Pyar Kyun Kiya". But after a lull period, Sushmita took a sabbatical from acting few years ago.

**Aries:** Daily reminder, Aries: now is not the time to play it small or safe. The full moon in Sag is encouraging you to re-examine your creative projects. Which are the ones that demand your undivided attention? Get into action mode despite the self-doubt, the insecurities, and the trepidation. Know that when you take one step towards the Universe, the Universe takes ten steps in your direction.

**Taurus:** Author Joshua Becker, who champions minimalism, describes the philosophy as "intentionally living with only the things I really need—those items that support my purpose." Today, you're being encouraged to draw inspiration from his words and examine your surroundings. Are your possessions adding to the clutter or helping you live intentionally? Have you secretly been glorifying the 'more is less' philosophy? Taurus, your worth is not dependent on the number of things you own. Neither is your happiness. Downsizing is a good way to let go of the old story and redirect your energy towards the things that truly matter.

**Gemini:** Sometimes, we become so obsessed with our desires, we believe there is only one way out of the maze. But what if your tunnel vision is the

reason you're feeling limited, Gemini? Spirit wants you to embrace the qualities of trust and surrender. The path will reveal itself once you let go of your false sense of control. The cards are also warning you against trying to do everything on your own (hello, burnout!). Perfect the art of delegation. As a leader, you understand what your subordinates are capable of.

**Cancer:** You've been here before, Cancer. You've been lied to and cheated on. So, why are you going back to the old ways or allowing them to walk all over you again? Remember who you are and call your power back. Truth-telling is also going to be a big theme. Your higher self is drawing your attention to all the ways in which you have been betraying yourself. If the masks that keep you safe are the very masks that are beginning to stifle you, it's time to let them go, moon child.

**Leo:** It's a magical time in the Leo HQ! You are connecting with your special someone and your soul tribe like never before. With things opening up, you may even have the opportunity to spend time with those you love (don't forget the safety measures, though!). Lovers who have been quarantined away from each other are realising that this

time has brought them closer to each other in a multitude of ways. If you can survive this, you can survive anything at all. There will soon come a day when you will wake up in each other's arms.

**Virgo:** It's easy to shut down at the first sign of distress. You know what takes an insane amount of courage? Standing up and speaking up. Use your voice for the greater good, Virgo. Wield your power to educate. The world needs you to be the most glorious version of yourself. On the personal front, this is a time of transitions. You're leaving your painful past behind and moving towards a better tomorrow. Let's raise a toast to the hope that keeps us alive in the darkest of times!

**Libra:** It's easy to bury yourself under a pile of unfinished work or make your life a race to the finish line. Allowing yourself to live in the moment? That's a whole different ball game, Libra. Today, you're being asked to slow down despite your resistance. Find joy and beauty in the present. As you do, reassess your self-care rituals. Receive the care and nurturing you have been giving so freely to others. PS: Consider a full moon meditation or an art therapy session.

**Scorpio:** The journey isn't over, Scorpio. It is, in fact, just getting started. The transition from chaos to cosmos is in order. Instead of second guessing yourself or doubting the mission you have undertaken, trust the timing of everything in your life. Make the most of the given opportunity and take a leap of faith. Remember, life doesn't come with a manual, and if it did, things would be terribly boring. 'One step at a time' is a mantra that will help you find your way.

**Sagittarius:** What if forever is a myth? What if all you truly have is this moment? The cards are urging you to acknowledge the connections that are a source of joy and harmony, and invest your energy into them. You never know where you will be six months from now, Sagittarius! As such, nurturing your interpersonal relationships is a big theme for you right now. Consider a virtual full moon party tonight. Your soul crew will be delighted to partake in the celebration.

**Capricorn:** You've tried your best to resolve this conflict, but with no avail. Sometimes, it's best to disengage from the drama until things simmer down. Redirect your energy towards you, Capricorn. Focus on silence, solitude and

the simple act of coming home to yourself. Go for a walk in nature or make time for a full moon meditation. Remember to put your phone on flight mode as you do. Your heightened psychic abilities will help tap into a higher plane of consciousness and find the answers you need at this moment.

**Aquarius:** The lockdown has been a reset for you in so many ways. It has brought forth a new way of being and a new way of interacting with the world. Your fitness regimen has been upgraded too. You are no longer dependent on your gym or your trainer to help you figure out what's right for you. This chapter of your life is about consciously tuning into the needs of your body and designing a workout that suits you. PS: You can always turn to the virtual world for manuals or inspiration.

**Pisces:** You've been loved many times before. But never with this much depth, passion, and intensity. It's a magical time in your world. Consider this as your license to feel all the feels, Pisces. Spending time with your children or the young ones in the family is also going to be a big theme. Let go of your adult pants for once and embrace the spirit of playfulness. The joy of living in the present is immeasurable