

MONEY 6

'ECONOMIC RECOVERY IN INDIA TO BE SMOOTHER, FASTER'

WORLD 7

NEW YORK RECORDS 562 DEATHS IN SINGLE DAY

SPORT 8

FIFA POSTPONE U-17 WOMEN'S WC IN INDIA



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USUAL SUSPECTS SWAPAN DASGUPTA

Lockdown saboteurs lack common sense

Nearly every English-language newspaper this Saturday morning has at least one sombre piece warning readers to not go overboard with their reactions. That is always good advice, whether dealing with anger, sadness or happiness.

Why, in an age when political correctness has banished the notion of self-restraint from our value system, are we suddenly being advised to get a grip on our feelings? The answer is obvious. For the past 10 days or even more, most law-abiding citizens of India have physically withdrawn from the outside world both for self-preservation and as an act of social responsibility.

Why is everyone going through such an enormous amount of personal inconvenience? Why is the world order being turned upside down? It is because we are confronted with a dreaded disease with no cure in sight.

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It is at such a time that the Tablighi Jamaat has entered the scene. As of last Friday night, the convention hosted by this so-called religious organisation has resulted in 647 coronavirus cases in 14 States from Kashmir to the Andaman Islands.

What can be said with certainty is that the best plans by the Government to flatten the curve and reverse the process of coronavirus spread has suffered a setback because of the Tablighi Jamaat.

The ones who came from far and wide to Delhi's West Nizamuddin, a congested Muslim ghetto, to imbibe religious scholarship went there fully aware that the gathering was against all the guidelines issued by the Delhi Government to protect citizens.

People are angry not merely because Government guidelines were violated in a pre-meditated manner but that the organisers were brazen in their defiance, choosing to put out the message that they somehow had divine protection against coronavirus.

People are angry because what is clear a public health issue have been projected as an issue of religious identity. There are reports from all over India that Muslim localities are defiantly not observing social distancing and continuing life as usual.

But instead of getting livid over these rotten apples in the basket of India, our great secular intellectuals are saying we should be restrained in our reactions. Turning the other cheek and showering forgiveness to people who know not what they are doing is good stuff for elevated souls.

30% corona cases linked to Tablighis

Govt figures put number below 3K, but realtime data claims 3,500 +ve cases; 601 new cases; death toll at 68

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As coronavirus cases continued to swell in the country, adding 400-500 patients a day since Wednesday, the Centre on Saturday again linked the rise to the Tablighi Jamaat members congregating in Delhi's Nizamuddin Markaz in mid-March, saying they alone contributed 30 per cent of the total cases.

The Ministry of Health said total number of cases as on Saturday morning stood below 3,000, including 68 death and 601 new cases reported over the last 24 hours.

"Till now there are 2,902 positive cases in India. 601 positive cases have been reported since Friday, 12 deaths also reported on Friday, taking the total to 68. One eighty three people have recovered/discharged," said Lav Agarwal, Joint Secretary in the Ministry.

But according to the total of figures collected from States, the overall numbers of positive cases stood at 3,510 by 8.30 pm on Saturday. Maharashtra stood at the peak 537 positive cases, including 47 new. It was followed by Tamil Nadu with 485 positive cases, including 74 new. With 59 new cases, Delhi was on the third spot.

The national Capital has overall 445 positive cases. Kerala with 304 positive cases, 11 of them new was placed fourth. Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan had more than 200 cases each.



Attendees of the Tablighi congregation in Delhi's Nizamuddin area board an ambulance for mandatory COVID-19 tests, in Agartala on Saturday

Meanwhile, Dharavi in Mumbai reported two more cases of coronavirus, taking the total number of positive cases in the area to five.

Agarwal said 1,023 coronavirus cases in 17 States were related to the Jamaat's congregation. "Around 30 per cent of the total cases are related to the religious congregation so far. We need to understand that we are as strong as the weakest link," he said.

Punya Salila Srivastava, Joint Secretary in the Home Affairs Ministry, said through

a massive coordinated effort around 22,000 Tablighis and their contacts have been quarantined.

All issues related to the ongoing lockdown are being monitored by a 24x7 control room of the Ministry of Home Affairs here, she said, adding that about 200 personnel from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and Central Armed Police Forces are linked to it on the ground level.

The officer said all measures to implement the three-week nationwide lockdown, set to end on April 14, have been effective till now and the supply of essential goods and services has been "satisfactory".

Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla has written to States and Union Territories to ensure that the supply chain of essential items is not obstructed during the lockdown period, she said.

The first installment of ₹11,092 crore under the State disaster response fund was released by the MHA on Friday. States can utilise this money for ensuring aid to migrant workers and other calamity-related work, she said.

States and UTs are running relief camps for migrant workers and other needy people in coordination with NGOs and other community groups, she added.

India bucks global trend, 42% cases from 21-40-yr group

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Contrary to the global trend where elderly are said to be the most vulnerable to Covid-19, in India it is the young people who are bearing the brunt of the deadly disease. At least 42 per cent of the total positive cases reported so far are in the age group of 21-40. People above 60 years accounted for only 17 per cent of the cases.

"We have done the age profile analysis of Covid-19 cases in India. We found that 9 per cent of positive cases are in between 0-20 years, 42 per cent cases are in the age group of 21-40, 33 per cent in 41-60 and 17 per cent in the people above 60 years of age," said Lav Agarwal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

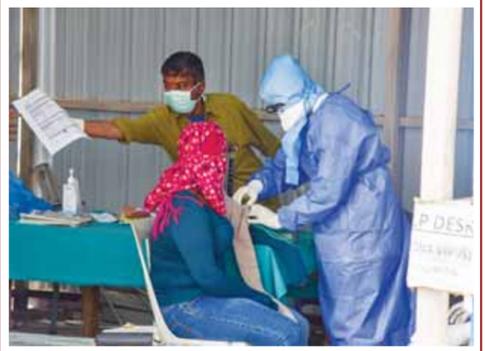
However, in contrast, as situation prevails at present, most of the fatalities reported in India are from the higher

People above 60 account for 17%; fatalities highest among elderly

Around 1.15 million people from across the world are infected with the virus which has claimed 60,428 lives since the first case of Covid-19 was reported in December last year from Wuhan in China. So far, 2,36,095 have recovered.

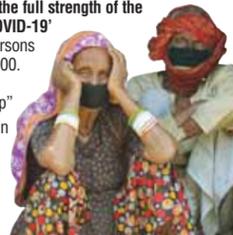
"As far as deaths are concerned, we have noticed that advanced age and co-morbidities such as diabetes, kidney and cardiac ailments played an important role in deaths," said Agarwal.

"We are battling with this on a day-to-day basis. Still, the case doubling rate in India is lesser than others," he added.



THE SCORE

- The number of coronavirus cases stood at 445 in Delhi but the situation was under control and there was no community transmission, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Saturday. There were 40 cases of local transmission while a majority of other patients either had foreign travel history or they were recently evacuated from Nizamuddin Markaz, he said.



U-turn on domicile order: Govt tries to win hearts & minds

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre's decision to reverse its Tuesday night order notifying a new domicile status for Jammu & Kashmir reflects a realisation that it needed to take political parties together for maintaining long-term normalcy in the Union Territory.

As per the latest order, all jobs in Jammu & Kashmir will be for those who stayed in the area for at least 15 years.

The Centre was forced to withdraw its order following angry response from Jammu & Kashmir-based political parties, including National Conference (NC), People's Democratic Party (PDP) and newly formed Jammu & Kashmir Apni Party.

The State unit of the BJP too had briefed top brass of the party after receiving brick bats from common masses over ignoring their genuine concerns while drafting the rules defining the domicile status and granting reservation in

jobs meant only for fourth class employees.

An official said that swift response from the Centre was meant to win hearts and minds of the people of Jammu & Kashmir especially at a time when the Centre has already initiated political process with the setting up of delimitation commission.

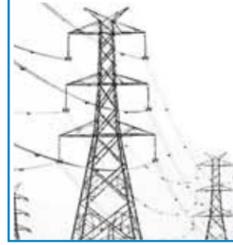
"Any person who fulfils the following conditions shall be a domicile of the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir for the purposes of appointment to any post under the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir," said the revised notification titled as Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Adaptation of State Laws) Order-2020.

"...no person shall be eligible for appointment to any post unless he is a domicile of the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir," the amended Jammu and Kashmir Civil Services (Decentralisation and Recruitment) Act, which is a part of the notification, said.

Grid failure fear during blackout solidarity misplaced: Minister

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid concerns raised by several Opposition leaders, including former Power Minister Jai Ram Ramesh, that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for a 9-minute blackout at 9 pm on April 5 could result in a grid collapse, the Ministry of Power on Saturday said the apprehensions that this may cause instability in grid and voltage fluctuation harming electrical appliances are misplaced.



Clearing the air over a possible power grid collapse, the Power Ministry said there is no call to switch off street lights or appliances in homes like TV, refrigerators, air conditioners and only lights should be switched off for 9 minutes.

The lights in hospitals and other essential services will remain on. The clarification came after several news reports claimed that the Prime Minister's appeal for a 9-minute blackout would result in power grid collapse and would take time to restore power across the nation.

Ramesh, Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, and Maharashtra Energy Minister Nitin Raut have expressed concern that PM's call could lead to a multi-State grid collapse and result in blackout in entire country.

Discharge for 17 survivors in MP on cards

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

As the Covid-19 patients have surged to 115 in Madhya Pradesh commercial capital Indore, the city has finally heaved a sigh of relief as the administration has reported that 17 of those tested positive have recovered and could be discharged from hospitals in a day or two.

The total number of positive patients has reached 179. Meanwhile, the Covid19 mayhem continued to batter Indore city as 23 new patients were tested positive late evening on Friday taking up the tally of infected locals to 112 on Saturday.

Indore witnessed two more deaths on Saturday as an 80-year-old and a 42-year-old man, both earlier tested positive died during treatment. Another man

died at Chhindwara taking up the tally of Covid19 deaths to 11 in Madhya Pradesh. However, Indore battered by high number of corona cases had some respite on

INDORE WITNESSED 2 MORE DEATHS AS AN 80-YR-OLD AND A 42-YR-OLD MAN DIED DURING TREATMENT. ANOTHER MAN DIED AT CHHINDWARA TAKING UP THE TALLY OF COVID19 DEATHS TO 11 IN MADHYA PRADESH

Saturday as the administration affirmed that 17 locals who have tested positive earlier have recovered and could be discharged from hospitals in a day or two.

Indore divisional commissioner Akash Tripathi said that 17 of those earlier tested positive have recovered and after some necessary tests, could be discharged from hospitals soon.

Now, State Health Dept Principal Secy tests +ve

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

After IAS officer J Vikay Kumar, Health Director was tested positive, there is a chaos among the IAS officials, Health department and the State Government.

Principal Secretary of Health department Pallavi Jain Govil was on Saturday tested positive. She had the responsibility of issuing health bulletin everyday. She released the bulletin even on Saturday.

Integrated Disease Servillance Programme (IDSP) Head Dr Veena Sinha was also tested positive on Saturday. At least 15 IAS officers have isolated themselves.

Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains, who also came in contact

with the positive person, is going to office but not chairing any meeting.

After the videoconference Integrated Disease Servillance Programme Head was also tested positive

ing of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Bains on Saturday issued a list of 14 officers and their second-line officers.

These second line officers would look after the works instead of the officers who have gone in quarantine.

The administration has also expanded the testing capacity of the labs and from Saturday onwards, total 150 tests would be carried out daily.

There are sufficient num-

bers of medical equipment including medicines, masks, ventilators and so on and there is nothing to worry, said Tripathi adding the situation could be under control in a week or so.

Suspects have been quarantined and those with medical issues are being treated in hospitals under isolation. Health staff is carrying out extensive

check-up in badly affected areas including - Nayapura, Khajrana, Ranipura, Chandan Nagar, Hathipala and others to detect suspects.

In a day or two, the administration is starting the home delivery of essentials and for this, the carts engaged in collection of garbage collection from households would be offered orders by the locals and supply vehicles would arrive at their doorsteps.

Meanwhile, the journalist based in Bhopal and his daughter who had contracted the infection earlier have tested negative for the virus and returned home on Saturday.

# 'I have never regretted my decisions'

DEBINA BONNERJEE who plays Mallika in Sony Sab's Aladdin Naam Toh Suna Hoga speaks with MUSBA HASHMI about what made her take up the role, challenges and how it was hilarious to act with Gurmeet to begin with

**■ What is your role in Aladdin Naam Toh Suna Hoga?**

I play Mallika, who is the creator of djinn and the lamp. She is the one who has created all the djinns.

**■ What attracted you to play the role?**

The dimensions of the character ofcourse. It is a very larger than life and humongous character. Mallika is the lead antagonist, it is like the whole show is on one side and Mallika single-handedly on the other. She stands tall. Moreover, the show is also well-established so there were no reasons for me to turn down the project.

**■ From Mayavi to now Aladdin, how has the journey been?**

It has been an excellent one. Throughout my journey, I followed God's instinct more than mine. There was a time when I auditioned for a few projects and I took the ones that got finalised first instead of taking the chance of waiting for the other ones thinking that they might be better. There were times when I was a part of a couple of projects at the same time but I have never regretted my decisions that 'oh I should have waited for other things to happen'. And in return whatever project I took back then turned out well for me. I believed that it was God's will, therefore I never questioned my decisions.

**■ How easy or difficult was it for you to be a part of this industry?**

I wouldn't say it was easy or difficult. Acting just happened with me. No one in my family belong to the field and hence, I had no one who could have guided me for my better back then. I only had a dream, that of being an actor. I kept on believing in it so much so that I developed the etiquette of an



actor —body language and others. And that didn't make sense to many people back then. I remember when I was in Class VIII, my teacher scolded for me behaving like a heroine. I had a mixed feeling then — bad because I felt it was humiliating and good because I thought that people have started to believe that I have the qualities of an actor and can become one, even though I had no clue of what the field used to be like.

Then after some time, I took part in certain competitions, looked for work in the newspaper and eventually it happened and I came into the industry. One changed led to the other. I have always managed to be as hardworking as I was before, I never felt saturated and never took anything casually. Even when I was in the most comfortable of positions, I had tried to evolve and be where I am today. So it wasn't easy at all. Now when I see people who are enamoured by our lifestyle and profession come into this industry but it is not the way how things work. They are not persistent enough, may be they are for the initial two years but then it gets lost. However, my husband (Gurmeet Choudhary) and I both have worked extremely hard all our lives. We

have always motivated each other to improve our skills.

**■ You and Gurmeet are one of the power couples of the industry. What keeps the relationship so fresh?**

It is because we are best friends first. And one can never get bored of their friend. Also we have set our individualistic priorities right, it is not as if one of us have kept that aside. The other day someone was telling me that people should give space to their partners. That's what made me think that do we give space to each other and the answer was instantly a yes. Take for example if I am out with my friends that includes only girls and if Gurmeet is free and is getting bored at home then I ask him to join us and he never says no and vice versa. We have that level of understanding and there is no hard core role that my time is my time. Also, we are each others' first priority and everything else comes second. This is what keeps us going.

**■ You both have worked together on various shows. How easy or difficult was that?**

Initially, it was difficult to work. We got to work together on our first break — *Ramayan* and even *Mayavi*. We used to laugh a lot. I found it hilarious to act together. Then gradually we started having lot of expectations from each other, we advised each other too. Then after some time, we got to work together for a film on a digital space and we realised how both of us have evolved as actors as well as human beings by working together. We were matured and stopped expecting from each other, in terms of work. The equation had changed over the years for us as actors and that was great.

**■ What is there in the pipeline?**

Currently I am focusing solely on *Aladdin...* and there is a film — *Shubho Bijoyo* that I have done with Gurmeet. It will release soon.

## Plan Your Stay At Home Sunday

To beat all the Coronavirus blues, Disney+Hotstar is set to offer an unmatched entertainment experience for families with the world's best superhero movies, unrivalled animated films, popular kids programming, recently released Bollywood blockbusters, exclusive Hotstar Specials shows, unlimited live sporting action, and much more. Subscribers of Disney+ Hotstar Premium will now be able to explore the world of great entertainment including critically acclaimed Disney+ Originals. Here's a list of 10 must-watch shows and movies.



**The Mandalorian:** After the fall of the Galactic Empire, lawlessness has spread throughout the galaxy. A lone gunfighter makes his way through the outer reaches, earning his keep as bounty hunter

**High School Musical: The Series:** Thirteen years after *High School Musical* was filmed at East High, the drama department is putting together a bold new production: *High School Musical: The Musical* and this time the lyrics are on screen, so you can sing along in every episode

**The World According to Jeff Goldblum:** Jeff Goldblum pulls the thread of a deceptively familiar object to unravel a world of astonishing connections with fascinating sciences and history. Through the prism of his witty mind, nothing is at it seems.



**Lady and the Tramp:** A timeless re-telling of the 1955 animated classic, *Lady* — a pampered American Cocker Spaniel and *Tramp* — a tough but lovable stray, embark on an unexpected adventure and despite their difference, come to understand the value of home.

**Togo:** In the winter of 1925, a champion dogsled trainer and his lead sled dog, Togo, embark on an exhilarating journey across the treacherous terrain of the Alaskan tundra to help transport an antitoxin serum to a small town.

**Encore:** Executive producer Kristen Bell reunites

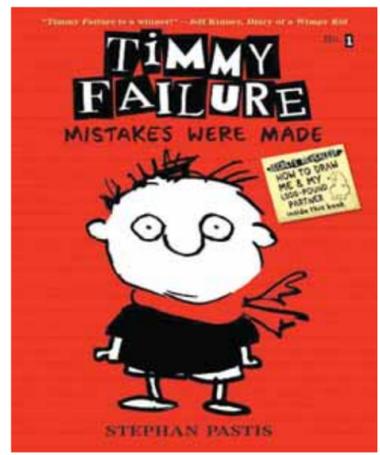
former high school classmates from around the U.S. to re-stage the musicals of their youth, years after the originally performed them.

**Disney's Fairy Tale Weddings:** A behind-the-scenes look at the magical weddings the one-of-a-kind engagements that take place at Disney Destinations around the globe including Walt Disney World, Disneyland and Disney Cruise Lines.

**The Imagineering Story:** Leslie Iwerks leads the viewers on a journey behind the curtains of Walt Disney Imagineering, the little-known design and development centre of The Walt Disney Company, to discover what it takes to create Disney theme parks around the world.

**Diary of a Future President:** Elena is on a path to become the President of the United States, but for now, she has to navigate through middle school with the help of her family and friend while documenting the pivotal highs and lows of her journey in the trusty diary

**Timmy Failure: Mistakes Were Made:** Timmy Failure follows the hilarious exploits of our quirky, deadpan hero, Timmy Failure, who along with his 1500-pound polar bear partner Total Failure Inc. a Portland detective agency.



## TELLYTALE

**MANIT GOES AN EXTRA MILE**



Ever since *Kundali Bhagya* was launched, the show has been the most loved Indian television show. The stellar cast including the likes of Dheeraj Dhoopar (Karan), Shaddha Arya (Preeti), Manit Joura (Rishab), Anjum Fakih (Shrishti), Sanjay Gagnani (Prithvi) and Abhishek Kapur (Sameer), are being appreciated by one and all. However, looks like everyone's love for Manit is going to grow by leaps and bounds after hearing about what he has been up to during this COVID-19 lockdown.

In such difficult times when the whole country is locked down courtesy COVID-19, the *Kundali Bhagya* actor is trying to give back to the world in his own little and humble way. Manit Joura has come out in support of man's best friend, dogs. He loves canines and hence, he is going the extra mile for them. In association with Animals Matter To Me (AMTM), the actor has been feeding the stray dogs and with immense safety as instructed by the Government. In fact, they have taken permission from the Mumbai police to be able to go around the city for the same. In crucial times like these, when the horror of getting affected by the virus haunts everyone and keeps them indoors, he has shown immense courage and selflessness for the ones in need, who cannot even speak, and are often neglected.

When asked about the initiative, Manit shared: "Animals are as much a part of our society as we are! Domesticated animals have lived around humans all their lives and are mostly fed by them. In fact, dogs have forever been a man's best friend. However, the nationwide lockdown has rendered them confused, unfed, and thus, hungry and in this hour of need, I believe, we must show up for them. I'm so grateful that AMTM understood the cruciality of the situation and supported the cause. I wish we could do this on a larger scale, only if we were not victim to such critical situations."

The dog lover in Manit could not help but say: "It's our duty to look after these animals in the times of need. I would go baskers if Bella (his dog) is subject to anything of this sort. Being the parent of my beautiful Irish Setter, Bella has taught me so much compassion and empathy. And I wish

we all could have the same for the stray dogs who have always been around us. I do hope everybody is safe and staying indoors and is doing their bit to help the society in their own ways."

**KINSHUK CELEBRATES QUIET B'D'AY**

Every year, birthdays remind us to be grateful about the past year of our life and the next year that is about to begin. With varied people having their own unique ways to celebrate birthdays, we totally love to know how celebrities spend their special day.

*RadhaKrishn* fame actor Kinshuk Vaidya who will turn a year older today, is having a quiet birthday due to the coronavirus lockdown.

Kinshuk mentioned: "In the light of



social distancing, it is going to be a quiet birthday celebration for me this year. However, I am looking forward to spending the day with my parents and grandmother. I'm sure my friends are planning something special for me over video calls."

Kinshuk will soon be seen in *Star Bharat RadhaKrishn* — *Krishn Arjun Gatha* where he will be seen essaying the role of Arjun.

**AKANKSHA'S LOVE FOR SUNGLASSES**



Everyone around you would be obsessing over an accessory which they cant get enough of. It can be anything from earrings, necklaces, bracelets to belts, shoes. The stunning Akanksha Puri who plays the role of Parvati in Sony Entertainment Television's *Vighnaharta Ganesh* has a

special love for sunglasses. She has more than two dozen sunglasses and loves collecting them. She believes that they are not only a necessity but also a great style statement which can automatically uplift your attire.

The ones who love sunglasses have a variety of sunglasses to choose from such as cat eye, aviator, oval and many more. Women and men both are going gala over the choices they have got in Sunglasses. One of them is Akanksha Puri she is fascinated with sunglasses. She makes sure she has at least two sunglasses in her bag whenever she goes out. She also takes much care of them and has especially bought sprays for cleaning her sunglasses. Akanksha makes sure she has sunglasses for all her attires and occasion from gym, to lunches, beaches and more.

Akanksha expressed her love for sunglasses and said: "People have their choices, some collect coins, some have an affinity for bags, while some are fond of collecting stamps. Likewise, I am sunglasses lover. I am a huge sunglasses hoarder and believe that in today's times sunglasses are like a necessity not only it protects your eyes but is also symbol of style as well. My friends and family member keep gifting me sunglasses as they know how much I am obsessed with them."

**MEERA SPENDS TIME READING BOOKS**



Meera Deosthale, who is currently playing the character of Vidya in Colors' eponymous show, has often spoken about her love for reading. However, given her hectic shoot schedule, the actress never got enough time to do so. Now that the entire country is under lockdown, Meera finally gets to spend some quality time reading her favourite books and the ones that were on her wishlist.

Commenting on her obsession for books Meera said: "I have always been very outspoken about my obsession and love for books. During my free time at home, I am making the most of the opportunity and spending my time reading. I am catching up on books by some of my favourite authors that I wasn't able to read because of back to back shoots. The best part about reading books is that you always learn something new that you would have never known otherwise. I hope everyone's finding themselves while staying home and staying safe."

# Timeless classics for lockdown

To beat COVID-19 blues and give a feel of the good old days, several shows like *Ramayan*, *Mahabharat* and *Shaktimaan* are being re-telecast. MUSBA HASHMI tells you why they are still in demand

The silver lining in the grey clouds of the Coronavirus pandemic is that it has brought families closer. So much so that DD National found it the right time to go back in time and bring back all the family dramas or to be precise classics that had people glued to their sets. Back in the 80s and 90s, it was an era when people would eagerly wait for their favourite shows. It was nothing short of a festivity and *puja* for some when they would do *aarti* of the TV sets as soon as *Ramayan* was aired.

From mythological shows like *Ramayan* and *Mahabharat* to fantasy ones like *Alif Laila*, to dramas like *Circus* to superheroes series like *Shaktimaan*, there's something for everyone to watch during this lockdown and keep them entertained.

Nitish Bhardwaj, who played Lord Krishna in *Mahabharat*, says that the reason why the millennials too are glued to their TV screens in the re-telecast of these shows is because of curiosity.

"The millennials are wondering why their parents were praising these serials so much, what is there that makes them stand out. This curiosity has attracted the attention of the younger generation towards the re-telecast," he says.

Another reason is that the storyline is relevant even today and hence fresh. "The value systems and the drama of human relationships in these serials is relevant for all times. The human conflict and struggle has in fact increased over the last 30 years and this makes *Mahabharat* even more identifiable," Bhardwaj tells you.

There is a difference, he says, in the shows that were made then and now. "People nowadays call their shows factory-line 'soaps' whereas our shows were and still are 'designer products' which cater to both classes and masses," he adds.

Mukesh Khanna, who played Shaktimaan says that good work remains good even if you watch it after 30 years down the line. "Gold will always remain gold, no matter after how long you dig it. That was a period of creativity. You name any show from those days and it is still as good. Shows now have lost essence. One reason for this may be the daily telecast," he says.

He tells you that the re-telecast

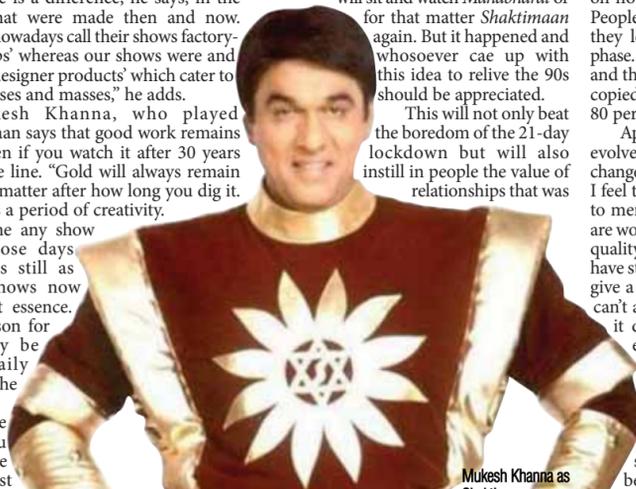


of these shows was next to impossible but now that it has happened, it is time to cheer up. "Back then, when *Mahabharat* used to come on TV, everyone was hooked to their screens and it looked like a curfew situation on the roads. Then with the emergence of more and more channels, the variety of content increased manifold. It looked impossible that these shows will ever come back because of the varied taste of the audience. I could have never imagined that there will be a time when the whole country will sit and watch *Mahabharat* or for that matter *Shaktimaan* again. But it happened and whosoever cae up with this idea to relive the 90s should be appreciated.

This will not only beat the boredom of the 21-day lockdown but will also instill in people the value of relationships that was slowly being lost. Moreover, the younger generation will get a taste of their culture and tradition which is the need of the hour," Khanna tells you.

Khanna hopes that the re-telecast of such shows will bring about a change in the TV industry and that makers would now start coming up with concept that will stay relevant even after three decades years.

"I hope that this change will come and the makers will realise that the audience wants something fresh but it will depend on how long the lockdown period stays. People have the tendency to forget what they learnt once they come out of that phase. People should stop repeating content and think of newer concepts. One track is copied by multiple shows and as a result, 80 per cent has low TRPs," he says. Apart from the fact that technology has evolved, Khanna hasn't see any positive change in the TV industry. "All these years, I feel that TV has degraded a lot. Yes, not to mention there are a lot of people who are working extremely hard, the otherwise quality of things have degraded. People have started twisting history. They want to give a modern twist to everything which can't and shouldn't happen because then it doesn't showcase our culture. The essence gets lost. Not everything can be modernised especially mythological shows. This is the reason why many such shows failed to leave a mark," he says and gives a hint that the audience will get to see *Shaktimaan Season 2*, bigger and better soon.



Mukesh Khanna as Shaktimaan

# CM: Jan Parishad, NCC and NSS made valuable contribution in Corona crisis

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that Jan Abhiyan Parishad, NCC and NSS have made valuable contribution in the social service. In the current Corona crisis, their assistance must be sought to help the public. Chief Minister Chouhan was holding a discussion with the Jan Abhiyan Parishad, NCC and NSS officials through video conferencing. As many as 416 people of Jan Abhiyan Parishad who have contact with about 27 thousand institutions at the village level are working in the state at the district and block level. There have been no activities in the last one and a half years. The Chief Minister

directed that the Parishad should actively work to help people in Corona crisis. The Parishad team should make a list of non-social organisations working in their areas and their support must also be sought in the current Corona crisis. The Chief Minister directed that the workers of Jan Abhiyan Parishad should work with the help of local administration to deliver food and food grain to the needy. Along with this, they should cooperate in the distribution work of Ayurveda, Homeopathy and Unani medicines in rural areas. These drugs are effective in increasing immunity. They should also provide factual information to the villagers

regarding the Corona virus. Principal Secretary Higher Education Neeraj Mandloi told the Chief Minister that 735 NSS units are working in the State, with total 1.5 lakh students out of which one lakh are college students, whose support can be taken during the Corona crisis. 10,000 students have given their consent to work during the Corona crisis. Chief Minister Chouhan directed that support from these institutions can be sought for transmission of useful messages, information centre, call center, distribution of food and other materials etc. through social media. Students should be given work that are not risky. ADG Major General Sanjay Sharma of NCC told the

Chief Minister that the services of N.C.C. Senior Division students who are more than 18 years of age can be taken in Corona crisis. As many as 700 children whose families have given consent have been identified. They can be used in helpline, call center, material supply management and relief material distribution etc. They can be put into work by giving them necessary training. The Chief Minister directed that after providing proper training to them, their services should be taken during the Corona crisis as per rules. They should be put to work with complete safety and caution, children should be made to serve in the city/village to which they belong.

# Corona outbreak impacted 1.13 cr people

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The Coronavirus outbreak, which originated in China, has infected more than 1.13 crore people across the World. It has left businesses around the world struggling for their existence, costing billions of dollars. Stock markets around the globe tumbled like pack of cards, industries like Auto, aviation, retail, ecommerce, travel etc have been badly hit due to the pandemic arise due of the COVID-19 outbreak. India is no exception to this economic crisis, effected by a total halt to major industrial production, an estimated loss of over 2 crores of jobs in the Country. More than 10,000 tweets in less than 10 hours to ban Tiktok in India have been trending on Twitter since

Friday morning. Commenting on the Tiktok ban in India, Kishore Shukla, Social Activist and a Retired Manager, Bank of Baroda, Madhya Pradesh said, "I strongly oppose the Tiktok app. This is how Chinese are having access to our valuable personal data which may hit us badly if we continue to use the app." In the past also, Tiktok has been facing heat from Indians to ban the app in the Country because of thousands of deaths occurred in the country while making Tiktok Videos. Last year, Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) - the economic wing of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh - also called for a ban on Chinese social media applications Tiktok and Helo, to protect India's national security and



startup ecosystem. In a letter sent to Prime Minister, it said "While we have extensive regulation on foreign funding in media, these applications under the garb of social media platforms circumvent our domestic rules that exist to protect national security," SJM claimed the Chinese ByteDance-owned applications were exposing India's youth to vested interests at an early stage.

# 22-year-old woman dies under suspicious circumstances at Kolar

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Janhavi Rajak was found in an unconscious state at around 4

found in an unconscious state at around 4 in the afternoon and was rushed to a nearby hospital where she died later during treatment. Police have not found any suicide note or any reason behind the suicide and have claimed that the deceased had consumed poison which would be investigated. The reason of the death was not clear claimed the police. Body was sent for the post mortem after the preliminary investigation. The police have registered a case under section 174 of the CrPC and have started further investigation. Police said that the husband of the deceased who works as a labourer came to

house in the afternoon to have food and after food went to sleep and at around 4 he found his wife in an unconscious state. He took her to hospital after he failed to bring her to conscious and where she was declared dead. In the initial investigation it was found that verbal spat with the family members used to occur, still the statements of the family members apart from the husband are yet to be recorded which could help in revealing the reason behind the death. During the investigation details of the husband would be investigated. It is not possible to ascertain the reason of death.

# MP Edu Board to gear up for class 10 and 12 exams

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The students of Madhya Pradesh School Board of Education (MPSBE) now have to gear up for class 10 and 12 exams. The new date sheet will soon be released by MPSBE. Like all other board exams, MP board exams were postponed due to Corona Virus spread. The board is looking for the correct opportunity to release the MP board new time table for class 10 and 12. All the school examinations of the board were cancelled by the Madhya Pradesh Government. A new date for board exams will be released soon after the lockdown is over. All the students are eagerly waiting for the exam dates. As soon as new dates are released by Madhya Pradesh Education Board, the students need to be ready for the exams. The MPBSE will soon announce the new dates for the cancelled exams. It is to be noted that examination of Biology, History, Accounts and Book keeping, Chemistry, Geography, Political Science were scheduled in these dates for class 12 for MPBSE. For class 10 CBSE Computer Science exam was scheduled on March 20. Besides, for class 12 CBSE the exams of Sociology, Biotechnology, Computer Science, Hindi, Geography and Business Studies were scheduled on these dates.

# Bhojpuri Ekta Manch distributes 1000 earthen diyas in city

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Bhojpuri Ekta Manch distributed 1000 earthen diyas in the city on Saturday. President Kunwar Prasad of Bhojpuri Ekta Manch told that Maharishi Patanjali campus Gandhinagar today to celebrate Prime Minister's Sankalp Prakash festival on Sunday, April 5, 2020 at 9:00 pm on the whole of India, battling the corona pandemic. Free distribution of 1000 earthen diyas made from Bhojpuri Ekta Manch On this occasion, Kunwar Prasad Yogendra Singh Pura Singh Reema Devi Mamta Jat, Tejaswini Prasad Ravi were

# Kamla Nagar police nab drug peddler near Ganga Nagar trisection

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Kamla Nagar police have nabbed a drug peddler near Ganga Nagar trisection and recovered drugs (Cannabis) weighing around 2 kg from his possession late in the night on Friday. At round 12 in the night police acted swiftly on a tip-off and seized 2 kg of drugs from a man. The accused was identified as Rajesh Jagat and he is a resident of Suraj Nagar area who failed to provide details of the drugs recovered from his possession. Police said that the details of procurement and delivery of the drugs would be probed in the further investigation. After the initial investigation, the police have registered a case under sections 8 and 20 of the NDPS Act. The accused confessed that he was involved in drug peddling to make fast money and at the time of lockdown as the availability has become premium he brought it to make good money by selling it in the areas and to his earlier customers. During the initial investigation, it was found that the accused would bring the drugs and would sell in the area and nearby areas to customers in small quantity but in the night on Friday from whom he had brought the drugs and scheduled to deliver it is remained unclear. Police said that his source from which the drugs were procured would be investigated. The crime record of the accused would be investigated in the further investigation. The nexus which supports these drug peddlers would also be investigated.

present. Besides, Bhojpuri Ekta Manch is also distributing 300 packets of puri vegetables daily, by the Janseva Group, on behalf of Vinayak Nagar "Janseva Group", till Saturday, 300 packets of puri vegetable are being distributed in the surrounding areas of Gandhinagar so that no one is hungry. Cooperation social worker Kunwar Prasad Pradeep Jogi, Vishal Yadav, Arif Khan, Kuldeep Khatik Raja Bhai Food campaign is being run with the cooperation of Nivedak ?Kunwar Prasad State President Bhojpuri Ekta Manch, Bhopal Madhya Pradesh were present.

# CII draws and advocates a COVID-19 CODE OF CONDUCT

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has drawn and advocated a COVID-19 CODE OF CONDUCT to be pledged by our 9000 members to help their workers and society at large from the impact of disruptions caused by COVID-19, said Anurag Shrivastava, Chairman, CII - Madhya Pradesh. CII has also set up CII COVID - 19 Rehabilitation and Relief pool Fund to help society from the impact of disruptions caused by corona virus. Many CII members have dedicated their plant facilities to help scale up manufacture and availability of essential goods and equipment needed to deal with the medical emergency like ventilators, sanitizers, essential drugs, medical services. In this extremely challenging times, CII Madhya Pradesh with the support for its members has stepped up to

support the society, which is facing a deep humanitarian crisis. In Madhya Pradesh, CII has been coordinating closely with the government and civil society to understand ground situation and assess immediate requirements. Members from the industry have come forward to help with their generous contribution to CII Foundation, Chief Minister Relief Fund & PM CARES Fund, said Shrivastava. Food packets and essential materials are being distributed daily to over 300 families of the migrant workers with the CII Members in Bhopal. Cooked meal was distributed to around 2500 wage earners in Pithampur and similarly for 250 persons in Katni district. Hand sanitizers distributed to the local Municipal Corporation of Bhopal, Indore and Gwalior. In Indore CII Industry members have come forward to use their mess facilities and provide food to the weaker section of the society.



Team of doctors take samples and check body temperature of police personnel after a police constable tested positive Coronavirus, amid of nationwide lockdown in wake of Coronavirus pandemic in Bhopal on Saturday Pioneer photo



Underprivileged assemble at PCC headquarters to collect food packets distributed to poor and homeless people amid of nationwide lockdown in wake of Coronavirus pandemic in Bhopal on Saturday Pioneer photo



Consumers stand in a long queue to withdraw money outside Bank of India bank branch amid of nationwide lockdown in wake of Coronavirus pandemic in Bhopal on Saturday Pioneer photo

# Haryana Police files 38 FIRs for spreading rumours

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Police on Saturday said it has registered a total of 38 FIRs against 36 accused persons for allegedly spreading fake news or rumors about COVID-19 on Whatsapp and other social media platforms across the State.

In a statement, Additional Director General of Police (Law and Order), Navdeep Singh Virk said that Home Minister, Anil Vaj had instructed the Police Department to initiate stern action against those circulating fake, misleading and unverified information about COVID-19 on social media so that potential confusion and panic among the general public could be prevented.

All such rumour-mongers have been booked under different sections of IPC and IT Act, he added.

The ADGP advised the general public neither to post unverified information on their social media accounts nor forward it to others on messaging apps like WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger etc, as they would could land in trouble. To enforce the strict lockdown, he said that Police has also registered 1141 FIRs booking close to 1655 persons for violating the government order. Since the lockdown is in order, Haryana Police have also seized 5750 vehicles and imposed a fine of Rs7.11 crore upon the violators under the Motor Vehicle Act.

DEDICATED TEAMS TO CHECK FAKE NEWS

To tighten the noose around rumour-mongers spreading provocative and misleading messages through various social media platforms, regarding COVID-19, Director, Information, Public Relations and Languages Department, P.C. Meena has already constituted several dedicated teams at both State and District Level.

These teams will monitor Facebook pages, Twitter, YouTube, web portals, news channels, other social media platforms to nip those involved in circulating 'fake news', spreading sensationalism and misinformation about COVID-19 and to stay abreast of the situation so that panic is not spread among the people.

The cyber cell of Haryana Police in the State is closely monitoring on information being circulated on social media platforms and is further ensuring that no 'False News' should cause panic.

Apart from this, the Government agencies are also keeping a close vigil watch on every news being circulated on social media platforms. Sharing more details about the same, an official spokesperson said that if any information received from social media or anywhere else is misleading or beyond the facts, then he should inform the police and local administration and also send it to diprfactcheck@gmail.com. He said that a case under various sections of IPC as well as the IT Act and Epidemic Act will be registered against those who are involved in posting or circulating of forwarding 'False news or

message' which may create panic among general public in the time of crisis.

HARYANA SETS UP EXCLUSIVE COVID-19 HOSPITAL

Haryana Government on Saturday said Shaheed Hasan Khan Mewati Government Medical College in Nalhar, with a capacity of 600 beds, will now be an exclusive COVID-19 hospital.

Presiding over a meeting of the Crisis Coordination Committee through video conferencing, Haryana chief secretary Keshni Anand Arora directed the officers that the patients who are already admitted in the hospital should be immediately shifted to nearby hospitals after duly following all transfer protocols.

Apart from this, it should also be ensured that the availability and supply of adequate medical equipments including PPE kits, masks etc in this hospital.

She directed that the officers should also ensure that exclusive COVID wards are made in the medical hospitals and colleges across the State.

The Chief Secretary directed that possibilities should be explored to convert the medical colleges into exclusively COVID hospitals.

Private laboratories should be identified in each district which can be designated for COVID-19 testing and along with this, the availability of rapid testing kits should be ensured in every hospital and medical college, she added.

# Corona: Over 6000 families from Hindpiri screened

## Administration extends support to Senior citizens

PNS ■ RANCHI

Members of more than 6000 families staying in Hindpiri alone were screened for Coronavirus by Saturday afternoon, Ranchi Deputy Commissioner Rai Mahimapat Ray said. The inspection was carried out on Saturday after initial resistance by locals and alleged misbehaviour meted out to some health workers on Thursday, sources said.

"We did not face any resistance from the locals today (Saturday). Members of more than 6000 families living in the area have already been screened," Ray said. He, however, did not comment on the findings from the area.

Hindpiri is located at a stone's throw from the Mahatma Gandhi Road of the State Capital - one of the oldest stretches connecting different parts of the city. The first COVID-19 case of Jharkhand, a Malaysian woman, was reported from this locality. The administration wanted to

check every person who may have knowingly or unknowingly came in direct contact with the woman since the day she tested positive. However, on Thursday, some locals resisted the entry of health workers in their houses,

suspecting that the data collected from the locality will eventually be used for the National Register of Citizens (NPR) - an idea of the union Government that drew wide criticism from members of a particular community. The Anjuman Islamiya committee had to intervene and convince the locals, mostly illiterate people of a particular community, to get tested for COVID-19, sources said.

The 22-year-old Malaysian woman, who happens to be the only positive COVID-19 of capital Ranchi, was apprehended along with 16 other foreign nationals from a mosque in Hindpiri on March 31. She had returned from the Tablighi Jamaat congregation in New Delhi by Rajdhani Express on March 16.

The woman's test report brought the entire locality under scanner. However, some locals still resisted medical examinations claiming that the woman was asymptomatic, and only one particular community was being targeted in garb of



Medical staff during a door-to-door survey to screen people for COVID-19 symptoms during nationwide lockdown imposed in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, at Hindpiri area in Ranchi on Saturday. Vinay Murmu photo

the testings. Meanwhile, the lockdown on Saturday was followed strictly across the State capital.

A press communique from the district administration said that people were readily using the facilities provided by the Government during the lockdown. "More than 300 calls were made to a helpline number for senior citizens since the lockdown was enforced.

Through the helpline number, many senior citizens sought help in getting edibles, LPG cylinders and even medicines and mobile phones,"

said Ranchi Deputy Commissioner Rai Mahimapat Ray. One of the callers, he said, had broken his leg and was in need of medical help. Responding to his complaint, a team of the district administration took him to Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) and provided medical assistance, added Ray.

The district administration runs helpline numbers for senior citizens, mental health assistance and delivery of edibles and grocery. The helpline number for senior citizens received around 300 calls and

95 per cent of the complaints were addressed, said Ray, adding that the administration was paying special attention to those senior citizens who stay alone in Ranchi and do not have younger family members to help them out during this crisis.

Cops patrolled the streets of Ranchi on Saturday and ensured the people stay indoors. However, commoners were allowed to move out till 10am for buying vegetables, ration and other edibles. Most areas of the city wore a deserted look during the day.

# Three women Naxals killed in encounter in West Singhbhum

## Cache of arms & ammunition recovered from Naxalites

PNS ■ JAMSHEDPUR

Three women naxals were killed in a fierce encounter between Maoists and security forces under Gudri police station area in West Singhbhum on Saturday morning.

Those killed were in the age-group of 25 years and belonged to the squad of area commander Suresh Munda of the banned CPI-Maoist. Forces have recovered three fire-arms from the three killed lady rebels along with huge quantity of ammunition and explosives from the scene of encounter.

The encounter took place at Chirung village in Gudri located in a hilly terrain bordering Khunti district from about 7 am and continued for an hour.

West Singhbhum superintendent of police, Indrajit Mahatha said the encounter took place while they were carrying out an anti-insurgency operation at Gudri thana area having got a specific information.

"During the operation there were jawans of CRPF's 170 and 60 battalions posted in West Singhbhum and 94 battalion from the adjoining Khunti district beside the district police jawans.

The personnel rushed to the Chirung village by maintaining social distancing and encircled the village where about 25 rebels were holding

meeting with the villagers. But as the police and paramilitary forces reached, the rebels started firing at the troops.

After an initial exchange of fire from both the sides for about an hour, the naxals started backtracking and finally fled the scene," said Mahatha. The SP, West Singhbhum, said after the rebels fled the scene they carried out a search operation and found the bullet-ridden bodies of three lady naxals. Beside those bodies were lying three rifles.

"During the search, we found over 500 rounds of bullets, arrow bombs, two IEDs, medicines, naxal literature from the scene, suggesting that the rebels belonging to Suresh Munda squad of the CPI-Maoist were at the Chirung village for motivating the villagers for joining the naxalism," Mahatha pointed out.

In the last few days anti insurgency operation in the West Singhbhum has been intensified following intelligence reports that suggest rebels are camping in the pockets.

The administration has increased police patrolling on the bordering areas connecting to West Bengal and has also deployed adequate number of paramilitary personnel on areas potential to rebels attack.

Meanwhile intelligence sources maintained that the naxals have once again started influencing the local residents to come to the fold of the naxalism," said a senior intelligence officer. He said the rebels are targeting areas in Sonua, Goelkera and Porahat region of West Singhbhum.

# No fresh coronavirus cases reported in Jharkhand 1.3 lakh put in home quarantine



People stand in a long queue for collecting food at a free food distribution centre, during complete lockdown in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, in Ranchi on Saturday. Ratan Lal photo

PNS ■ RANCHI

While the number of COVID-19 cases crossed 3000 in India on Saturday, no fresh cases of the deadly virus were reported in Jharkhand, health officials said.

The State, where the first case of Coronavirus was reported as late as March 31, has put more than 1.3 lakh people on home quarantine and sent over 15,000 people to quarantine centres, a report from the National Health Mission (NHM) said on Saturday.

The report further said that highest number of samples was collected from Ranchi district and the least number of samples were collected from Sahibganj in Jharkhand.

Out of the 206 samples collected from Ranchi by Saturday, 200 tested negative and the report of remaining six suspects are awaited. The highest number of samples was collected from Kolhan division and the lowest from Palamu division, the NHM report said. Meanwhile, a 50-year-old Ranchi resident, who was reportedly admitted in the

isolation centre at Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) on Friday, died on Sunday. Sources said that his samples were collected for Coronavirus tests on Friday and the test result is awaited.

He had cough, cold and mild fever, doctors said. "We shifted him to emergency after his health started deteriorating. He died during treatment," said a senior RIMS official, requesting anonymity.

While speculations were rife that he may have died due to Coronavirus infection, there was no official statement released on the cause of his death by the time this report was filed. A family member of the deceased said that his body was not handed over to the family by the time of filing of this report. A highly placed health official this correspondent contacted was unaware of the case.

According to NHM, more than 1500 travelers are under surveillance in Jharkhand and 270 of them have completed their 28 days of staying under observation. The Government has more than 37,000 beds in

quarantine centres across the State and nearly 3000 beds in Isolation Centres, the NHM report said.

Besides, the State has more than 250 ICU beds and over 1600 non-ICU beds. Out of the 691 samples collected in Jharkhand so far, 446 have come out negative and only two have tested positive for COVID-19. The report of remaining 172 Coronavirus suspects are awaited, health officials said.

Several attendees of Tablighi Jamaat congregation from Jharkhand are under scanner here. Even a State minister's son has been sent to an isolation centre after his links with Tablighi Jamaat surfaced. Sources said that at least 150 people with Tablighi Jamaat links were under scanner in Jharkhand.

The number of Coronavirus patients in India crossed 3000 on Saturday and the death toll neared 100. Jharkhand has only two testing centres - a handicap in testing cases at a faster pace, say doctors. At least 84 samples were collected on Saturday and the results of all the 84 samples are awaited.

# Coronavirus positive cases mount to 22 in U'khand

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Tablighi Jamaat connection in spread of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is proving to be a big burden on Uttarakhand. On Saturday, six more cases of the dreaded disease which has been declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organisation (WHO) were reported by the state health department.

All these new patients are said to be Tablighi Jamaat followers who had attended the Jamaat congregation at Nizamuddin in Delhi last month. With them the total number of the patients of the disease in the state jumped to 22. Of the six patients reported on Saturday, five are from Nainital district while one is from Haridwar district. The five COVID -19 positive patients reported from Nainital on the day were taken out from Taj Mosque of Haldwani recently and their samples were sent for test on Thursday. All of them are said to be outsiders.

What has sent the health department of the state in tizzy is the fact that the disease has now spread to five of total 13 districts of the state. From the provisional state capital of Dehradun, 11 cases of the disease have been reported so far while five and four cases have been reported from Nainital and Udham Singh Nagar districts respectively.

One case of the disease each has been reported from Haridwar and Pauri districts. That the Jamaat attendees have caused a sudden spike in the COVID-19 cases in

# No Jamaat attendee to remain hidden, syas Doon Police

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Uttarakhand police have requested the people of Uttarakhand not to get panicked by increase in cases of the COVID-19 in the state and assured that it would not allow any Tablighi Jamaat follower who had attended the congregation in Nizamuddin to remain hidden.

The director general (Law and Order) Ashok Kumar said that every Jamaat follower who had been to Nizamuddin centre would be traced.

He appealed the Jamaat followers to voluntarily come forward and tell their travel history.

Uttarakhand can be understood from the fact that in last three days 15 cases of the disease have been reported by the health department and all of them are said to be the Jamaat followers.

The first patient of the disease was reported in the state on March 15 when an Indian Forest Service (IFS) trainee was found positive. From March 15 to April 1, seven cases of the disease cropped up in 18 days but in last three days 15 cases have been reported which account of 70 percent of total cases in the State. The director general (DG) of state health services, Dr Amita Upreti confirmed that on Saturday (till 5 pm) six new cases of the disease cropped up in the state. She said

The DGP also made an appeal that people should not get influence by rumours and communal harmony.

Meanwhile, due to five Jamaatis being found positive earlier in Bhagat Singh Colony and Kargi Grant in Dehradun, the district magistrate has directed the SSP to restrict movement of the general public in these areas being kept under community surveillance.

Apart from personnel involved in essential services and those involved in supply of essential commodities, the movement of the general public will remain restricted in these two localities.

that reports of 59 swab samples were received by the state control room till 5 pm on Saturday and out of them 53 samples were found negative while six were positive for the disease. She said 350 Tablighi Jamaat followers have been kept under institutional quarantine in different parts of the state.

She added that a total of 14989 persons in the state have been kept in home and institutional quarantine. On Saturday, the health department collected swab samples of 57 suspected patients of the disease. The department has so far collected 882 samples of suspected patients and has received reports of 746 samples while reports of 136 samples are awaited.



A man sanitises inside full body sanitisation machine installed by BMC in the State-level corona control room, smart city centre amid of nationwide lockdown in the wake of coronavirus pandemic in Bhopal on Saturday. Pioneer photo

# HP Govt bans on sale, distribution of chewing gum

PNS ■ SHIMLA

Himachal Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Saturday said the State government has imposed complete ban on sale and distribution of chewing gum, bubble gum and such type of other products in the State for three months.

Thakur held a video conference with all the Deputy Commissioners, Superintendents of Police and Chief Medical Officers of the state from Shimla to take stock of the situation due to outbreak of Coronavirus epidemic.

He said that under the Active Case Finding Campaign launched throughout the state, health information of 5.5 lakh persons were procured by the health workers during door to door campaign.

He said adequate arrangements should be made for providing surgical masks, hand

sanitizers and gloves to the health workers working under Active Case Finding Campaign.

The Chief Minister asked the Deputy Commissioners to make the home delivery system for providing essential commodities to people more effective, as this would help in ensuring proper distancing.

He said that in rural areas also volunteers and PRI representatives could be involved to provide home delivery of essential commodities to the people at village level so that unnecessary crowding in PDS shops could be avoided.

Thakur urged the people of the state to emulate the appeal of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to switch off the lights in their homes from 9 pm to 9.09 pm on Sunday and light diyas and torches in their balconies.

He said this appeal will not be applicable for lights in hospitals and all other essential ser-

vices like public utilities municipal services, offices, street lights, police stations, manufacturing facilities etc.

He said there is no call to switch off either street light or appliances like computers TVs, fans, refrigerators and ACs in the homes.

Thakur directed the officers to keep strict surveillance on persons of Nizamuddin Tablighi Jamaat of Delhi. He said that focus must be that persons with any travel history are identified at the earliest so that coronavirus does not spread to others. He said that they should be kept in home quarantine or isolation.

He said that Himachal Pradesh has already taken all issues regarding all protocols for grid safety to tackle the likely reduction in demand and surge in voltage during the event. Thakur said 4286 persons had been kept under surveil-

lance for coronavirus in the state so far, out of which 1754 people had completed 28 days of surveillance period.

He said that investigations of 88 persons for COVID-19 had been done on Saturday out of which 33 samples from Tanda Medical College had been collected and 55 samples were collected in IGMC Shimla and report is awaited. He said that 381 persons had so far been investigated in the state for coronavirus and total six cases had been found positive till now.

Director General of Police S.R. Mardi said that FIR must register against the persons who concealing information regarding their travelling history under Disaster Management Act. Additional Chief Secretary Health R.D. Dhiman said that 29 new medical officers have also been appointed.

# CRPF CMO +ve, DG among 200 advised home quarantine

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

After a Chief Medical Officer (CMO) of CRPF was found Covid-19 positive and isolated and eight other officers were quarantined, the paramilitary, in a proactive measure, has now mapped a detailed list of about 200 Force personnel, including DG CRPF himself, who were traced to have contacts with the quarantined personnel. All the 200 such personnel, including top officials, have been advised self/home quarantine and are accordingly observing the protocols as a precautionary measure.

The list of the contact tracing including CRPF DG AP Maheshwari and Senior Security Advisor of MHA K Vijay Kumar have been advised home quarantine or quarantine at CRPF facilities till the test reports are out. However, these top officials have not exhibited any symptoms of the novel coronavirus, top CRPF officials said.

At least three Inspectors General, whose wards returned from foreign countries, have also been quarantined as a precautionary measure. Former CRPF DG Vikram Srivastava has also been self-quarantined as a preventive measure.

The CRPF chief, who has himself subjected to home quarantine, is supervising the work of the Force from home. While Maheshwari is currently free from any Covid-19 symptoms, he is undergoing the quarantine drill as a precautionary measure, officials said.

A CRPF spokesperson said,



"A CRPF officer has tested positive for COVID-19. All personnel in contact with the officer have been quarantined. The DG CRPF had an indirect contact with the officer. As per protocol, DG is observing quarantine."

"We will win together. The only Mantra is social distancing. To all of us let this be the religion as well as spirituality of the day. Save oneself to save others. Save humanity," Maheshwari has tweeted tagging Prime Minister Narendra Modi, PMO, HMO India and Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Liaison Officer and Assistant Commandant of CRPF P Raja, who had been quarantined after Chief Medical Officer Dr Deepak

was tested Covid-19 positive, is being tested for novel coronavirus. Raja's swab samples have been sent for testing to a laboratory. The 200 CRPF personnel sent on home quarantine were traced to be in contact with Raja and further course of measures will be taken after test reports of Raja,

top CRPF officials said.

Those quarantined include OPD patients attended by Dr Manish Kumar, SMO at RK Puram here, admitted patients in CRPF hospital at RK Puram, personnel who were in contact with a driver of 178 Battalion who was attached with Covid-19 positive CMO Dr Deepak, personnel in contact with another driver of 139 Battalion who was attached with Dr Manish, personnel who were in contact with quarantined Transit Officers Mess personnel Raj Kumar Paswan of 122 Battalion, and Medical/Paramedical staff of composite hospital of CRPF at RK Puram.

Another list of officials quarantined includes those who were in contact with Assistant Commandant P Raja, Liaison Officer of Senior Security Advisor of Union Home Ministry K Vijay Kumar who is a former CRPF chief. This list also includes IG (Operations) of Chhattisgarh, Section Officer to DG, DIG (Operations) Sukma, Assistant Commandant P Martin Raju,

## Govt OK's five-phased corona containment plan

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

With coronavirus cases rising by hundreds and deaths multiplying with each passing day, the Government on Saturday came out with a five-phased 'containment plan for larger outbreaks' on the perception that current Covid-19 spread mimics the H1N1 pandemic of 2009.

"This suggests that while the spread of COVID-19 in our population could be high, it's unlikely that it will be uniformly affecting all parts of the country. This calls for differential approach to different regions of the country, while mounting a strong containment effort in hot spots," said the document that visualises five different step-wise scenarios in case of any such outbreaks in the country.

It begins with travel-related cases reported in India followed by local transmission of COVID-19, large outbreaks amenable to containment, wide-spread community transmission of COVID-19 disease and finally to the point, if or

when India becomes endemic for the deadly disease. The Government current strategy is focussed on these five points aiming to combat the deadly disease.

So far, the virus has killed over 80 people and infected over 3000 in the country. Large number of cases has been reported from Delhi, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh.

"Large scale measures to contain COVID-19 over large territories have been tried in China," notes the document prepared by the Union Health Ministry.

In India also, clusters have appeared in multiple States, particularly Kerala, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Punjab, Karnataka, Telangana and UT of Ladakh while 211 districts are now reporting COVID-19 cases and the risk of further spread remains very high, as per the document.

Current estimates of the incubation period of COVID

▣ Epidemiology Coronaviruses belong to a large family of viruses, some causing illness in people and others that circulate among animals, including camels, cats, bats, etc. Rarely, animal corona viruses may evolve and jump species to infect people and then spread between people as witnessed during the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS, 2003) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS, 2014).

▣ In humans, the transmission of SARS-CoV-2 can occur via respiratory secretions (directly through droplets from coughing or sneezing, or indirectly through contaminated objects or surfaces as well as close contacts).

▣ Most common symptoms include fever, fatigue, dry cough and breathing difficulty. Upper respiratory tract symptoms like sore throat, rhinorrhoea, and gastrointestinal symptoms like diarrhoea and nausea/vomiting are seen in about 20% of cases.

range from 2-14 days, and these estimates will be refined as more data become available.

Strategic approach for scenario include travel related cases reported from India which focuses on early detection through universal screening of all International passengers at Points of Entries (PoEs) and tracking travellers in the community who have travelled from affected coun-

tries.

Talking about the possibility of local transmission of COVID-2019 disease, which so far the Government has denied, the document said that local transmission will lead to clustering of cases in time and space, epidemiologically linked to a travel related case or a positive case that has links to a travel related case. The cluster containment strat-

egy will be extensive contact tracing and active search for cases in containment zone, testing all suspect cases and high risk contacts, as per the document.

"Geographic quarantine and containment strategy proposes defining the area of operation, active surveillance for cases and contacts in the identified geographic zone and expanding laboratory capacity for testing all suspect cases, high risk contacts and SARI cases. Implementation of social distancing measures with strict perimeter control and providing chemoprophylaxis with Hydroxychloroquine to all asymptomatic healthcare workers and asymptomatic household contacts of laboratory confirmed cases has been further course of action."

However, if the containment plan is not able to contain the outbreak and large numbers of cases start appearing, then a decision will need to be taken by State administration to abandon the containment plan and start on mitigation activities, it stated.

## Shops of agri machinery, spare parts to remain open during lockdown



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has allowed shops of agricultural machinery and its spare parts to remain open during the nationwide lockdown. Repair shops for trucks on highways have also been included in that list. The Union Home Ministry issued the 4th Addendum to the guidelines issued regarding lockdown, to exempt shops of agricultural machinery and its spare parts.

"Shops of Agricultural machinery, its spare parts (including its supply chain) and repairs to remain open. Tea industry, including plantations, with a maximum of 50 per cent workers were also exempted, in an order by the MHA.

The fourth addendum issued by union home secretary Ajay Bhalla exempted shops for truck repairs on highways, preferably at fuel pumps as well as the tea industry, including plantations with maximum 50 per cent workers.



The MHA said that social distancing and proper hygiene practices must be ensured in each of these activities

The MHA said that social distancing and proper hygiene practices must be ensured in each of these activities.

The decision seems to have been taken in view of the urgent need for trucks to ply normally, given they carry most of the essentials including vegetables and grains. India is amid a nationwide shutdown for 21 days where all services are suspended save few essentials.

This extreme decision was necessitated in wake of the outbreak of Covid-19 in India.

## India, US to fight COVID-19 together: PM



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said that India and the US have decided to "deploy the full strength of the India-US partnership" to fight COVID-19 that has infected over a million persons globally and killed more than 60,000.

Modi said this after "an extensive conversation with President Trump".

In a tweet, PM Modi wrote, "Had an extensive telephone conversation with President @realDonaldTrump. We had a good discussion, and agreed to deploy the full strength of the India-US partnership to fight COVID-19."

In India, which is into its 11th day of the 21-day lockdown, the pandemic positive cases stand at over 3,000 with the dead count at 75 while the US is undergoing a far severe coronavirus attack with the positive cases breaching the 2.75 lakh mark and the death toll standing at nearly 7,500.

In terms of positive cases, the US has the most in the world while fatalities-wise it has surpassed China, the origin of coronavirus and is behind Spain and Italy.

## ALL-OUT WAR AGAINST CORONA

### Modi reviews countrywide preparedness

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Chairing a joint meeting of the Empowered Groups constituted for planning and ensuring implementation of COVID-19 response activities in the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday reviewed the countrywide preparedness regarding availability of hospitals, proper isolation and quarantine facilities as well as disease surveillance, testing and critical care training.

He also directed the concerned groups and officials to ensure sufficient production, procurement and availability of all essential medical equipment such as PPEs, masks, gloves and ventilators, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) stated in a series of tweets.

The Government has constituted 11 different Empowered Groups, under the Disaster Management Act, to suggest measures to ramp up healthcare, put the economy back on track and reduce the misery of people as quickly as possible post 21-day lockdown imposed to contain the Coronavirus pandemic.

Each group has a senior representative from the PMO and the Cabinet Secretariat to ensure seamless coordination and is been empowered to formulate plans and to take all necessary steps for their time-bound implementation.

The Empowered Group on Medical Emergency and Management Plan is headed by

SHGs make 1.32 cr face masks

New Delhi: Nearly 66,000 members of Self Help Groups (SHGs) in 24 States covering 399 districts of the country under the Ministry of Rural Development's National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) have so far made 1.32 crore face masks, the Government said on Saturday.

NITI Aayog member Dr V Paul, while the Group on Availability of Hospitals, Disease Surveillance and Testing and Critical Care Training work under the Chairmanship of Environment Secretary C K Mishra.

The Empowered Group on ensuring the availability of essential medical equipment, production Procurement, Import and Distribution is headed by Pharmaceuticals Secretary P D Vaghela, while the Group on augmenting Human Resources and Capacity Building is under Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Secretary Arun Panda. Drinking Water Secretary Parameswaran Iyer leads the Group on Facilitating Supply Chain and Logistics Management for availability of necessary items.

CEO NITI Aayog Amitabh Kant heads the Group on coordinating with the private sector.

### PM to videoconference with floor leaders of various political parties

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A three-week lockdown continues and may not be eased at one go, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will interact with floor leaders of various political parties via a video link on April 8.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi said the Prime Minister will interact with floor leaders of all those parties which have more than five MPs in both houses of Parliament on April 8 at 11 am.

Covid-19 and countrywide lockdown are likely to be discussed during the meeting.

This will be the prime minister's first interaction with opposition leaders after the lockdown amid criticism that the former has not taken the latter in confidence and not informed about the state of medical and other contingencies.

The Group on Economic and Welfare measures functions under Economic Affairs Secretary while Atanu Chakraborty and Information and Broadcasting Secretary Ravi Mittal heads the Group on

Keeping in mind the norms for social distancing and travel restrictions, the much-coveted meeting will be conducted through a video conference.

Many opposition leaders have been asking for an all-party meeting with the Prime Minister on the pandemic wanting to have the first-hand information on the steps to cope with the crisis which may not end too soon in time.

In the meeting, Government officials said that the Prime Minister will seek suggestions from different parties on the future road map to contain the deadly virus. The meeting will start at 11am with Modi's opening remarks in which he will appraise the party leaders of the steps his government has taken so far.

The meeting will also be an opportunity to build a broad political consensus on India's fight against Covid-19, accord-

ing to officials. Besides Modi, union home minister Amit Shah, defence minister Rajnath Singh, parliamentary affairs minister and Leader of the Rajya Sabha, Thawar Chand Gehlot are also expected to be present.

Meanwhile, BJP's vice-president Jay Panda has dismissed Congress charges of government not being ready to deal with the crisis which has claimed 75 lives and the numbers of those positive reaching 3,000 in the country as of today. Panda said all the suggestion made by the state governments have been implemented by the Prime Minister and that "Prime Minister is coordinating with the states run by the opposition parties".

Pointing to a survey, the BJP leader said "83 per cent of people have expressed confidence with PM's leadership during the ongoing crisis".

Information, Communication and Public Awareness.

Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY) Secretary Ajay Sawhney helms the Group on Technology and Data

Management, HRD Secretary Amit Khare heads the panel on Public Grievances while Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla leads the Empowered Group constituted on Strategic issues relating to Lockdown.

## DRDO designs full-body disinfection chamber to fight virus

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Focusing on in-house solutions to fight coronavirus pandemic, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has designed a full-body disinfection chamber called Personnel Sanitisation Enclosure. This walk-through enclosure is designed for personnel decontamination, one person at a time. The DRDO is already manufacturing and supplying sanitisers and masks to the Delhi Police while the Navy has manufactured handheld temperature gun at a cost of ₹1,000 which is much less than the ones available in the market. The DRDO has also developed portable sanitisation spray which can be used to spraying disinfectant.

Giving details about the latest endeavour, defence ministry officials said here on Saturday the portable system is equipped with sanitiser



and soap dispenser. The decontamination is started using a foot pedal at the entry. On entering the chamber, electrically operated mist creates a disinfectant mist of hypochlorite for disinfecting. The mist spray is calibrated for an operation of 25 seconds and stops automatically indicating completion of operation. As per procedure, personnel undergoing disinfection will need to keep their eyes closed while inside the chamber.

Moreover, the system consists of roof mounted and bottom tanks with a total of 700 litres' capacity.

Approximately 650 personnel can pass through the chamber for disinfection until the refill is required. The system has see-through glass panels on side walls for monitoring purpose and is fitted with lights for illumination during night time operations. A separate operator cabin is provided to monitor overall operations.

The system has been manufactured with the help of M/s Dass Hitachi Ltd, Ghaziabad, within a time span of four days. This system can be used for disinfection of personnel at the areas of controlled ingress and egress such as entry and exit to hospitals, malls, office buildings and critical installations.

Earlier, the DRDO also developed face protection mask for health care professionals handling COVID-19 patients. Its light weight construction makes it convenient for comfortable wear for long duration.

This design uses commonly available A4 size Over-Head Projection (OHP) film for face protection. The holding frame is manufactured using Fused Deposition Modeling (3D printing). Polyactic Acid filament is used for 3D printing of the frame. This thermoplastic is derived from renewable resources such as corn starch or sugarcane and is biodegradable.

The face mask will be mass

produced using injection moulding technique for volume production. Nearly 100 face shields are being produced daily and provided to PGIMER, Chandigarh. Similarly, 100 are produced and handed over to ESIC, Hyderabad.

A demand of 10,000 masks been received from PGIMER and ESIC Hospitals, they said.

In the continuing quest for developing indigenous solutions to combat the pandemic, the DRDO is ready with technologies for sanitising areas of different sizes. The Centre for Fire Explosive & Environment Safety (CFEES), Delhi has developed two configurations of sanitising equipment. These are spinoffs from technologies developed for fire suppression applications.

The CFEES, Delhi with the help of its industry partner has developed portable sanitisation equipment for spraying decontamination solution consisting of one per cent

### Be careful on April 5 while lighting diyas or candles, Army urges public

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Army on Saturday came out with an advisory for general public asking people to be careful on April 5 while lighting diyas or candles.

Hypochlorite (HYPO) solution for sanitisation of suspected area.

The portable system can be mounted as a backpack and can be carried by the operations personnel.

The application areas can

"Use soap to wash your hands and not alcohol-based sanitisers prior to lighting," it said. There have been cases of people suffering burn injuries due to use of sanitiser and then coming into contact with fire. Recently, a 44-year-old Rewari

include hospital reception, doctor chambers, office spaces dealing with general public, corridors, pathways, metro and railway stations, bus stations, etc.

The Centre with the help of its industry partner has also developed a higher capacity which is carried on a trolley. The system incorporates low pressure single fluid (disinfectant liquid) technology to generate very fine mist. The system is capable of disinfecting upto 300 square metre area.

(Haryana) man suffered 35 per cent burn injuries when he accidentally came into contact with fire in his kitchen while cleaning household items with an alcohol-based hand sanitiser. Doctors have also advised caution in its usage.

square metre area. It has a tank capacity of 50 litres and has a lancing (throw) distance of 12-15 metres.

This is useful for disinfecting hospitals, malls, airports, metro stations, isolation areas, quarantine centres and high risk residential areas.

Two of these systems are being provided to Delhi Police for immediate use. These can be made available to other agencies with the help of industry partners.

# 7L jobs gone in 14 days, worst yet to come in US

IAN S ■ WASHINGTON

The worst stage of coronavirus pandemic became visible in the US when the Donald Trump Government reported that employers cut over 7 lakh jobs in the first two weeks of March — close to the May 2009 financial crisis peak of 8,00,000 job losses.

Most of the job losses were reported from restaurants and bars, followed by retailers. It was the first decline in payrolls since September 2010, CNBC reported. The unemployment rate rose to 4.4 per cent — from 3.5 per cent — the first job decline in a decade, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics reported on Friday.

The Labor report, however, doesn't capture "the nearly 10 million laid-off and furloughed Americans who filed initial jobless claims in the past two weeks as much of the nation's economy was shut down to contain the spread of the virus". According to a USA Today report, that's because Labor's survey was conducted the week ending March 14, before most states ordered residents to stay at home and nonessential businesses — such as restaurants, movie theaters and most stores — to close. It means the job loss num-

bers for March will actually be way high. The US Labor Department on Thursday revealed that another 6.6 million workers filed jobless claims last week.

"The report does capture the first stumble in the economy's historic free fall. The number of workers filing initial jobless claims rose by 70,000 — the most since 2013 — to 282,000 in the week of Labor's survey." The April jobs report, which won't be released until May 8, could include the nearly 10 million Americans who filed for first-time unemployment benefits as the pandemic forced businesses to close and people to stay at home, CNN reported.

Job losses over the next few weeks will come from a wider range of sectors, according to Daniel Zhao, senior economist at careers website Glassdoor.

"White collar jobs are not safe from this," Zhao was quoted as saying.

"If this is an indication of what was happening before the full force of the crisis hit, then it will be hard to come up with the words to describe the numbers in future months," added Nick Bunker, economic research director at job search site Indeed.

# Trump recommends Americans wear face masks in public

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

All Americans should cover their faces with scarves or homemade cloth masks when they leave their homes as part of the desperate efforts to curb the massive spread of the coronavirus pandemic in the country, President Donald Trump has suggested.

Citing the latest recommendations from the US Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Trump, who has decided not to wear a mask, urged people to wear face coverings like scarves or homemade cloth masks, and to keep medical-grade masks available for the health workers who are struggling to contain the growing number of COVID-19 cases.

The guidelines issued by



the CDC, the Government's public health advisory agency, came as the US reported more than 1,100 deaths in a single day — the highest total for a 24-hour period anywhere in the world.

Senior officials at the CDC told the White House this week that stronger guidelines

were necessary to prevent the virus from spreading between asymptomatic people, US media reported.

The US has so far confirmed 278,458 cases of Covid-19 and more than 7,100 deaths. New York state remains the worst hit area, with nearly 3,000 deaths.

The deadly coronavirus has so far infected over 1,131,000 people and claimed the lives of over 59,800 people across the world, according to latest figures from the Johns Hopkins University.

Until now, health authorities here said that only the sick, or those caring for patients of coronavirus, should wear masks, but newer studies suggest that covering up one's face is important to prevent inadvertent transmission.

# Gabon bans eating of pangolin and bats amid pandemic

AFP ■ LIBREVILLE

Gabon on Friday banned the sale and eating of bats and pangolins, which are suspected of sparking the novel coronavirus in China where they are highly prized in traditional medicine.

President Ali Bongo Ondimba also announced the government was planning to lock down the capital Libreville and unveiled an emergency package for those hard hit by the pandemic.

The novel coronavirus is believed to have come from bats, but researchers think it might have spread to humans via another mammal.

Pangolins are critically endangered and have long been protected, but they are sold in the markets of the cap-



ital Libreville, as are bats, and their meat is popular. The water and forest ministry said the novel coronavirus was a "combination of two different viruses, one close to bats and the other closer to pangolins", and claimed to be quoting a scientific study published in Nature.

Gabon has declared 21 COVID-19 infections, but none from animals, the ministry said. "A similar decision was taken by the authorities when our country was affected by the Ebola virus — a ban on eating primates," Forestry Minister Lee White said.

The national parks agency ANPN announced in mid-March that tourists would no longer be allowed to interact with great apes to avoid any risk of contamination by the coronavirus.

The pangolin, the world's most heavily trafficked mammal, also called the scaly anteater, is believed to have possibly been a vector in the leap of the novel coronavirus from animal to human at a market in China's Wuhan city last year.

# OPEC, allies to seek response to coronavirus pandemic

AFP ■ LONDON

OPEC and its allies are due to discuss oil production cuts next week following US President Donald Trump's claim that leading producers Russia and Saudi Arabia will slash output to boost tumbling prices.

The meeting was originally expected to be held via video conference on Monday, but now looks likely to be pushed back to "take place

later in the week," said a source close to OPEC, who asked not to be named.

On Thursday, kingpin exporter Saudi Arabia called for an urgent meeting of OPEC and other countries to "stabilise the oil market" following a phone call between Trump and Saudi Crown Prince and de facto leader Mohammed bin Salman.

Oil prices have tumbled since the beginning of the year due the fallout from the coronavirus pandemic — which has weighed heavily on economies and demand — and a price war between OPEC kingpin Saudi Arabia and Russia, the key player in OPEC+.

The two countries failed to agree further output cuts at a meeting at the Vienna-based Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) last month, leading Riyadh to open the oil taps to flood the market.

Azerbaijan's Energy Ministry said in a press release that next week's meeting would aim to discuss the adoption of a "new declaration of cooperation".

Russian President Vladimir Putin said Friday that Moscow was prepared to discuss "a reduction in the volume of about 10 million barrels a day, a little less, maybe a little more." "I believe that it is necessary to combine efforts in order to balance the market

and reduce production," Putin said. According to a Russian source cited by the TASS news agency Friday, US officials have been invited to take part in the meeting. Trump surprised investors on Thursday by tweeting: "I expect & hope" Riyadh and Moscow will be cutting back "approximately 10 Million Barrels, and maybe substantially more".

"Could be as high as 15 Million Barrels," he added in a

subsequent post. Oil prices — which hit 18-year lows earlier this week — rallied sharply following Trump's statements, marking a record rise in a day's trading on Thursday.

On Friday, Brent stood at \$34.11, up 14 percent, and WTI at \$28.34, up 12 percent. This stage seems more like speculation than something likely to happen quickly," warned Carlo Alberto De Casa of ActivTrades.

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# 'Economic recovery to be smoother, faster in India'

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

Once the Covid-19 pandemic ebbs, the course of economic recovery in India will be smoother and faster than that of many advanced countries, according to KPMG.

UNCTAD in its latest report on Covid-19 impact on developing countries has predicted that the major economies to be least exposed to recession would be China and India.

KPMG has said that steps taken to prevent the spread of the virus, such as the lockdown, have brought the economic activity to a standstill and could impact both consumption and investment.

The abrupt halt in urban activity could lead to a steep fall in consumption of non-essential goods. In this scenario, India's growth will fall to 4-4.5 per cent of salaried employ-

ees in urban India are informal workers who will face uncertain income following the stall of urban activity. KPMG has prepared three scenarios that can play out for the Indian economy. If there is quick retraction across the world, including India, by end April to mid May, India's GDP growth for 2020-21 may be in the range of 5.3 per cent to 5.7 per cent.

The second scenario assumes that while India is able to control Covid-19 spread, there is a significant global recession. In this scenario, India's growth will fall to 4-4.5 per cent.

In the third scenario, if there is proliferation within India and lockdowns get extended coupled with a global recession, it will be a double whammy for the Indian economy. India's growth will fall under 3 per cent in this scenario as a prolonged slowdown would exacerbate economic troubles.

However, experts also pointed out that to show higher GDP growth in revised numbers recently, the government has reduced the base in the previous year.

In that case, the government should have revised and lowered GDP growth for previous year. So, projections are taking place as per official numbers. It is now not the question whether government numbers are right. The historical government numbers are incorrect now, experts said.

Later in the week," said a source close to OPEC, who asked not to be named. On Thursday, kingpin exporter Saudi Arabia called for an urgent meeting of OPEC and other countries to "stabilise the oil market" following a phone call between Trump and Saudi Crown Prince and de facto leader Mohammed bin Salman.

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I-T dept allows more time to individuals to file TDS exemption forms

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Income Tax Department has allowed individuals to submit Form 15G and 15H for the current fiscal after June 30 for claiming exemption from TDS on interest income to mitigate the hardship of people amid the Covid-19 crisis.

Forms 15G and 15H are filed by persons whose incomes are below the taxable threshold, to seek exemption from TDS on interest income.

These forms are usually submitted by taxpayers to banks and financial institutions in April. In an order, the Central Board of Direct Taxes said the 15G and 15H forms submitted last fiscal will remain valid till June 30, 2020, since the Covid-19 pandemic has caused severe disruption in the normal working of almost all sectors of the economy, including banks and other institutions.

# Explained: Here's how power system will be managed during lights-out today

New Delhi: A 9-minute lights-out by most of households on Sunday evening can potentially collapse the grid due to sudden drop and then a quick surge after the event. But to manage the dramatic changes in electricity and its impact on the grid, the government has drawn an elaborate plan to manage it. Following are the broad plan of action.

Electrical appliances such as AC, fans, TVs, refrigerators are not supposed to be switched off and only household lights are to be switched off from 9 pm to 9.09 pm on Sunday.

Also, lights in all essential services, including hospitals, police stations and manufacturing facilities as well as street lights are not to be switched off.

These two steps will ensure sizeable household demand

continues irrespective of lights-out. Power System Operation Corp Ltd — the agency responsible for managing the grid — has mapped all India lighting load and estimated such demand at 12-13 gigawatts (out of a total consumption of 125-126 GW).

Unlike normal operation, this reduction in load of 12-13 GW would happen in 2-4 minutes and recover nine minutes later — within 2-4 minutes. This sharp reduction in load and recovery, which is unprecedented, will need to be handled through hydro and gas resources. The drop in load and subsequent rise will be managed by using hydro and gas generators that require the least amount of time for ramp up.

All regional entities have been advised to maintain their interchange with the grid as per

schedule. Distribution companies have been advised to avoid any feeder switching operation from 20:00 to 22:00 hrs.

Also, control room staff at national and all regional/state load centres will be strengthened and grids will be closely monitored to tackle any contingency. State load distribution centres have asked distribution companies to ensure that substations and housing society/residential apartments' main supply is not be switched off at feeder / mains level.

During the evening peak hours — 18:10 to 20:00 hrs — hydro generation will be reduced and conserved for providing flexibility during 21:00 hrs event. During this time, thermal and gas generation will be scheduled in a manner so as to manage the peak.

# RIL aircraft ferries 6,000 PPE kits to Mumbai

New Delhi: An aircraft of Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) has flown in 6,000 personal protection equipment (PPE) kits or coveralls for the frontline health workers in Mumbai fighting the Covid-19 outbreak.

"6,000 PPE lifted & flown straight to Mumbai for our frontline #HealthWarriors fighting to protect Mumbaikars!", the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) said in a tweet.

"A huge thanks to @ril.foundation & @thisiskar for making this possible!", BMC said in the tweet.

RIL and RIL Foundation have announced several initiatives to fight Covid-19. These include contribution of Rs 500 crore to the PM-CARES Fund, Rs 5 crore to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund of Maharashtra, and contribution of Rs 5 crore to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund of Gujarat.

In addition, it set up India's first 100-bed exclusive Covid-19 hospital geared up in just two weeks to handle coronavirus patients.

## APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



General public is hereby informed that an unidentified deadbody of male Age : Approx. 70 years, Height : 5'5", Complexion : Wheatish, Build : Thin, Face : Long, wearing blue colour shirt and grey colour pant, was found dead on 22.03.2020 at Hanuman Mandir, Yamuna Bazar, Kashmere Gate, Delhi. In this regard a DD No. 10-A dated 22.03.2020 u/s 174 Cr.P.C. has been lodged at P.S. Kashmere Gate, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this found person may kindly inform to the following:-

SHO : P.S. Kashmere Gate, Delhi  
Tel. No. 011-23968730

DP/159/N/20

**UJVN Limited**  
H.O.: 'UJJWAL', Maharani Bagh, GMS Road, Dehrabad-248006  
Telephone: 0135-2763808; Fax: 0135-2763508  
CIN No. U40101UR2001SG025866, Website: www.ujvn.com

**e-Tender Notice**

Office of the Executive Engineer (Civil), MB-1, Maneri (Uttarkashi) invites sealed tenders from interested parties. Brief summary of tender are given below:

Tender No	02/ EE(Civil) / MB-1 / Maneri/2020-21
Name of work	Painting work of Tilioti Power House at Uttarkashi.
Estimated Cost	Rs. 27,07,731.45 (Excluding GST)
Earnest Money Deposit	Rs. 67,700.00
Tender Fee	Rs. 2360.00 (Including GST)
Date & time of availability of bid document on website	04-04-2020 from 17:00 Hrs
Last date & time of submission of bids on website	25-04-2020 upto 17:00 Hrs
Last date & time of submission of hard copies of bids	27-04-2020 upto 15:00 Hrs
Date & time of opening of bids on website (Part-I)	28-04-2020 at 11:00 Hrs

For fuller & further detail, kindly visit e-procurement portal "http://uktenders.gov.in"

पत्रांक: 196 दिनांक: 03.04.2020 E.E (Civil), MB-1, Maneri

"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

## Cyber security agency cautions against fake PM-CARES UPI IDs

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The national cyber security agency has alerted donors against fake 'UPI IDs' for a special fund launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. In an advisory issued on

Saturday, the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) said it has "tracked several fake UPI IDs which are similar to the UPI ID used by the 'Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations (PM-CARES) Fund'".

CERT-In is the country's nodal agency to guard cyber space. The advisory identified some of the fake UPI IDs in circulation such as pmcares@pnb, pmcares@yesbank, pmcares@ybl, pmcares@upi, pmcares@sbi and pmcares@icici.

## Metro Railway provides food, basic facilities to workers

Kolkata: Metro Railway Authorities have taken several initiatives to provide different basic facilities to workers including contract labourers staying at work site of Noapara-Barasat via Biman Bandar Metro Extension Project. Arrangements have been made to provide meals to these workers regularly. Groceries, food items and

LPG cylinders in adequate amount have been provided at the site for that.

Masks, alcohol based sanitizers and soaps have also been provided to the workers and they have been encouraged to wash their hands frequently in order to stop the spread of COVID-19. They have also been encouraged to follow the government's guidelines to stop



spread of this deadly virus. Social distancing and cleanliness are being maintained at this site camp very strictly. Water tank and RO based water plants have been

installed for maintaining personal hygiene at this site camp. Separate room has also been identified as Isolation Room for anyone found with symptoms of cold, cough and fever.

## PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED

(See Section 82 Cr. PC)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person namely **Karan S/o Shukhdev Mehato R/o 379, Aadarsh Nagar, Sabzi Mandi Azadpur, Delhi** have committed (or are suspected to have committed) the offence in a FIR No. 297/18, u/s 356/379 /511 IPC, PS Kotwali, Delhi and it have been returned to a warrants of arrest there upon issued that the said accused **Karan** could not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Karan** have absconded (or are concealing themselves to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused persons **Karan of FIR No. 297/18, u/s 356/379 /511 IPC, PS Kotwali, Delhi** is required to appear in the court to answer the said complaint on or before 21.05.2020.

By order  
Ms. Prigya Gupta  
Ld. Metropolitan Magistrate,  
Central, Room No. 21,  
Tis Hazari Court, Delhi

DP/140/N/2020

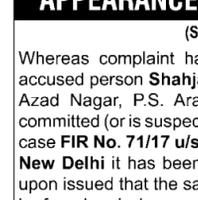
## APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified person about 35 years of age whose name, residence and family is unknown had been found dead at pusta under Metro Line Yamuna Khadar, Kashmere Gate, Delhi. In this regard a vide has been registered with DD No: 14-A u/s 174 Cr.PC dated 23.03.2020 at P.S. Kashmere Gate, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to identify the deceased person but no clue has come to light so far.

The description of the UIDB is as under:  
**Sex:** Male, **Age:** about 35 years, **Height:** 5'7", **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Face:** Long, **Built:** Thin **Wearing:** Red colour shirt and grey colour pant.

If anyone has any information about his relatives, kindly inform the SHO/Kashmere Gate, Delhi.  
E-mail : c/c@cbi.gov.in  
Ph. : 011-24368638, 24368641  
Fax : 011-24368639

DP/163/N/2020



SHO  
P.S. Kashmere Gate, Delhi  
Ph. No. 011-23968730

## PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

(SECTION 82 Cr.Pc.)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that the accused person **Shahjad, S/o Hasibul Rahman R/o Village Azad Nagar, P.S. Arariya Kot, Dist. Arariya, Bihar** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No. 71/17 u/s 27/61/85 NDPS Act, P.S. Kotwali, New Delhi it has been returned to warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said accused person **Shahjad**, cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Shahjad**, has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Shahjad, FIR No. 71/17 u/s 27/61/85 NDPS Act, P.S. Kotwali, New Delhi** is required to appear before the court on or before 27.05.2020.

By order  
Ms. Prigya Gupta  
MM-08, Room No. 272  
Tis Hazari Court, Delhi

DP/134/N/2020

## SEARCH FOR MISSING FEMALE



General public is hereby informed that this female namely **Priyanka D/o Mehinder Pal R/o O-188 Sector-01, DSIIDC, Bawana, Delhi** **Age :** 24 years, **Height :** 5'4", **Face :** Round, **Complexion :** Fair, **Build :** Strong, wearing grey colour suit and chappal in feet, has been missing since 05.03.2020 at about 01:00 P.M. from the area of P.S. Bawana, Delhi. In this regard DD No. 27-A dated 06.03.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Bawana, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this missing female may kindly inform to the following.

E-mail: c/c@cbi.gov.in  
Website: http://cbi.nic.in  
Fax: 24368639,  
Tel.: 24368638/24368641

SHO : P.S. Bawana, Delhi  
Ph. : 011-27752534,  
27751949

DP/129/N/2020

# GLOBAL VIRUS DEATH TOLL CROSSES 60,000

**AFP ■ PARIS**  
The coronavirus pandemic has killed over 60,000 people worldwide, nearly three quarters of them in Europe, since it emerged in China in December, according to a tally compiled by AFP at 1330 GMT Saturday from official sources.

A total of 60,457 deaths have been recorded, including 44,132 in Europe, the continent worst hit by the virus. The official tallies probably reflect only a fraction of the actual number of cases.

With 14,681 deaths, Italy is the country with the highest death toll, followed by Spain (11,744), the United States (7,159), France (6,507) and Britain (4,313).

Since COVID-19 first emerged, 1,130,204 cases have been declared officially in the world, with more than half of them in Europe (610,846).

There have been 290,219 in the United States and Canada (7,325 deaths between them) and 115,777 cases in Asia (4,124 deaths).



A woman wearing a face mask to protect against the new coronavirus looks at vegetables at the Tajrish traditional bazaar in northern Tehran, Iran on Saturday. AP

## New York records 562 deaths in single day

**New York:** The New York State reported its highest number of 562 COVID-19 deaths in a single day, with a person dying almost every two-and-a-half minutes, as Governor Andrew Cuomo allowed redistribution of ventilators and protective gear to hospitals with greater need.

Coronavirus cases in the state, the epicenter of the pandemic in the US, crossed 100,000 and it recorded the highest increase in the number of deaths from the virus in a single day between April 2 and 3, Cuomo said.

The death toll in the state now stands at 2,935, an increase of 562 deaths in just one day, Cuomo said. "The curve continues to go

up," Cuomo said while addressing reporters on Friday. The number of confirmed coronavirus cases in the state now stand at 102,863, nearly half of all COVID-19 infections in the US, where the tally has reached 277,953. New York City alone has 56,289 coronavirus patients.

Cuomo also gave a grim assessment of the rising number of casualties, saying the state witnessed the "highest single increase in the number of deaths since we started."

More than 7,000 people have died in the US, and 1,867 in the New York City alone, according to Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Centre.

"More people in New York died from the virus in the last 24 hours than in the first 27 days of March. The state's death toll has nearly doubled in the last three days," The New York Times said.

The Governor also expressed anger over the short supply of essential medical equipment for healthcare professionals to help them deal with the surge in the cases across the state and the country.

He said personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks, gowns and face shields are in short supply in New York as they are across the country and there is need for companies to make these materials. **PTI**

## 5-year-old boy dies of virus in UK, toll reaches 4,313

**London:** A 5-year-old boy with pre-existing underlying health issues is the UK's youngest COVID-19 victim as the country's death toll in the coronavirus pandemic rose by 708 in 24 hours to hit 4,313 on Saturday.

UK Cabinet Office minister Michael Gove revealed the latest death toll during the daily Downing Street briefing, during which he reiterated the government's plea for the public to continue to strictly observe social distancing over what is set to be a pleasant weekend.

"If we weigh up an hour or two outside and weigh it against the lives of those we love and the lives of those on the NHS (National Health Service) frontline, then it should be clear, I hope to all that we should follow the advice," said Gove.

"The sun might be out, but that doesn't mean you should be out," Stephen Powis, NHS England's National Medical Director said.

A statement from the NHS on the latest deaths in England

said that patients were aged between five years and 104 years old.

The latest figures emerged as police forces across the UK put on extra patrols in parks and outdoor areas, amid fears that large numbers of people will be tempted to go outside and break social distancing rules in the warmer weather.

During the daily briefing, Gove also announced that hundreds of ventilators were being manufactured in the UK every day and more had been sourced from abroad, including Germany and Switzerland and a batch of 300 invasive ventilators from China arrived on Saturday.

"I'd like to thank the Chinese government for their support in securing that capacity," he said. He said a partnership between University College London (UCL) and Mercedes Benz has produced a new "non-invasive" ventilator, which has been clinically approved. The partnership has already produced 250, which will rise to 1,000 a day by next week. **PTI**

## B'desh sees highest single-day jump in virus cases, extends shutdown to Apr 11

**Dhaka:** Bangladesh on Saturday extended the nationwide transport shutdown till April 11 as the country recorded its biggest single-day increase of COVID-19 cases with nine new positive tests, taking the country's total to 70.

The country reported two more deaths from the novel coronavirus, taking the total number of fatalities to eight, according to data released by the health directorate on Saturday.

One of deceased was 90-year-old and the other was 68 and both had histories of heart disease and stroke respectively, Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) Director Meerjady Sabrina Flora told a virtual media briefing here.

The tally of infections increase to 70 after nine more people, including two children aged under 10, tested positive in the last 24 hours.

This is the biggest jump in positive tests over a 24-hour period since Bangladesh announced its first cases on March 8. The total number of recovered patients is 30.

The authorities collected 553 samples from across the country in the last 24 hours and tested 434, Abul Kalam Azad, director general of the Directorate General of Health Services, said in an online briefing. **PTI**

## CHINESE EXPLORERS START EVEREST CLIMB AMID VIRUS PANDEMIC: REPORT

**Beijing:** A group of Chinese mountaineers has begun an expedition on Mount Everest as China limped back to normalcy after the coronavirus outbreak. The site, however, remains closed to foreign climbers.

The highest peak of the world stands on the border of China and Nepal and can be climbed from both sides. China has closed its side to foreign climbers while Nepal has cancelled all expeditions in response to Covid-19. Only Chinese climbers are permitted this

spring season because of the pandemic, operators told the BBC. China has suspended foreign expeditions on the north side of 8,848-meter Mount Everest in Tibet during the spring climbing season of 2020 due to the global spread of the coronavirus. The Tibet Mountaineering Association (TMA) announced during the second week of March that while China has made great progress in containing the coronavirus disease, its rapid global spread still brings uncertainty and danger. **PTI**

## 95 police officers, 46 medical staff died in fight against virus in China: Media

**Beijing:** Ninety-five Chinese police officers and 46 medical workers died in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic, State-run media reported on Saturday, revealing for the first time the casualties of the frontline officials fighting the battle against the global health crisis.

The revelation of the casualties came as China on Saturday held a national memorial for the martyrs and victims of the coronavirus outbreak. China has reported 81,639

confirmed COVID-19 cases and 3,326 deaths, majority of them from epicentre Hubei province and its capital Wuhan, where the deadly virus originated late last year.

As of Thursday, a total of 60 frontline police officers and 35 auxiliary police officers had sacrificed their lives at the frontline of the battle, official media here quoted the Chinese Ministry of Public Security.

As of March 15, at least 46 medical workers have sacrificed

their lives during the battle by risking infection, over-work or accidents state-run Global Times reported.

Earlier, Chinese officials said over 3,000 medical workers have contracted the virus. China has deployed 42,000 medical workers in Hubei and built 14 makeshift hospitals to accommodate surging cases.

Hubei province has so far reported 67,803 confirmed cases, including 50,008 in Wuhan. **PTI**

## Spain shut till April 25 Deaths down for second straight day at 809

**Madrid:** Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez announced on Saturday the extension of the country's lockdown until April 25 in order to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus.

"The cabinet on Tuesday will again ask for authorisation from parliament to extend for a second time the state of alert until Saturday April 25 at midnight," Sanchez said in a televised speech.

"With the utmost caution, we believe that this is the time that our health system needs to recover," he said. Hospitals, in particular the intensive care units, have been overwhelmed by an influx of coronavirus patients.

The total number of fatalities in the country stands at 11,744, second only to Italy. The number of new Spanish cases also slowed to 7,026, taking the total to 124,736.

A nationwide 15-day state of emergency was first announced on March 14 barring people from leaving home except for essential outings such as buying food or seeking medical care. **AFP**

Italy's doctors look for help from sleek new robots

**Varese (Italy):** The shiny new robots gently check the pulses of highly infectious patients on life support in the Italian epicentre of COVID-19. The doctors and nurses love them because they also help save their own lives. Italians have seen the world around them turn unrecognisable from the various lockdowns and social distancing measures used to fight the new coronavirus outbreak.

But little appears to have changed them as much as seeing dozens of doctors and nurses die while trying to save the tens of thousands of patients who have suddenly ended up in hospitals across Italy's pandemic-hit north. The country's medical association said on Friday that at least 70 medics have died from various causes since Italy recorded the first official COVID-19 death on February 21.

The fear is that an overwhelmingly majority of the 70 would still be alive today had they been better protected against the coronavirus. This helps explain why the doctors are nurses in a hospital near Italy's mountainous border with Switzerland are laughing behind their face-masks while posing for photos with their new robot friends. The Varese hospital has received six of the sleek and slightly human looking machines on wheels. **AFP**

## Pak lawmaker writes to UN chief to probe if virus man-made and trace its origin

**Islamabad:** A Pakistani lawmaker has appealed to the United Nations to form a commission to probe if coronavirus is a man-made or a naturally grown virus and also trace its origin, according to a media report.

The motormouth former Pakistani interior minister, Rehman Malik, in a letter to UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, suggested that the proposed commission on COVID-19 under the UN Convention on Biological Weapons, 1975 might comprise of virologists, scientists, professors, researchers, analysts and experts in the fields of microbiology and virology, the Dawn News reported.

Making the letter public at

a press conference through a video link, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Senator Malik said the commission should present its report to the UN secretary general in three months, and give recommendations to prevent future breakouts of such viruses, and international standards for coordination in case of a breakout. The COVID-19, which originated in China's Wuhan city, has so far killed 59,456 people worldwide and infected more than 1,122,320 in 190 countries. For the proposed UN commission on COVID-19, Malik has proposed seven 'terms of references' to the UN secretary general. These include accurate identification of the geo-location of the COVID-19's origin, identification of areas with

zero patient, discovery as to why the behaviour, intensity and fertility rate of COVID-19 varies from country to country, investigation whether it is a man-made or naturally-grown virus and examination of the allegations of transportation of the virus from one place to other destinations in the world, as a 'biological warfare tactics'. He said the deadly coronavirus pandemic had stirred up the worst global crisis since World War II, the daily said.

"Many claims, speculations, conspiracy theories and misinformation about the disease have found their way into the international print and electronic media, blurring distinction between real and fake news," he said. **PTI**

## Pak records 2,700 virus cases, Punjab crosses 1,000-mark

**Islamabad:** Pakistan's coronavirus cases rose to 2,708 on Saturday with the number of patients in the Punjab province, which accounts for more than half of the country's total population, crossing the 1,000-mark.

According to the National Health Services, COVID-19 has so far claimed 40 lives, while 130 patients have recovered.

Punjab — the hotspot of the viral infection in Pakistan — reported a total of 1,072 cases, followed by Sindh at 839, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa 343, Balochistan 175, Gilgit-Baltistan 193, Islamabad 75 and 11 cases in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

The viral infection in the country is rapidly spreading,

despite hectic efforts by the government to curtail it, officials said.

On Friday, the World Bank has approved USD 200 million in aid to Pakistan to help deal with the impact of the novel coronavirus.

According to Radio Pakistan, the project titled "Pandemic Response Effectiveness in Pakistan", will support the government to prepare and respond to the disease and strengthen national systems for public health preparedness.

Asserting that no one was sure how long the COVID-19 pandemic would last, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday announced a massive package to the construction sector to restart economy. **PTI**



People walk along the banks of the river Rhine in Cologne, Germany on Saturday. AP

## Front-line medical staff deaths grow, highlight virus risks

**Rome:** Air raid sirens sounded across China and flags flew at half staff in tribute on Saturday to victims of the coronavirus pandemic, including the health care "martyrs" who have died fighting to save others.

With the highest number of infections in Europe and their hospitals overwhelmed, Spain and Italy struggled to protect medical staff on the front lines of the outbreak, while 17 medics in Egypt's main cancer hospital tested positive for the virus.

As the number of infections has grown to more than 1.1 million worldwide, health care systems are straining under the surge of patients and lack of medical equipment like ventilators as well as protective masks and gloves, giving rise to growing concerns about the exposure of hospital personnel. Italy and Spain, with com-



bined deaths of more than 25,000 and nearly a quarter-million infections, have reported a high percentage of infections among health care workers.

Carlo Palermo, head of Italy's hospital doctors' union, fought tears as he told reporters in Rome of the physical risks and psychological trauma the outbreak is causing, noting reports that two nurses had committed suicide.

"It's an indescribable condi-

tion of stress. Unbearable," he said. "I can understand those who look death in the eye every day, who are on the front lines, who work with someone who maybe is infected, then a few days later you see him in the ICU or die." U.S. President Donald Trump announced late Friday he would prevent the export of N95 protective masks and surgical gloves to ensure they are available in the U.S. - prompting neighboring

Canada's prime minister to respond that cross-border aid goes well beyond supplies.

"I think of the thousands of nurses who cross the bridge in Windsor to work in the Detroit medical system every day," Justin Trudeau said. "These are things Americans rely on." The number of people infected in the U.S. has now exceeded a quarter-million, with the death toll climbing past 7,000. New York state alone accounts for more than 2,900 dead, an increase of over 560 in just one day. Most of the dead are in New York City, where hospitals are swamped with patients.

World Health Organization director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus warned African leaders of an "imminent surge" in coronavirus cases on the continent, urging them to open humanitarian corridors to allow the delivery of badly

needed medical supplies.

More than half of Africa's 54 countries have closed air, land and sea borders to prevent the virus' spread but that has delayed aid shipments. Virus cases in Africa are now over 7,700, and the head of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has warned some nations will have more than 10,000 cases by the end of April.

In the Philippines, Sen. Richard Gordon, who is also head of the local Red Cross, said lockdown measures have meant millions of poor families are unable to fulfill basic needs.

"A lot of people are hungry. They're asking for milk, they're asking for diapers. They say it's not going fast enough," Gordon said, threatening to have local officials arrested if they steal from government aid for dirt-poor families. **AP**

## Anti-parasitic drug kills virus in lab grown cells: Study

**Melbourne:** Researchers have found that an anti-parasitic drug already available around the world can kill the novel coronavirus grown in cell cultures within 48 hours, an advance that may lead to the development and trial of a new clinical therapy for COVID-19.

According to the study, published in the journal Antiviral Research, the drug, Ivermectin, stopped the virus, SARS-CoV-2, from growing in cell culture within 48 hours.

"We found that even a single dose could essentially remove all viral RNA by 48 hours and that even at 24 hours there was a really significant reduction in it," said study co-author Kylie Wagstaff from Monash University in

Australia. The scientists said Ivermectin is an approved anti-parasitic drug that has also been shown to be effective in vitro against a broad range of viruses including HIV, Dengue, Influenza and Zika virus.

However, Wagstaff cautioned that the tests conducted in the study were in vitro and that trials needed to be carried out in people.

"Ivermectin is very widely used and seen as a safe drug. We need to figure out now whether the dosage you can use it at in humans will be effective - that's the next step," Wagstaff said.

"In times when we're having a global pandemic and there isn't an approved treatment, if we had a compound

that was already available around the world then that might help people sooner," she said.

Although the mechanism by which Ivermectin works on the virus is not known, the scientists said it is likely, based on its action in other viruses, that it works to stop the virus 'dampening down' the host cells' ability to clear it.

"As the virologist who was part of the team who were first to isolate and share SARS-CoV2 outside of China in January 2020, I am excited about the prospect of Ivermectin being used as a potential drug against COVID-19," said Leon Caly, study co-author from the Royal Melbourne Hospital in Australia. **PTI**

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

# FIFA postpone U-17 Women's WC in India

The FIFA Under-17 Women's World Cup to be held in India in November was on Saturday postponed by football's governing body due to the worsening COVID-19 pandemic across the globe.

The women's age group showpiece was to be held at five venues in the country — Kolkata, Guwahati, Bhubaneswar, Ahmedabad and Navi Mumbai — from November 2-21.

The tournament was to be competed among 16 teams, with hosts India being automatic qualifiers. It was to be India's maiden appearance in the U-17 Women's World Cup.

The decision was taken by the FIFA-Confederations working group which was recently established by the Bureau of the FIFA Council to address the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The working group recommended the Bureau of FIFA Council to "postpone the FIFA Under-20 Women's World Cup Panama/Costa Rica 2020 — originally scheduled for August/September 2020 — and the FIFA Under-17 Women's World Cup India 2020 — originally scheduled for November 2020."

"New dates will be identified," FIFA said in a statement.

It was also decided "to create a sub-working group on the women's international match calendar to consider potential changes to the calendar and dates of postponed FIFA final tournaments".

The All India Football Federation said the postponement was on expected lines.

"Just like other sports events which were postponed due to this dreaded disease, it (postponement of U-17 World Cup) was to happen. We have to accept the decision," AIFF General Secretary Kunal Das said. "The qualifying events in Europe



Precious Uzoaru Dede instructs Indian goalkeeper during team's practice session



IFT/Twitter

and Africa and other confederations are yet to be held and so the decision was on expected lines."

He said the tournament will most likely be held next year.

The working group of the world body which took the decision includes the FIFA administration and Secretary Generals and top executives from all confederations.

It unanimously approved a series of recommendations following its first meeting, which was organised

via conference late on Friday.

While the tournament itself is five months away but only the qualifying event for Asia has been held so far from which from which Japan and North Korea have made the cut.

Five remaining qualifying events — that of Africa, Europe, Oceania, South America, and Central, North America and Caribbean — have not been held due to the global health crisis which has affected more than a million people.

The official schedule of the tournament was announced in February and Navi Mumbai was to host the final.

The Local Organising Committee (LOC) said it supported the decision though it was looking forward to host the tournament in November as scheduled.

"We agree that this has been made with the highest regard for public health, and the participating teams, host cities, staff and visiting

## 'Tough decision to shelve, but in best interest'

**KOLKATA:** The postponement of the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup will not derail preparations for the tournament as the country is still committed to "delivering a memorable" meet whenever it is possible, Roma Khanna, the tournament director of Local Organising Committee, said. "We were, of course, looking forward to the tournament but everyone understands the current situation and has been supportive," Roma said.

"The fact that three of the venues (Kolkata, Navi Mumbai, Guwahati) have already hosted a FIFA tournament in the past helps and the other venues seem on track. Everyone is committed to ensuring that this does not impact us much and we move ahead with our planning and deliver a memorable U-17 Women's World Cup in India," she said.

She added that the LOC will work with FIFA to chalk out alternate dates best suited to host the tournament in India which has previously hosted the U-17 Men's World Cup which was won by England.

fans, and keeps the best interests of everyone in mind," the LOC said in a statement.

"For us at the moment, the primary concern is the health and well being of every stakeholder involved in the tournament. We don't want to take any risk that is detrimental to our community before it is clear



"We shall work with FIFA to look at alternate dates best suited to host the tournament in India. At present, in collaboration with FIFA, the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Hosting States, national and international health authorities, we are constantly monitoring the situation regarding COVID-19 in India."

"We are in regular touch with FIFA and all the other concerned stakeholders. Three of the venues (Guwahati, Kolkata and Navi Mumbai) hosted the FIFA U-17 World Cup in 2017 and already meet

the majority of FIFA requirements. The two new venues, Ahmedabad and Bhubaneswar, also have the basic infrastructure ready. We also already had one round of FIFA inspections in November at all five of these venues, which went really well.

"It is a tough decision but it is in the best interest of everyone especially the players. As I have said before, the safety of the players, fans and all the other stakeholders is of utmost importance to us. We look forward to hosting a spectacular FIFA U-17 Women's WC in the near future," she concluded. **IANS**



## Cummins glad being vice-captain under Paine

**MELBOURNE:** Australia fast bowler Pat Cummins feels nice about skipper Tim Paine rating him as one of the contenders for future Test captaincy but says the topic is just a moot point as the wicket-keeper is still playing.

Discussions about who should lead Australia whenever the 35-year-old Paine retires are ongoing. Former captain Steve Smith's leadership ban has also expired.

Earlier this week, Paine named Smith, Cummins, Travis Head, Alex Carey and Marnus Labuschagne among those who could take up the captaincy.

Former skipper Michael Clarke has long been pushing for Cummins — the current vice-captain — to lead the national side.

"It's nice to hear, (I) don't think it makes me want it more or less. I'm glad being a vice-captain underneath him that I get that nod. He's brilliant," Cummins was quoted as saying by *cricket.Com.Au*.

"Like I've said a hundred times before, I kind of feel it's not quite right talking about captaincy now when we've got someone like Paine and Finchy (limited-overs captain Aaron Finch) doing great jobs. We'll see down the track, but at the moment it's bit of a moot point."

The 26-year-old Cummins, who has taken 143 wickets from 30 Tests since making his debut in 2011, is expected to top Cricket Australia's contract list for 2020-21 whenever it is announced, underlining his importance in Justin Langer's team.

The 26-year-old has become the most resilient member of the attack after an injury-plagued start to his career. He was appointed one of Paine's deputies last year, but currently has no captaincy experience at the domestic level. "In the perfect world, your first experience of being captain — say Australian captain, you've (already) had quite a bit of experience leading and you know exactly what it entails," he said.

"But things don't always work out as exactly as you planned." **PTI**

# KP proposes condensed IPL without fans

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The COVID-19 pandemic may have indefinitely stalled all sporting activities but former England captain Kevin Pietersen still "truly believes" the 13th edition of IPL should happen the moment there is a window of opportunity.

He proposed a "condensed" league behind closed doors for one of cricket's biggest money-spinners, adding the fans shouldn't be risked.

"Let's say July/August is the earliest, I do truly believe the IPL should happen. I do believe it is the kick-start to the cricket season. I think every single player around the world is desperate to play the IPL," Pietersen said.

The former star batsman expressed his thoughts on *Star Sports* show *Cricket Connected*.

The IPL is important not just for players and franchises, but also for the people working behind the scenes, and this was not lost on Pietersen.

"There could be a way in



Kevin Pietersen in conversation with Sanjay Manjrekar and Scott Styris during Star Sports Cricket Connected show on Saturday

which to get some money into the franchise, into the economy by having a situation where you use maybe three venues which are completely closed to fans and the players can still go out and play the tournament in three weeks or in four weeks.

"So, it's a more condensed tournament in three venues which we know are safe, which we know are secure," he said.

Agreeing with Pietersen, former India batsman Sanjay Manjrekar spoke on the impor-

ance of organising the IPL.

"The moment we get clearances from all the authorities that matter, the IPL should happen, only because it will kick start the economy because when you talk about the IPL it's not just about the Mumbai Indians, or a Dhoni or a Virat Kohli, there are a lot of people who are making their livelihood through the IPL," he said.

Recently, Rajasthan Royals' executive chairman Manoj Badale had said that a "short-

## BCCI in constant touch with foreign Boards

NEW DELHI: Even as the fate of the 13th edition of the IPL hangs in balance, both BCCI as well as the IPL franchises are keeping fingers crossed in order to have a full season of the cash-rich league. And a major player in this scenario is the foreign boards as an IPL without the foreign players wouldn't be the carnival it is. So, even as the country fights the pandemic, BCCI has been keeping foreign boards in the loop with regards to developments.

Speaking about it, a BCCI official said that the foreign boards like Cricket Australia and the ECB and Cricket South Africa among others have all been constantly updated on the scenario and the directives of the government with regards to fighting COVID-19.

"While various options have been discussed like a closed-door tournament, or a curtailed one, it is almost clear that everyone wants foreign players to be a part of the IPL and that is one of the major highlights of the tournament. So, we have been constantly updating the boards of the situation here and the directives that are being issued by the health department as well as the government in the fight against coronavirus."

"In fact, it is a two-way process as international border lockdown is also an aspect that needs to be kept in mind because at the end of the day whenever the IPL does happen, the foreign players need to fly in," the official pointed. **IANS**

## England cricketers volunteer salary reduction

**LONDON (AFP):** England cricketers, both men and women, have volunteered pay cuts and donated 500,000 pounds as contribution towards the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

The cricketers' gesture comes after the England and Wales Cricket Board had proposed a 20 percent cut in the players' salaries. The ECB was waiting for a response from the representatives at the Professional Cricketers' Association.

The donation of 500,000 pounds is equivalent to a 20 percent reduction in the salaries of men's cricketers while the women volunteered for a pay cut in their April, May and June salaries.

"Following a meeting of all of the England men's centrally contracted cricketers, the players have agreed to make an initial donation of £0.5m to the ECB and to selected good causes," read a statement from the players.

"The precise details of the charitable donation will be decided over the next week by the players. This contribution is the equivalent of all of the England centrally contracted players taking a 20% reduction in their monthly retainers for the next three months."



## Rohit, Warner world's best T20 openers: Moody

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



Tom Moody's tweet: "Tough call, but I would be more than happy with @davidwarner31 and @ImRo45"

Former all-rounder Tom Moody on Saturday picked India's Rohit Sharma and fellow Australian David Warner as best opening batsmen in T20 cricket.

Moody is also a well-known coach and commentator.

In a question and answer session, the 54-year-old also picked Chennai Super Kings as his favourite IPL team and M S

Dhoni favourite captain.

"Tough call, but I would be more than happy with @davidwarner31 And @ImRo45 (Rohit)," Moody wrote on his *Twitter* page when asked about the best opening batsmen in T20s.

There is abundance of cricketers in India but amongst the emerging ones, Moody feels Shubman Gill "stands out". Gill has played two ODIs for India and has also made the Test team but is yet to get a game.

Moody, who has coached multiple IPL teams, believes New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson is blessed with the best cricketing brain and Ravindra Jadeja is his favourite Indian fielder.

Asked about his favourite Indian cricketer, Moody picked skipper Virat Kohli.

# Stay indoors and fight battle for your country: Pujara

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Batting long comes naturally to Cheteshwar Pujara and now he wants his fellow Indians to do the same by staying at home as "the battle against the COVID-19 pandemic can only be won by being indoors".

Pujara was one of the elite Indian sportspersons who attended the video call held by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday to discuss ways to fight the coronavirus.

"The Prime Minister wanted us to pass on the fighting spirit of a sportsperson to the general public. Sportspersons do inspire to fight," Pujara said.

"Every single person is a soldier at the moment. If you stay indoors, you are fighting the battle for your own country. There



Cheteshwar Pujara has to be a collective effort else we can't win this," said India's Test batting mainstay.

After helping Saurashtra win their maiden Ranji Trophy title last month, little did he know that he would be spending all his time at home. Pujara is enjoying the "forced" break and most of his time goes into entertaining his two-year-old daughter.

The closest he has got to a "hit in the nets" is by playing with a plastic bat.

But a gym at home means he is not compromising on his fitness.

"I usually take everything in a positive way. Sometimes you need to take a break as a sportsperson and there can't be a better time. We just won the Ranji and it is the right time to take three to four weeks off."

"Luckily I have a gym at home. With gym, I can still do my strength sessions, cycling and

running. I also do yoga which helps a lot," said Pujara.

He was supposed to play county cricket in the UK but that too has been postponed at least till May 28 and faces a cancellation.

Considering the current circumstances, Pujara might have to wait till the Australia tour starting November to play his first competitive game since the Ranji Trophy final. But he is prepared for any eventuality.

"I would still have some first-class games before the Australia tour. I am prepared for anything. This is the time when we can't just be thinking about sporting events. First, we have to win this battle against coronavirus," he said.

"We just need to make sure the virus is contained and things get back to normal. After that we can talk about the game."

## PCB want to host ICC event to cover losses



PTI ■ KARACHI

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) want the International Cricket Council (ICC) to award them the hosting rights of a major event in lieu of the financial losses suffered due to India's refusal to play a bilateral series against them.

PCB Chief Executive Wasim Khan asserted that Pakistan is prepared to host a major ICC event sometime in 2023.

"I don't think hosting international cricket is now such a big issue for Pakistan as the security situation has improved now," Khan said.

"The fact that we have logistically hosted the entire Pakistan Super League in Pakistan and also teams like Sri Lanka and Bangladesh for Test matches besides other smaller events and series shows we are capable of hosting a big ICC event."

Khan said that if Pakistan gets

a major ICC event it would make sense as it has suffered lot of financial losses due to India's refusal to play matches in India or Pakistan for some years now and also because there appears to be no chance of any Indo-Pakistan series taking place in the near future.

"There appears to be little chance of India and Pakistan playing and we have already suffered losses in millions of dollars."

He said that the chief executives

## No salary cut for Pak players

**LAHORE:** The world has come to a standstill due to the coronavirus outbreak and that has led to all sporting events across the globe either being cancelled or suspended. While federations have started asking sportspersons to take pay cuts, the Pakistan Cricket Board just like BCCI has made it clear that there will be no pay cuts at present.

A PCB official said that while the current situation is being monitored, there will be no pay cuts in the current financial year

of cricket Boards will have a video conference with the ICC to discuss World T20 Cup, Asia Cup and World Test Championship.

"There is no doubt that because of the coronavirus pandemic every board is facing a big challenge to reduce their financial losses as

which runs till June 30 for the Pakistan board.

"Our financial year runs from July 1 to June 30. All player contracts (central and domestic) are till 30 June. There will be no salary cuts in the 2019-20 financial year. We have put in place systems to ensure that monthly salaries are paid on time and without delay. The PCB is monitoring the situation in the country closely as it evolves and will amend its policy when appropriate," the official said. **IANS**

much as they can. We are all in the same boat. We have similar interests. When this conference is held we will be discussing future measures."

Khan said the aim is to prepare an alternate plan whenever cricket resumes.

## Dhoni leads Jaffer's all-time ODI XI



**NEW DELHI:** Former India opener Wasim Jaffer has picked M.S. Dhoni as captain of his all-time ODI XI.

Jaffer had recently revealed that all Dhoni wanted when he started off for India captaining the team to the 2007 T20 World Cup and 2011 50-over World Cup and is touted to be

the most successful captain to lead the Men in Blue.

In his all-time ODI team, Jaffer picked four Indian batsmen — Sachin Tendulkar, Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and Dhoni who was also chosen as wicketkeeper. However, no Indian bowler could make a cut to Jaffer's team.

Jaffer, who recently retired from all forms of cricket, also picked West Indies legend Sir Vivian Richards, South Africa's AB de Villiers and 2019 World Cup hero Ben Stokes in the batting line-up.

Jaffer picked Wasim Akram as the all-rounder, Shane Warne or Saqlain Mushtaq as his spinner, West Indies seamer Joel Garner and Australia legend Glenn McGrath as his pacers.

The 42-year-old, surprisingly, picked Australia's two-time World Cup winning captain Ricky Ponting as the 12th man. **IANS**

# the pioneer agenda

FROM THE INSIDE

**Article 370: A fresh perspective**

Bashir Assad's new book provides a refreshing narrative of the actual situation obtaining in Kashmir

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**Be ready to combat evil forces**

Let us brave the situation by exercising all the care and caution as suggested by the experts. This too shall pass

Obviously social media has had a massive impact on the fame game, but not in a positive way. But it can be for some — Margot Robbie



Children react in different ways due to lack of ample sleep or even excess of sleep impacting their health, writes KERRY BAJAJ, as she shares tips on how to ensure that your baby or child is able to sleep peacefully during a time when anxiety is running high in the family due to Coronavirus lockdown



## SLEEP IN THE TIMES OF CORONA

Before the coronavirus lockdown, did you ever think your house could be capable of so much multi-tasking? My house is now a one-room schoolhouse, an office, a gym, a restaurant that's turning out three meals a day, a messy art studio, a global pandemic monitoring station, and the place where our family relaxes and sleeps.

Speaking of sleep, I've never been so grateful that my kids have an early bedtime — 7 pm and 8 pm for the 4 and 5-year-old — and happily sleep through the night. As a sleep consultant, I've been speaking to many parents about how to navigate this challenging time. I've always preached that ensuring a good night's sleep is a precious gift for our children, and I believe it now more than ever. Here's why:

- Sleep is a powerful immune-booster. Both adults and children that are sleep-deprived are more susceptible to illness. Without sufficient sleep, your body produces fewer cytokines, which is a protein that targets infection.
- Sleep supports our emotional health. Sleep is a mood-booster, and acts as a soothing balm for our emotional balance. Much-needed at the moment.
- Sleep is crucial for all aspects of our physical health, from cardiovascular to metabolic to respiratory to immune system.

As Matthew Walker says in *Why We Sleep*, "Sleep is the single most effective thing we can do to reset our brain and body health each day."

Here's my guidance on how to ensure your baby or child is able to sleep peacefully during a time when anxiety is surely running high in the family.

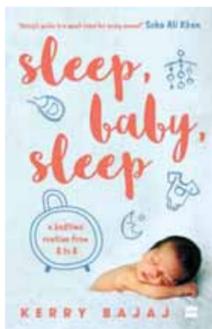
**THE DAYTIME SCHEDULE**

The hundreds of parenting decisions we make during the day will impact our children's night sleep.

**Anchor.** As I say in *Sleep, Baby, Sleep*, routine is like a magic wand for parents to keep their babies happy, healthy and secure. But let's face it — our young children have nowhere to go and no pressing deadlines. Yet we can still create a predictable routine, which provides a sense of normalcy and safety. For my two daughters, I've put a focus on creating "anchors" in our day, points of stability in the ocean of free play. After breakfast, we do our math lesson. While eating lunch, we listen to a storytelling podcast (*Listen & Play* by the BBC). In the afternoon, we work on phonics. In the late afternoon, we call the grandparents. Before dinner, my husband does physical exercise with the girls. These are the predictable touchpoints that they can count on every single day. There's no need to be rigid, but having a daily rhythm with anchors gives children a sense of security.

**Exercise.** Our stir-crazy little kiddos need physical activity — and lots of it! Movement is great for releasing endorphins and will help our children to sleep well at night. Even when stuck inside, we have options — you can have a dance party, water play in a small kiddie pool or bathtub, Cosmic Kids Yoga, or hopscotch, relay race or frog jumps in the hallway. I've even seen videos of kids biking, roller skating and skateboarding inside the house. Be creative! Get the kids up and moving at least 3 times a day — and join them, because it's a good stress-buster for you, too!

**Screentime.** As soon as the WHO declared a global pandemic, I decided that my strict stance on screentime could be relaxed during these weeks at home. My kids don't



nap anymore, and we all need downtime. Every day after lunch, we pull the curtains, turn off the lights, snuggle up under blankets and "go to the zoo." Meaning we visit the Cincinnati Zoo Home Safari via their Facebook page. Hanging out with the hippos and porcupines is soothing, sweet and educational. If you're juggling cooking, cleaning, laundry, work, and homeschooling — choose a nice programme (*I love Daniel Tiger* for toddlers) and give some guilt-free screentime. Since we have a set time for screens, the kids aren't bugging me to watch videos the rest of the day, which is an added bonus.

**Note:** please don't use screentime for the 2 hours before bedtime, because it may be too stimulating and interfere with a good night's sleep.

**THE BEDTIME SCHEDULE**

Many families that I consult with have trouble setting a bedtime routine because they have family functions, weddings, and travel. Since all of that is off the table, it's a perfect time to establish an age-appropriate bedtime for your little one.

**Early to Bed.** Babies and young children need 11 to 12 hours of continuous night sleep. This means that if your baby wakes up at 7 am, bedtime should be between 7 and 8 pm. Sleep is essential for your child's mood, growth, development and immunity. To shift your child's bedtime earlier, I recommend pulling the curtains and turning off the bright overhead lights after sunset. Create a bedtime routine. It can be simple — dinner, bath, books, bed. Write it down on a piece of paper, let your child decorate the bedtime chart, and hang it on the wall in their bedroom.

**Comfy, Cozy Bedtime.** I always encourage clients to think of bedtime as the best part of the day, rather than a power struggle. Cuddle up with your child, read books, sing a lullaby or say a prayer. In order for your child to relax enough to "let go" of the day and fall asleep, they should feel secure and connected. Every night I ask my daughters what they want to dream about (it's often cake and unicorns) and then I spritz them with imaginary "dream spray." This puts happy thoughts into their minds about sleep.

**White Noise.** I recommend white noise to every parent that wants their baby or child to sleep better. White noise provides a soothing rumbling backdrop for sleep and helps drown out the household noises. Especially these days when you may be taking late-night conference calls from the living room, play some white noise for

your child. The easiest way to try it is by downloading a free app (such as *Sleep Pillow*) on your phone or tablet.

Will your child get "addicted" to white noise? This is a common question and the answer is no! If you want to wean off of white noise in the future, you can simply reduce the volume for a few days.

**Sleep Training.** I spoke with a mom of twins who has let go of her domestic helpers during quarantine, has a job in banking that has converted to work-from-home because of coronavirus, and is exhausted from the night wakings that used to be handled by a nanny. Her elderly mother is attending to one twin, and she is attending to another and they are both up twice at night, for as long as an hour each time. For babies over 6 months, you can do sleep training and proactively shape the sleep patterns so you don't have so many night wakings. In my book *Sleep, Baby, Sleep*, you will get the complete guidance to help your baby sleep through the night. In the book, I also cover newborn sleep, baby sleep, toddler sleep and nap schedules for age 0 to 4 years.

**SOOTHING THEIR WORRIES**

It's mission critical to be mindful of what we're saying in front of the kids. Our children will surely struggle with sleeping peacefully if we are exposing them to too much talk and worry about coronavirus.

**Turn Off the TV.** Put the TV news on a 21-day lockdown. There is absolutely no reason to expose your child to sensational and scary news reporting. If it's terrifying for you as an adult, then please protect your child. Also, don't talk on the phone about the gory details of coronavirus in front of your kids. They are always listening and absorbing what you say on the phone. Remember, the beauty of having an early bedtime is that you can watch the news and make your phone calls at night.

**Invite Questions.** I've given simple and honest explanations about coronavirus and the lockdown to my kids. Since their world has drastically changed from school, playdates and sports to 24/7 at home, I do check in with them once a day. I simply ask "do you have any questions for me?" Most of the time they don't, but they know that the lines of communication are open. They know it's safe to have questions. If we can help our children process their concerns in the day, they will better be able to relax and surrender to sleep at night.

**Manage Your Own Triggers.** To help your child's anxiety, you have to manage your own.

For me, that means having an extra loaf of bread and the freezer and an ample supply of chocolate. It means not looking at Whatsapp while I'm playing with the kids because the news is too triggering. It means talking to a friend when I'm feeling scared or anxious so I can work through it, but not in front of the kids. It means focusing on what I can control — staying home, washing my hands. And letting go of what I can't control — the actions of others, how long this will last.

**Empowering Messages.** Since the kids understood from their school friends that coronavirus is a big, scary thing, I have focused on what our family is doing to stay healthy. They know that children are mostly not getting sick from coronavirus, but I'm sure they're scared about their parents getting sick. I tell the kids — I eat healthy food, I exercise, I take vitamin C and I sleep well. I'm strong and healthy. I've assured them that if I do get sick for a few days, my body will fight the virus and bounce back.

**Honour Ambiguity.** We are on a 21-day lockdown, but there is no guarantee that it will end there. This is an ambiguous situation. Please don't get your heart set on having freedom on April 15 and then feel crushed if it doesn't happen. When my 5-year-old asks how long we'll be at home, I tell her the truth — I don't know. It may be 21 days, or it may be 100 days. You may also want to consider the possibility that this could be a long road ahead, so that you'll also be able to emotionally support your children in the weeks ahead.

**Love Them Up.** I tell the kids every single day that I love being at home with them. That this is such a special time for our family to be together. That there is no one I'd rather be stuck home with. You may be spread thin and stressed out of your mind, but don't underestimate what a gift it is for your children to have bonus time with their parents.

So there you have it — create a flow for your daytime routine, enjoy cozy bedtime snuggles, and protect your child from nonstop coronavirus conversation. In doing so, we can create a virtuous cycle where our kids feel good during the day and sleep peacefully at night, thus boosting their physical and emotional resilience. For all the essential workers on the front lines of this crisis, endless thanks for your service. For all the rest, please stay home, stay safe, take care of each other and wash those hands!

The writer is an American sleep consultant living in Mumbai. She is a holistic nutritionist and author of book *Sleep, Baby, Sleep*, published by HarperCollins

BOTH ADULTS AND CHILDREN THAT ARE SLEEP-DEPRIVED ARE MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO ILLNESS. WITHOUT SUFFICIENT SLEEP, YOUR BODY PRODUCES FEWER CYTOKINES, WHICH IS A PROTEIN THAT TARGETS INFECTION



SO PLEASE, OH PLEASE, WE BEG, WE PRAY, GO THROW YOUR TV SET AWAY, AND IN ITS PLACE YOU CAN INSTALL A LOVELY BOOKSHELF ON THE WALL  
— ROALD DAHL

Bashir Assad's new book provides a refreshing narrative of the actual situation obtaining in Kashmir, not touched upon otherwise by the so-called Kashmir experts, writes PROF K WARIKOO

# Article 370: A fresh perspective

**B**ashir Assad, the Kashmiri writer has come out with yet another interesting and insightful study of Kashmir following the abrogation of Article 370. To quote Bashir, he has brought out the "bitter truth following his inner voice" underscoring the Islamisation and Pakistanisation of narratives in Kashmir. And he blames the political leadership in Kashmir which remains "mired in conservatism and short-sightedness around Muslimness" for the troubled situation. Competing schools of Islamist extremism have sway in Kashmir with the local political leaders, intellectuals, media, social and cultural activists, lawyers, businessmen, employees etc. spearheading the Islamist extremist movement. Being witness to the steep decline of the unique Kashmiri culture, Assad calls upon the silent majority of Kashmiri Muslims "not to be carried away by the frenzies of the extremists who thrive on violence".

As regards the decision of the Indian parliament to revoke Article 370 and reorganise the J&K State into two UTs of Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir, the international community has by and large viewed this decision as India's internal affair, with the exception of Pakistan and its ardent supporters—China, Turkey and Malaysia. However, there has been concern over the restrictions imposed in the State following this decision. So far as the local response to this historic decision is concerned, Assad is right in his analysis that in north Kashmir (excepting Sopore and Rafiabad belt in Baramulla district which is dominated by Jamaat-e-Islami), the local people have remained peaceful. And the new narrative of the Indian Government revolving around empowerment, investment and development (EID) has found resonance among the people in rural Kashmir, Gujjars and Bakarwals, Paharis, Kupwara, Handwara, Gurez and most of the Jammu region.

In case of south Kashmir, Jamaat-e-Islami has been influential in Kulgam, Tral, Pulwama, Bijbehara, Anantnag, Kokernag, Doru and Pahalgam and that gets reflected in the different political response and incidents of violence there. In central Kashmir, Srinagar city remains the hotbed of separatist nerve centre of Pakistani narrative being parroted by the political elite, intelligentsia, academia, journalists and civil society.

Coming back to Article 370, Assad believes that the idea behind this Article was to allow the unique Kashmiri identity



based on composite culture, social harmony and brotherhood to flourish. This very foundation of Kashmiriyat collapsed with the ethnic cleansing and forced exodus of the entire indigenous minority community of Kashmiri Pandits in January 1990 and thereafter. The Pandits continue to live in forced exile for the past 30 years now. And there is no prospect of their return to their homes, as all their landed properties, houses, business and educational establishments and even the temples have been occupied in an organized manner. And with the digitisation of land revenue records going on in full swing in Kashmir, all these properties are being conveniently transferred in the names of their illegal occupiers. Here it would be pertinent to mention that all through the past 75 years, the successive State governments have legalised the settlement of non-Kashmiri Muslims in the State. Over 26,000 Afghan Pashtuns were provided land and State citizenship in 1950s at Gutli Bagh, Ganderbal. Similarly over 650 Tibetan Muslim families were provided land and State citizenship in Hari

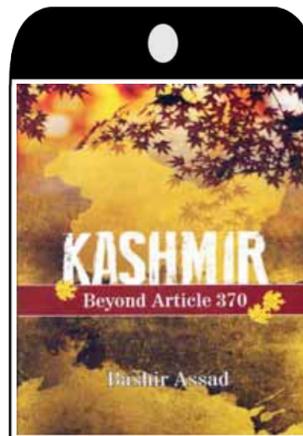
Parbat area in Srinagar around 1959-60. And after 1970s, one has been noticing the ingress and silent settlement of radical Muslims belonging to *Allah Wale* group from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar etc., who set up their shops and captured the local mosques. So much so, over 800 local Kashmiri Muslim Imams were silently replaced by these radical fire-brand non-local Muslims who contributed a lot in radicalising the Kashmiri Muslim society by weaning them away from the local *Sufi-Rishi* tradition of Islam. Assad has been honest in pointing out that most of the Kashmiri Muslim employees who would shift to Jammu during the annual Durbar move, have purchased land or houses in Jammu particularly during the past decade or so. This is in quite contrast to the fact that none of the Hindu employees shifting from Jammu to Srinagar during the Durbar move, have ever purchased in any land or house in Kashmir. One may add that thousands of acres of forest and *nazool* land has been occupied by influential Kashmiri Muslims and Gujjars/Bakarwals, which was subse-

quently regularised by Farroq Abdullah and GN Azad governments under the Roshni Act. All this has been done to change the demographic character of Jammu region into a Muslim majority one, so that the narrative of Muslim and separatist politics is extended to Jammu region as well.

Assad makes yet another valid point stating that the NC government under Chief Ministership of Farooq Abdullah (1996-2002) rebuilt the "completely collapsed infrastructure including hundreds of bridges, schools, hospitals, shrines and government buildings." Yet the NC and its leadership never highlighted these achievements in their 2002 election campaign. Instead their election plank was the restoration of autonomy. Here one would recall how the NC stalwart Mirza Afzal Beg would during his election campaign in 1977 flaunt a piece of rock salt (of Pak origin), and a green handkerchief (*rumal*) in order to emotionally blackmail the local Muslim population. Assad is emphatic in saying that both the "NC and PDP used Article 370 for winning elections. They only complained about

the erosion of authority when out of power. For them, Article 370 was laying golden eggs." The abrogation of Article 370 once again brought the think tanks, NGOs, human rights groups, media etc. to the fore, with the local political class propagating "soft separatism". The problem is compounded because the "political family fiefdom has taken deep roots in Kashmir. And this political kinship survives in the conflict, with both the separatist and mainstream political elites being the conflict profiteers". So the challenge for the Government of India is to make peace more profitable for these political elites than the conflict.

Assad argues that the increasing Pakistanisation and Islamisation of the Kashmiri narrative, actually prompted the Modi government to abrogate Article 370. He blames the separatists and the NC and PDP leaders by holding the threats of secession, for the dilution of Article 370. As regards the impact of the abrogation of Article 370, Assad is right in saying that "the majority of Kashmiris are happy that the political class, which exploited them emotionally, economical-



**KASHMIR: BEYOND ARTICLE 370**  
Bashir Assad  
Pentagon Press, ₹595

ly and politically for decades, is finally made to pay the price for it. The common people want these corrupt leaders to be arrested on charges of corruption, misappropriation, embezzlement, nepotism and favouritism".

Now that Article 370 is history, new tasks for the government are to restore the confidence of the people through EID, de-radicalisation, rational delimitation to give due representation to deprived sections both in Jammu and Kashmiri regions, and to undo the artificial merger of areas in a particular constituency initiated by Mirza Afzal Beg in post-1975 period to prevent the Shias, Kashmiri Pandits, Gujjars and other communities from getting elected from their territorial strongholds. To conclude, the book provides a refreshing narrative of the actual situation obtaining in Kashmir, not touched upon otherwise by the so called Kashmir experts. As such it is a must for all those interested in understanding the social and political dynamics in Jammu and Kashmir.

The reviewer is a Senior Fellow, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi and editor, Himalayan and Central Asian Studies

## NEW ARRIVALS

**FIREKEEPERS OF JWALAPURAM: THE KISHKINDHA CHRONICLES BOOK 2**  
Vamsee Juluri  
Westland, ₹450

In this, the sequel to *Saraswati's Intelligence*, we see that an environmental catastrophe has hit the land, causing a shortage of food for Kishkindhans. Hanuman, Vaishnavi, and the *rishis* split up to go and urge people everywhere to leave their villages and shelter in the cave-temples. Meanwhile in Kishkindhanagara, Riksharaja has made life miserable for Sugreeva, blaming him for abandoning his brother Vali and accusing him of stealing the throne. A refugee crisis is also on their doorstep, with thousands of villagers coming to the rock city everyday as their plants and trees are dying...

**TIMELESS TALES FROM MARWAR**  
Vijaydan Detha  
Puffin, ₹250

*Timeless Tales from Marwar* gives a new lease of life to his folk tales. It is a hand-picked compilation from the much-celebrated *Batan ri Phulwari* — 'Garden of Tales' — a fourteen-volume collection written over a span of nearly fifty years.

**YOUNG PANDAVAS: THE CITY OF ELEPHANTS**  
Anupam Arunachalam  
Hachette, ₹199

Nine-year-old Sahadev and his four brothers — Yudhishtir, Bhim, Arjun and Nakul — are happy in their little forest home, until a forgotten curse changes their lives forever. They return as princes to Hastinapur, a city full of riches... and secrets. Lively and action-packed, this illustrated reimagining of the *Mahabharata* brings alive the world of the great India epic.

# Stories that inspire action and change

GUNJAN VEDA's book seeks to celebrate the everyday heroes, who have, despite all odds, managed to change not just their own lives, but the lives of those around them. An excerpt:

**T**en kilometres from the Pratap Singh High School, on the road to the famous Kaas Plateau, Maharashtra's very own Valley of Flowers, is the picturesque campus of the Bhatiya Bhatke Vimukta Vikas Va Sanshodhan Sanstha (Indian Institute of Research and Development of Nomadic and De-notified Tribes). Inside, there is a School of Social Work, a junior college, hostels and an Ashram school with 250 students from classes 1 to 10.

At 2 pm on a weekday, the place is abuzz with activity. Students and teachers have just returned from an invigorating lunch break, ready to resume their quest for knowledge. I head to the first floor of the double-storeyed institute building that embraces a circular courtyard. Here in a small corner room, a group of 50 students await me—the youngest is 12 years old, the oldest 16. Some play the *tabla*, the *dholki* and the Congo drums. Others create music on the synthesizer and the harmonium. Together they form the school's orchestra—one that has won name and fame in the district.

They are often invited to sing for the All India Radio and at local programmes. As the strong voices of the girls and the boys in the group decry casteism and call for equality through their songs, a new energy pervades the room, and with it, a new hope.

It is these students whose stories I wish to tell...

**Aishwarya**  
Aishwarya Umesh Dharase is



13 years old. Slim, with a deep sepia skin tone, she wears a bright, sleeveless red and gold salwar suit. Her jet black hair is oiled and tightly pulled back into a pony. 'I want to become a lawyer and fight for the truth,' this Class 7 student tells me. She also wants to learn to play the harmonium and the *tabla*. After all, she spent the first few years of her life around these musical instruments. Aishwarya's parents lived in the Bijapur district of Karnataka. Her father played the *dholki*, *tabla* and *pakhawaj* in an orchestra, while her mother was a singer. She also sewed garments to feed her family. Then one day, when she was barely six years old, Aishwarya's mother died in an accident. Shortly after, her father abandoned her. 'I was very small then. I didn't understand

what was happening. Suddenly I had no family, no one to call my own,' she tells me matter-of-factly. Life as Aishwarya knew it was over. Initially her paternal grandparents looked after her. Soon however, her *mausi* (maternal aunt) took over.

Aishwarya does not know if she is related to her *mausi* by blood. She doesn't know her maternal grandparents either. '*Mausi* says my mother was her sister and she treats me like her own daughter. That's all that matters. I have seen her work in the fields to raise me. It is her name—Bharti—that I write when I am asked for my mother's name.' Bharti first got Aishwarya admitted into a Kannada-medium school but she wasn't happy with the quality of education. She decided to send her to the

Ashram school where her own daughter Vaishnavi was studying. It was in Class 6 that Aishwarya came to Satara. 'I have been here for a little over a year now. Each day I learn new things. When I feel low, I think of my *mausi*. She is my inspiration. One day I will make her proud,' she tells me, the quiver in her voice only emphasizing the determined look on her face.

### Pragati

Next to her sits a slim bespectacled girl in a white, printed salwar suit. 13-year-old Pragati Ranjeet More is a student of Class 8. Eyes brimming with tears, she narrates her story.

'When I was born, my mother abandoned me in the hospital and went to live with her parents. She didn't take me home. Didn't



hold or hug me.' Pragati's father collected her from the hospital and took her to Pune. There he left the tiny infant with his sister. 'My *buja* raised me. She put me in a school in the city. Then one day my *dadi* turned up. She said that I shouldn't stay in Pune. She fought with my *buja* and brought me to Phaltan in Satara district. Since that day my *buja* stopped talking to us.'

Young Pragati was once again uprooted. She lost the only life and family she had known. But she was a survivor. She began to adjust to her new life. Just as she was learning to cope, another tragedy befell the family. Their house in Phaltan collapsed.

They had to move to Satara. Pragati's father used to be a construction worker. But he drank heavily and gradually stopped working. In fact, it was his drinking that had driven Pragati's mother away. In Satara, her grandfather took up work in a hotel to feed the family. Pragati enrolled in a nearby school.

One day, when she was in Class 3, her grandmother and father fought bitterly. 'My *dadi* burnt herself. She died,' Pragati recounts in a stony voice. Her mother used this opportunity to divorce her father.

That was when she discovered that she had a younger brother. 'My mother never came to see me. I didn't know that my father used to visit her. After they divorced, I found out that I had a younger brother, Omkar. He is now in Class 4.'

Despite all the tragedies that life had heaped on her, Pragati did not give up. She had learnt how to cook when she was barely five years old. While her grandfather helped her with the housework, he also had to go out and earn. So young Pragati went to school, did housework, cooked and looked after her brother. One day, in the newspapers, she read about the Ashram school in Satara. She quietly went to her father and said she wanted to join the school.

He agreed. Thus began a new journey.

*The Museum of Broken Tea Cups: Postcards from India's Margins* written by Gunjan Veda is published by Yoda SAGE Select

# Corona-led leadership challenges for Trump

Elections and Presidential leadership in the United States are a spectacle par excellence. This is equally true for both the elections for the anointed Presidency and the Congressional polls locally. Awareness and deliberations about the US foreign policy across the larger international system are everyone's pet peeve but the scenario in the domestic politics remains an domain orb, which has been investigated to a lesser extent elsewhere in the international system. Also, it is a theoretical principle in the discipline of international relations that there lies a continuum between the domesticity of a nation and its larger footprint in the global comity of nations. It's in this partisan narrative, where-in the domestic political discourse gladly but confrontationally subsists.

In the contemporary American firmament, President Donald Trump is going through the toughest phase of his Presidency which is even more serious concern than the impeachment proceedings in the US Senate, which he had to be content with. As a related fact, it is the COVID-19 virus which poses a national security and a health challenge for a besieged American nation. As the trail of coronavirus patients mounts in the United States, the American leadership seems perplexed despite being on the anointed pedestal of being the most powerful nation endowed with a mammoth defense paraphernalia which the nation can wield in the international sea, land and air firmament. It's the Calvinist self doubt of an incessant urge for self enhancement and continuously being on guard which should be utilised by the American establishment in this hour of crisis when the entire comity of states is seemingly strangulated by the new pandemic.

Apart from the pandemic, it is the threat of global terror and the vitriol in the aftermath of the impeachment proceedings which cause a big snarl-up and a vitiation of the political ecosystem in the United States of America. Frequent ego-trips that President Trump has had with the various Secretaries and



Patrons wait in line for a supermarket on April 2, 2020, in the Corona section of the Queens borough of New York. Data released by city health officials show that residents in the immigrant-rich Jackson Heights, Elmhurst and Corona sections of Queens have tested positive for the coronavirus at higher rates than in wealthy, mostly white parts of Manhattan and Brooklyn AP

his other top official machinery has marred the taint-free expectation of confused hoi polloi. Despite being the unstinting confidants of President Trump, several Cabinet members have been shown the door despite their scathless records of efficiency and loyalty towards the Trump's dominion.

One stand-out aspect of the US Democratic primaries has been the fact that Bernie Sanders, the left of the centre, Democratic Presidential hopeful, has been sidelined out of the race with Joe Biden being the candidate from the Democrat side of the fence to take on the political juggernaut of President Trump. One singular perspective out of many in the context of the American public sphere concerning the

leadership performance of President Trump has been the idiom of myriad flip-flops which President Trump has undertaken in the light of the various position and portfolio changes in his Cabinet. Secondly, President Trump has been changing the quintessential American point of view in the light of the climate change policies, American judiciary and the American policy perspective in the context of South Asia, where-in India's stance has always been that of negating the hyphenation of itself (India) with the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The win-win economic leadership by inking a mega trade deal with India along with the quarantining of India concerning the stipulation of GSP (Generalized System of Preferences) has

been the characteristic goggles through which some sections of India perceive the American policy perspective to be. Another poser on his political leadership happens to be that of frequent changes in the visa-related work conditions vis-a-vis India, which renders New Delhi slightly doubtful, especially the old guard in New Delhi's political and diplomatic leadership. One area where President Trump's leadership of the new world has been proactive is that of a peacemaking role in the Afghanistan conundrum and his tie-up with the Taliban based in Doha, Qatar. Even in the context of a turmoil-ridden "Middle East", the Washington leadership has done well with a mixed outcome in the context of the Syrian quagmire. In the

context of Iran, President Trump got rid of General Soleimani but did not retaliate when the American assets in Iraq were targeted by Tehran thus casting aspersions on a cleansing and aggressive posture of the American leadership. It was this BOP run policy which took the steam out of the acolytes of the leadership in Washington.

Jeffrey A Jenkins writes in his authored book titled, Leadership in American Politics, that, "There is a leadership gap in American politics between the leadership needed to address the country's most pressing problems and that provided by the nation's elected and appointed leaders. If we turn to political scientists to shed light on such leadership issues, we find their work often

lacking. As important as leadership is in explaining political choices and policy outcomes, studies of leadership are limited in many subfields of political science research and are missing altogether in others." Still, despite traces of whims and flip flops, the domestic WASP fraternity and the white blue collared workers still root for President Trump despite his leadership and popularity rankings transforming in the aftermath of individual situations.

His appeal lies in the leadership gung ho, loud chaperoning and symbolically stiff upper lip political nonchalance embedded with a sense of American hyper puissance which takes wings with the presence of a cacophonous political leadership and

opposition.

As an adjunct imagery, one can cite the speech of President Whitmore in the original patriotic flick, Independence Day. On the occasion of the launch of the American counter attack on the Alien Mothership, the embattled American President perches himself atop a F-16 and orates, "We the people of the free world and the American people shall not falter. We will not disappear into the night. We will not wither away into darkness and shadows. We will put up a struggle against the Alien Mothership. We shall overcome and it will be a historical moment when the world's fighter jets gather together for the largest aerial battle of the world, since World War-II along with the brave American flyers."

Thus, the practice of Presidential leadership is a reflection of the larger impact on the commoners which rings true in the leadership framework of President Trump, also, whenever the American homeland faces a crisis or a holocaust of impactful proportions. The venerable Pew Research Center too reported in January 2020 about the dismal support to President Trump's foreign policy. It was argued that, "Despite negative trends in his popularity as a true blue leader, his standing has improved. The current Pew Research survey finds an uptick in some countries since 2018 in ratings for President Trump and the US, though the degree of change varies from modest to solidly positive."

At least two plausible factors may be behind these shifts. First, support for Trump has increased somewhat on the ideological right in many nations." The 63 per cent recorded disinterest and dissatisfaction with President Trump's policy has been generated maybe because the world is flat since a long time but the domestic panning out of his electoral prospects might be a completely different leadership ball game altogether in the context of the American homeland.

(The writer teaches at IIPA, New Delhi)

The American leadership seems perplexed despite being on the anointed pedestal of being the most powerful nation endowed with a mammoth defense paraphernalia which the nation can wield in the international sea, land and air firmament



MANAN DWIVEDI

## PERSPECTIVE

# Why poor migrants need to fend for themselves

While many view the Covid-19 lockdown as an instance of the efficacy of the administration, the moot point is why the poor people want to run out of cities. This urban middle-class India refuses to see their contradiction. If the poor work so hard in the cities, why must any emergency make them leave the city to return to the village? Isn't the city their home too?

Published in 2002, poet and writer Dom Moraes in the co-authored book with Sarayu Srivatsa, *Out of God's Oven: Travels in A Fractured Land*, wrote: "India had the most brutally stupid middle-class in the world."

That observation comes to Moraes, a prolific and privileged man, after journeying through and writing about the world in the 1960s and 1970s. He returns in 1980 to India for good. In his remaining 25 years, he produces journalism, non-fiction, travelogues, while struggling through the desertion of his poetic muse that returns late in his life.

Moraes, like VS Naipaul, is dismayed with subcontinental poverty, violence and brutality, while awed by its cultural pasts. Owing to the stark class divide that has arisen due to India's struggles with tackling Covid-19, his comment has resurfaced online in recent days. In one way, Moraes' observation reeks of western condescension, but it carries insight that allies with concern: A society's fiercest critic is often its truest lover.

A mass of the middle-class of this country views the Covid-19 driven lockdown as an instance of the efficacy of the administration. Some members have gone on to question why poor people are walking from cities to the innards of rural India. Many, mainly middle-class people, have defended police excesses like spraying disinfectant on the walkers, or worse, con-

verted the Tablighi Jamaat event in Delhi, into one about Muslim bashing.

There's proof that the Union Government didn't take the threat seriously at the time; law enforcement both at the Centre and Delhi State was lax; major shrines of other religions were open. But, none of those seem to matter. Our "Hindu-Muslim" framing is set.

This majority middle-class India lauds the Government when it sends airplanes for countrymen abroad who need to be retrieved to escape the coronavirus. But a hodgepodge quarantine for the unwashed masses is par for the Covid-19 course. It's easier and cheaper to send airplanes for a few Indians abroad, it's harder to arrange for transport for thousands of daily wagers in the big cities who belong to villages.

This urban middle-class India refuses to see their contradiction here. If the poor work so hard in the cities, why must any emergency make them leave the city to return to the village? Isn't the city their home too?

Your essayist departs from the Moraes rapier thrust into the Indian psyche. It was made long back. A part of it is true now. The India that he wrote of is removed from us. In some ways for the good, in many for the worse. A part of today's Indian middle-class is perhaps more brutal than it's stupid. It isn't ready to see the mess that's the lockdown: There have been 22 documented deaths of migrants while walk-



Migrant workers try to catch buses during nationwide lockdown to stem coronavirus spread, at Anand Vihar in New Delhi

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer/FILE

ing back to their villages; many have said they'd die of hunger before the coronavirus kills them. If our poor feel so, what does that mean about our boisterous nationalism?

India's urban culture has made the poor seem sub-human. Our poor are our invisible people. Almost no big country in the world that battles Covid-19 has witnessed

its urban poor walk back to its native place. Our daily-wage workers slave in the cities for decades. Many even have papers that enlist them as domiciled residents. But they

are made to feel that they really don't belong. There is middle class acceptance to their unbelonging. The collective emotion is one of wonder and disconcert: Ah, millions-are-

marching to oh no, get-them-back-in-the-city! Yes, there are middle-class exceptions. But nobody has been able to convince them to stay back, least of all the Union Government. They banged plates saluting our healthcare workers the day the Prime Minister announced the lockdown. No sooner, they set foot for home.

However, it's essential to steer away from binaries: We may empathise with the urban poor but can't demonise the majority of India's urban middle-class. Many sections of today's collective urban middle-class, wasn't unlike the poor. Most of them have had tough lives, have seen their ancestors toil. They too came from villages some generations back. Exactly like today's urban poor, they lived cheek by jowl and were exploited.

One assumes, one's sufferings, makes one a better human being towards other sufferers. It's not true. Our middle class has its origins in discord. But they will behave exactly like their class superiors who exploit and may look down on them. That's why our poor are poor. Poet WH Auden, who encouraged Moraes as a teenaged poet, wrote in his poem "September 1, 1939": "I and the public know/What all school-children learn/Those to whom evil is done/Do evil in return". This moment sums up sub-continental middle-class mores.

(The writer is Associate Professor, Jindal School of Liberal Arts & Humanities)



RAHUL JAYARAM



IN DIFFICULT TIMES, WE'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO QUIT BELIEVING; WE'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO QUIT GROWING — JOEL OSTEEN



YOUR WEEK AHEAD

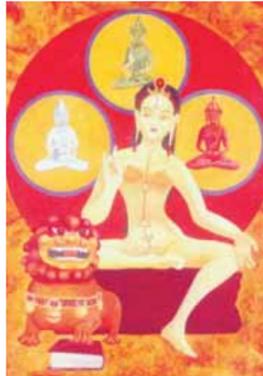
MADHU KOTIYA



**ARIES** March 21-April 19

This week will be very hectic for you. You need to control your aggression. Getting physically violent may hurt your image. You will be highly perceptive and intuitive. You need to control your emotions and ambitions. Avoid any kind of arguments with the people around you. Since it is work from home for most of you, a feeling of stagnation, dissatisfaction may take a toll on you. If you remain focused enough then there is a good chance of realising your potentials and opportunities coming your way. On the personal front, things are a little difficult. You may face accusations and your partner may be demanding. Singles may set their heart on someone who is unavailable to reciprocate their love. Time to clear away all illusions.

**Lucky number 1**  
**Lucky colour** Indigo  
**Lucky day** Friday



**LEO** July 23-Aug 22

Your health looks promising this week. This is a great time to practice new health care approach. Exercise, eat well, and make sure that you get enough sleep to keep well. Fitness is on top of your mind. You may come across valuable health information on the internet or indulge in a discussion with your friends. Work from home may put tremendous work pressure and leave you exhausted. In such a case, don't hesitate to seek help or delegate your workload. Leaders should know how to get work done efficiently. On the love front, you will enjoy unconditional love and affection this week. News of a pregnancy will bring happiness and fulfillment in a marital relationship. You will feel emotionally attached and closer to your partner.

**Lucky number 16**  
**Lucky colour** White  
**Lucky day** Sunday



**SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22-Dec 21

Your determination and will power will help you tackle any health challenges. You need to be disciplined this week. Avoid spicy foods. Follow your routine exercises, and a planned diet to stay healthy during this pandemic. Besides, ensure timely medical care to tackle existing health issues. Your focus is your strength in your career as well. This week is rewarding in terms of your profession. Those in partnership business will work for selfless motives. You will lead from the front and win many followers. Those who are in a job will accomplish an important project that will mark a stepping stone in their career. On the relationship front, you will feel blessed and will share cherished moments with your partner.

**Lucky number 9**  
**Lucky colour** Red  
**Lucky day** Tuesday



**TAURUS** April 20-May 20

This week most of your time is consumed by your passion for creative pursuits or hobbies. There is a sense of satisfaction, and a positive environment that surrounds and you will enjoy the bliss of good health. You are seeking pleasure in life's little things and appreciating whatever comes to you. On the work front, you will get wakeup calls to change yourself for the better. During your stay at home, you have the time to realise the area for change and get over the confusion. If you stress over small troubles then everything will get tangled. It's time you start taking things as they come. A new love interest is on the horizon. An experience will bring a new passion to your life. Existing relations will also blossom.

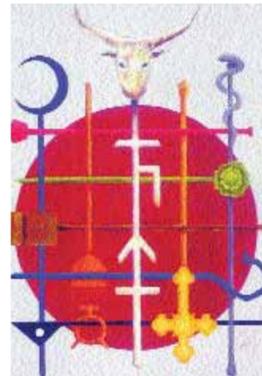
**Lucky number 11**  
**Lucky colour** Pastel Blue  
**Lucky day** Thursday



**VIRGO** Aug 23-Sep 22

You will radiate with a healthy aura and reflect a smart persona this week. You are active and are constantly attempting the make things happen. This week you will utilise your skills to create a world you want. Your skill in smooth-talking and adaptability to any situation is working in your favour. Professionally, you feel stagnated. This may irritate you and make you an under-confident person. Don't worry, this is a temporary feeling. Your creative and logical thinking will sail you through a rough time. You need to realise your potentials and others will believe in you. On the personal front, this is an entertaining and rewarding week. You are spending quality time with your loved ones. This week has in store many good things for you. Stay blessed and safe.

**Lucky number 12**  
**Lucky colour** Yellow  
**Lucky day** Wednesday



**CAPRICORN** Dec 22-Jan 19

This week you will be generous and kind. Your concern and care for others will be appreciated. Overall health remains good for you. You are likely to spend some time looking after your ailing parents or a friend. You are a spiritual person and are most likely to invest time in meditation, Yoga and Pranayam and other practices. You will feel in tune with your body, mind and soul. Professionally, this is a good period. Old associations will be helpful. Do not waste your time in leisure. Ensure there are no pending tasks. On the personal front, a happy and prosperous family life will bring bliss. Your partner will understand your dilemma and provide support if needed. Singles, use this time to reflect on what you need from a relationship.

**Lucky number 17**  
**Lucky colour** Silver  
**Lucky day** Saturday



**GEMINI** May 21-June 20

This week you have that kind of ability to perform right action at any given moment. You will embark on a new path. By being in tune with the spiritual environment, as well as those around you, you will not make any error in judgment. You are precise, and therefore, appear to perform tasks efficiently. Some of you are taking your work lightly. This may cause a serious problem in your career. The world has not come to an end, so don't ignore your inefficiency and focus on your work. Some of you are experiencing a void. This is the time when you can use some quiet time to decide whether you want to continue the job or take a break. This is a very good week for relationships. Warmth and affection with the near and dear ones is on the cards.

**Lucky number 20**  
**Lucky colour** Golden  
**Lucky day** Sunday



**LIBRA** Sep 23-Oct 22

You need to keep a close check on your health this week. Stress and anxiety may take a toll on your health. Ensure that you are following a proper diet, exercise, and sleep routine. Keep a positive attitude. With people at home, you may need some time alone. You will find depth and wisdom in solitude, and in listening to your inner voice. On the work front, you have an excellent energy to complete pending tasks. You will focus your time towards work rather than killing it in unnecessary leisure activities. Financially you will feel secure. Do not invest in any project right now. This is not a good time to put in your money. The week is extremely good in terms of a relationship. Trust and faith will be generated and you will be committed.

**Lucky number 7**  
**Lucky colour** Brown  
**Lucky day** Thursday



**AQUARIUS** Jan 20-Feb 18

You are sentimental and emotional this week. Small things may cause worry. Ignore rumours and follow the relevant source for news. Any tension can be a cause of ill health. You will suffer mood swings. Talk to someone trustworthy and let out your frustration. Follow meditation and other Yogic practices that will keep you balanced. Career-wise, whether it is your energy, time or money investment, you have worked with full dedication and are now waiting for the dividends. Stay positive as good things are on their way. This is the time to relax. Relationships are smooth and easy-going. You will enjoy mutual understanding among the family members. Love is in the air. Good news awaits married couples.

**Lucky number 13**  
**Lucky colour** Rose Gold  
**Lucky day** Tuesday



**CANCER** June 21-July 22

The week will bring new energy, stamina with good health. You are likely to put your all your energy in creative pursuits. This week, you will put forth your best. You may never know what your creation will bring out at this time. Quality time with family and children is indicated. You will connect with old acquaintances this week. This will prove beneficial for your career. Old connections and associations will bring a smile on your face. Stay alert as an opportunity may come your way. Don't lose this chance because it will be difficult to regain it. This week relationships may be troubling and are likely to bother you to a great extent. You may end up hurting the feelings of your near and dear ones.

**Lucky number 10**  
**Lucky colour** Off-white  
**Lucky day** Monday



**SCORPIO** Oct 23-Nov 21

You are filled with a new zest for life. You will feel healthy and experience a change in perspective. Your negative thoughts will be replaced with optimism. You will spend time in analysing your problems and learn the importance of solving them with conscientious thinking. You will feel relaxed in terms of your professional life. Praise from a senior will make you confident, secure and well-established. You are a motivator and will be an inspiration to your colleagues. Those having their own business, your ideas and views are being respected and followed. On the personal front, your dynamic personality will ooze charm and leave an impression on the others. Romance is in the air. Your appreciation and sweet words for your spouse will rejuvenate your relationship.

**Lucky number 3**  
**Lucky colour** Peach  
**Lucky day** Saturday



**PISCES** Feb 19-March 20

You are sensitive to diseases this week, especially water-borne diseases. Keep yourself safe from any kind of infection. Coming in contact with a diseased person could prove harmful for you. Avoid alcohol or unsafe water. Those who are feeling physically low should take timely action. At this time, it is not advisable to ignore your health. You should drink plenty of water, juices to avoid dehydration. On the career front, you will feel indecisive and under-confident as a person. This is all an illusion. Be aware of any misdoings that will be revealed, eventually. You will feel optimistic, upbeat, and hopeful about your relationships. Those in a committed relationship will take it to newer heights. This week you will have fun and be positive and committed.

**Lucky number 1**  
**Lucky colour** Golden  
**Lucky day** Tuesday

Madhu Kotiya is a tarot card reader, spiritual healer, and Founder, MShezaim Institute of Tarot and Divination. Contact details: madhu@indiatarot.com, www.indiatarot.com, M: 9873283331



**ASTROTURF**  
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

# Be ready to combat evil forces

The first calling of the present pandemic is not to panic. Should you panic, you may lose your sense of reasons and alert, which may not let you carry on your fight prudently in all strength. Let us brave the situation by exercising all the care and caution as suggested by the experts. We have braved many such pandemic in the past. Even this one will pass. Rest assured, the situation may begin to ease out soon.

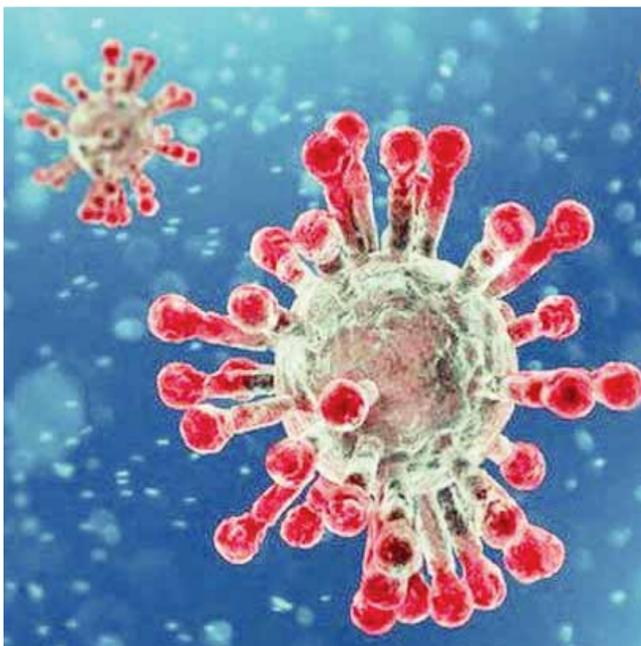
In the cosmic game plan, global health situation is figured out through a look at progressive movement of the Sun. That is about to reach its zenith on April 14th. Till then, watch your health carefully and remain live to our collective obligations as well. Situation may begin to gradually ease out thereafter. Once the Sun moves considerably beyond the Rahu-Ketu axis by June end, the situation may be expectedly be in control.

Even otherwise, if we ever lose our alertness and become complacent, we could be taken for a ride. Only a few days back, Chaitra navaratra got over, when the devout would have offered prayers to Mother Goddess Durga, believed to be repository of Shakti. Mind it, it is a period of major weather change

in India when one needs to rejuvenate oneself and be well geared up to face the challenges during the emerging season. We maintain austerity and regulate our food regime to tone up our digestive system, vital to our overall health condition. Regular prayers help clear off the clutters of mind, regain confidence, and strengthen vital forces playing within.

It may be pertinent to note here that all ancient puranic stories necessarily discuss terror — fight between devtas (high born) and rakshas (demon), in which, the latter always have the first laugh. Why? Perhaps, the devtas would have been complacent, not been alert against impending danger from unseemly forces, and forgotten their sense of collective obligations. Hence their fall. But when all devtas gather, invoke the divine — the all-powerful and all-knowing eternal element of consciousness, which drives all our dynamic functionalities including power of knowing — they outsmart the demonic forces and regain their lost ground. Import of the above simile does not need any further elaboration.

Mother Goddess, in the form we perceive, is shown with 10 hands — car-



rying weapons in eight, a conch shell (blowing instrument) in one, and lotus flower in the other — having two imports. First, the ten directions. Second, the 10 sensory organs — five each of perception and action. She combats negative energies flowing through eight directions with her armouries, with the rest two marked with productivity.

The conch-shell when blown excites a sound note comparable to 'O' — the primal-sound that supposedly got excited when the first motion happened at the primordial source, which, in turn, excited the creation chain. The conch-shell thus naturally symbolises the source energy, up above in the cosmos. The majestic lotus flower in all colours made of numerous petals signifies enormity and diversity of creation. Mind it, lotus flower grows in the mud underneath water body. But not even a trace of mud or water droplet can stay on flower leaves, which implies that though being all-powerful, yet, she does not carry any sense of ego, or attachment to the primal elements making it.

The evil forces are in evidence all across, making us vulnerable to their onslaught. Their killing potential would be felt much faster and relatively cover a fairly wider range than our productive

initiatives, which could take us for a ride if ever we become complacent. We, therefore, need to be fully on guard in a combative mode against the evil forces to make optimum use of our productive potential, vital to our existence.

Now, why weird form assigned to the demons? It is said that demons are conjurers, capable of hoodwinking us by making varied illusionary presences and take us for a ride. Remember, no such form-existence is in evidence anywhere in the world. It is so characterised just to exemplify in clear terms the danger inherent in the evil forces playing from within or beyond. Coronavirus could be taken as one form of unseen demonic force available in our surrounding carrying killing potential. Negative memory implants in our minds are another form of negative forces playing within, which often make us lose our sense of reasons and order that may cost us heavily. Let us be always war-ready to combat such demonic forces for a smooth sail of life.

The writer is an astrologer, vastu consultant and spiritual counsellor. Write to him at G-102, Bharat Nagar, New Friends Colony, New Delhi-110 025  
Tel: 91-11-49848475/9818037273  
Email: bharatbhushanpadmadeo@gmail.com