

PAGE 4
GIVE MORE FINANCIAL AID TO STATES: CONG

NATION 5

LIQUOR SHOP LOOTED IN DELHI AMID LOCKDOWN

MONEY 6

STOCKS FALL ON WALL STREET, HEADING FOR ANOTHER WEEKLY LOSS

Established 1864

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WEDDED TO CREATIVE WORK



sunday pioneer

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Light candles, Diyas at 9 pm today

In line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call, The Pioneer urges its readers and business associates to switch off lights and "dispel darkness" from 9-00 pm today by lighting candles, lamps or holding mobile phone torches for nine minutes to demonstrate the nation's collective will to fight Covid-19. As clarified by the Union Power Ministry, there is no need to switch off street lights or appliances like computers, TVs, fans, refrigerators and ACs in homes.



'ALL AND SUNDRY'

Staggered end of lockdown may not usher major changes

2



PM's appeal to switch off lights on Sunday could impact grid

5



D'Souza takes charge as MD & CEO of Tata Consumer Products

6

TODAY ALMANAC
Month & Paksham:
Chaitra & Shukla Paksha
Panchangam:

Tithi: Dwadashi: 07:24 pm
Nakshatram: Magha: 02:57 pm
Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work)
Rahukalam: 04:54 pm - 06:26 pm
Yamagandam: 12:18 pm - 01:50 pm
Varijyam: 10:03 pm - 11:28 pm
Gulikar: 03:22 pm - 04:54 pm
Good Time: (To start any important work)
Amritakalam: 12:46 pm - 02:13 pm
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:54 am - 12:43 pm

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER
Forecast: Clear
Temp: 39/24
Humidity: 79%
Sunrise: 06:07 am
Sunset: 06:30 pm
Current Weather Conditions
Updated April 03, 2020 5:00 PM

1,023 with links to TJ test positive for COVID-19

● Union Health Ministry says 30 per cent of the total Coronavirus positive cases in the country linked to 'one particular place'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



'Made-in-AP' Corona kits in markets on Apr 10

VIJAYAWADA: Industries secretary Poonam Malakondaiah on Saturday said that COVID-19 (PCR testing) kits and ventilators, being manufactured at the MedTech Zone, will enter the market on April 10. Disclosing this to the media here,

Malakondaiah said that the COVID-19 kit will enter the market on April 10 while ventilators will be available from April 20. While the crucial medical equipment is being produced in AP MedTech Zone, it will be tested for quality in 13 laboratories. The Industries Secretary said that the MedTech Zone, in collaboration with the Government of AP, will play a crucial role in production of medical equipment in the country. MedTech CEO and MD Jitender Sarma was leading efforts to produce the crucial medical equipment and these efforts have been intensified due to the huge demand in view of the pandemic.

said. "Around 30 per cent of the total cases so far are linked to one particular place where we could not sort of understand it and manage it, he said.

The Tablighi Jamaat congregation was held earlier last month in Delhi's West Nizamuddin area, which has turned into a COVID-19 hotspot.

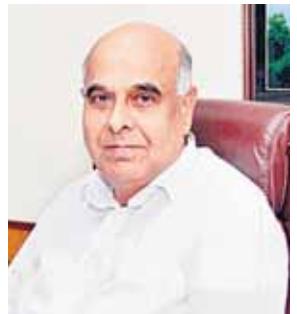
India is increasing COVID-19 testing capacity progressively, the official said, adding that there is no need to panic but awareness is needed to fight the battle against COVID-19.

"Rigorous contact tracing is on across 17 states which have reported cases related to Tablighi Jamaat congregation," the health ministry official

said. "We are increasing our COVID-19 testing capacity progressively," he said.

TS, AP power utilities all set for 'unity show'

L VENKAT RAM REDDY ■ HYDERABAD



Devulapalli Prabhakar Rao,
TS Transco CMD

The State load dispatch centres and transmission utilities in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh has geared up to deal with the possibility of any adverse impact on the electricity grid on Sunday, in view of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal for a nationwide blackout accompanied with the lighting of diyas, mobile torches etc. from 9.00 pm to 9.09 pm to dispel darkness and to reflect India's united stance against battling Covid-19.

Power utilities have asked people to utilise power for all purposes like refrigerators, fans, ACs, coolers, grinders etc. and to switch off lights during the blackout period to ensure that there is not much impact on the power grid on account of the consequent fall and rise in demand between 9.00 pm and 9.09 pm on Sunday. Special monitoring

cells have been set up at load dispatch centres to overcome variations of power demand and to ensure smooth and safe operation of the grid during the blackout period.

TS Transco CMD Devulapalli Prabhakar Rao said the safety and security of the State Grid would be maintained at any cost to implement the Prime Minister's call.

3

Covid-19 doesn't discriminate, don't blame any religion: Jagan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



Asking people to join the nation in lighting a lamp at 9 PM to dispel darkness away, Chief Minister Y.S. Jaganmohan Reddy on Saturday said that the country as a whole, irrespective of caste, creed or religion, has to put up a united fight against COVID-19.

In his address to the people, the Chief Minister said, "We have to join the nation in lighting a lamp at 9 PM on April 5, as called upon to do so by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to show the unity as Indians."

"Some people from our State took part in a religious convention in Delhi where members from foreign countries had also come. Some of them are said to be infected and the Coronavirus has spread from there. There's no reason why the infection should be attributed to a particular community but it must be seen as an unfortunate incident that hap-

pened there," Jagan said. He said that the spread of the virus could have happened anywhere, and in any congregation of any other faith. "There is no reason to discriminate against anyone and attribute motives as the spread was not intentional," the Chief Minister said.

He pointed out religious congregations were also held elsewhere by Sri Sri Ravi

Shankar, Jaggi Vasudev, Mata Amritanandamayi, Paul Dinakaran or John Wesley.

"We should not discriminate against people as it was unintentional was not premeditated. We have to put up a united fight like Indians giving no room for caste or religion bias," Jagan said.

3

TS reports 43 more Covid-19 cases

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The epicentre of coronavirus with more than 100 cases being reported from the state capital. No other district in the State has reported more than 30 cases. By Saturday afternoon, 21 cases were confirmed and towards the evening another 22 patients tested positive. One person has been cured. He was discharged on

Saturday. Health Minister Etela Rajender said that Telangana had not yet witnessed community transmission yet.

The government has procured 5 lakh N95 masks, PPE kits, viral transmission kits and 500 ventilators, 4 lakh corona testing kits, 20 lakh surgical masks and 25 lakh hand gloves, according to the minister.

3

NRT techies either furloughed or laid off in US

NAVEENA KAVI ■ HYDERABAD



crisis, in this case Coronavirus, and to prevent mass unemployment.

P Venkat, an NRT working in Michigan, said, "Furloughing is now a reality here in US. Instead of terming it as layoff, they are calling it 'temporary lay off' or forced vacation. Some car companies in Michigan are furloughing even those who are full time employees as sales are down. Furloughing is better if you are a resident and not H1B. But then it may also indicate that you will never get your job back."

3

PROUD PARENT

Daily wager walks 600 km to see birth of his baby

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



There was panic in the air with talk of a pandemic, his job was probably gone as was the roof over his head, but Mukesh Maurya did not let his spirits flag as he set off from Delhi for his village, more than 600 kilometres away, determined to be home to see his baby being born.

There were no trains and few buses to get to Musafirkhana in Uttar Pradesh's Amethi district all the way from Rajouri Garden where he worked as a daily wage labourer, but get there he did. It was March 28, Saturday, when

he set off for home, 650 km away. The nationwide lock-

down to curtail the spread of COVID-19 had begun after

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's March 24 announcement and all roads to home seemed were blocked.

But where there is a will there is a way, and 22-year-old Maurya, who reached home on Sunday evening, found it.

It took many hours of walking, several more hours of waiting and three gruelling, very crowded bus rides, with social distancing a random, distant thought. I reached just in time. My wife was having labour pains when I reached our village and we had to quickly arrange for an ambulance to take her to

Don't consume or spit tobacco products: ICMR

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) appealed to the people on Saturday not to consume and spit smokeless tobacco products (gutka, pan masala with tobacco, pan and other chewing tobacco products) and areca

nut (supari) increases the production of saliva, followed by a very strong urge to spit. "Spitting in public places could enhance the spread of the COVID-19 virus," the ICMR said. "In view of the increasing danger of COVID-19 pandemic, it is an appeal to the general public to refrain from consuming the smokeless tobacco products and spitting in public places during the COVID-19 epidemic."



CAPSULE**Services of Jagjivan Ram to nation recalled**

VIJAYAWADA: Contribution of Babu Jagjivan Ram to the country's development will always be remembered, recalled Governor Biswa Bushan Harichandrababu Jagjivan Ram was a true democrat, who fought for the uplift of downtrodden and weaker sections of society, Governor said on the eve of his birth anniversary on April 5. Babuji had served the nation as a Cabinet minister for 35 years and held several key portfolios, bringing about path-breaking reforms such as the Green Revolution, he reminded.

Non-medical navymen don new role for Corona patients

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

To cater to a large number of patients requiring medical and emotional succour during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the Eastern Naval Command is training non-medical naval personnel as Battle Field Nursing Assistant (BFNA).

The BFNA would lend a helping hand to doctors and paramedics in treating the Coronavirus patients in quarantine and isolation facilities. The training commenced at all stations under ENC here from March 30 in small batches consisting of a team of six personnel each, said a press release here on Saturday.

A total of 313 personnel, including 37 officers, have been trained at Naval units in Visakhapatnam, Chennai and Kolkata, the release said. The training would be continued and is aimed at covering and training at least 75 per cent of non-medical personnel.

Collation of information on Covid-19 for prevention, management, casualty carriage for transfer and protect self by donning the PPE (personal protective equipment) and disinfection have been taught to officers and sailors, along with defence civilians, including women.

The training emphasises the importance of PPE by health professionals, social distancing to prevent and contain the spread of the coronavirus by all personnel. The command is preparing to create facilities for Covid-19 beds at the ENC, including INHS Kalyani, the premier naval hospital.

Lockdown hits automobile sector hard in the State

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Automobile sector in Andhra Pradesh has been hit badly due to the lockdown in the country. The heavy vehicle drivers are caught in a piquant situation and not able to stay at home and at the same time not able to go out for work. Obviously, there is no option to work from home.

Apprehensive about staying at home for over three weeks because of the lock down, a heavy vehicle driver Ramaiah of Machilipatnam says that he earns at least Rs 1,000 per day if he goes out for work. Loss of one month's work would mean derailing the family, he said expressing concern over increasing prices of essential commodities and vegetables.

There are many more such employees dependent on the transport sector for their livelihood. The lockdown has first impacted the transport sector first and foremost. At least, 30 lakh people are dependent on transport sector in the State. At the national level, over six crore are dependent on the



transport sector.

The transport workers are demanding payment of suitable compensation for the loss of work. The transport sector geared up to observe 'Janata Curfew' on March 22 but it has been extended to all over the APSRTC, were stranded.

Over 4.8-lakh auto rickshaws, 83,000 cabs and 22,859 school and college buses remained off the roads throwing drivers and other personnel working on vehicles out of

Pradesh transport department statistics, 95 per cent of the over 13,27,689 registered by December end of 2019 remained off the roads. Of them, 6.30 lakh pertain to goods transporting vehicles. Over 14,638 stage carriers and 10,400 RTC buses, including buses under hire with the APSRTC, were stranded.

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Facilitate farmers to sell produce in villages: Guv

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Farmers should not face any problems in selling their produce, said Governor Biswa Bushan Harichandrababu Jagjivan Ram to officials at a high level review meeting convened with officials of the agriculture, marketing and civil supplies departments at the Raj Bhavan here on Saturday, he said that a farmer-friendly approach is needed in purchasing paddy and other produce during this hour of crisis.

He said steps should be taken to continue the agricultural operations during the hour of the crisis created by the coronavirus pandemic and the lockdown. It is important to take necessary steps to avert the shortage of food production in the State, he told officials.

In turn, they explained to the Governor that the government has formulated an action plan to purchase 32.72 lakh metric tonnes of paddy through Civil Supplies Corporation during the current rabi season. They said that arrangements have been made to purchase paddy at the fields itself and transport to godowns. Secretary and



Governor Biswa Bushan Harichandrababu Jagjivan Ram speaks at a review meeting of officials at the Raj Bhavan in Vijayawada on Saturday

Governor Biswa Bushan Harichandrababu Jagjivan Ram said steps should be taken to continue the agricultural operations during the hour of the crisis

It is important to take necessary steps to avert the shortage of food production in the State, he told officials

Secretary of Agriculture and Marketing Madhusudhana Reddy said each village will be treated as a unit for procurement of paddy and there is no hurdle for transportation of produce

Commissioner of Agriculture and Marketing PS Pradyumna said an action plan is also formulated for the marketing of produce

Commissioner of Civil Supplies Kona Sasidhar said that the amount paid towards paddy will be remitted directly into the bank accounts of farmers and the entire process is carried out in a transparent manner.

Secretary of Agriculture and Marketing Madhusudhana Reddy said each village will be treated as a unit for procurement of paddy and there is no hurdle for transportation of produce

Collector tells people not to panic over Covid-19

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a positive move in the district, a Covid-19 positive patient (21) was discharged from the Government General Hospital in Vijayawada after testing negative twice

Collector Md Imtiaz appealed to people not to panic about the rise in the Covid-19 positive cases in Krishna district. In all, 78 persons from the district had visited the Tablighi Jamaat congregation in Delhi and returned but all of them were kept under quarantine and samples were collected from them and sent for testing as a precautionary measure.

It was observed that the Covid-19 positive cases are being identified among those who attended Delhi meeting, he pointed out and appealed to their family members and contacts to come forward and undergo tests. He said that they can win over the virus with the coordination of doctors, revenue, police and panchayat raj departments and in particular with people's cooperation.

Ward-level officers, Village Secretariat staff and district-level officers shall form a team and monitor the health of people from time to time and update the developments, he

said. He appealed to people not to panic over false social media messages on the virus and call the doctors for more information on the virus by dialing 9491058200 or 7995244260 or toll-free number 1077.

In a positive move in the district, a Covid-19 positive patient (21) was discharged from the Government General Hospital in Vijayawada after conducting blood tests he was declared Coronavirus positive on March 21.

Later, his family members were put in quarantine and they were tested negative for the virus. "Doctors gave me confidence that I will recover from the virus and taking medicines as prescribed by doctors. After I was tested negative, I was discharged from the hospital, he said.

He said Collector Md Imtiaz and Police Commissioner Ch Dwaraka Tirumala Rao congratulated him for winning the war against the dreadful virus.

lation and did not come out of the house, however, after identifying the Covid-19 symptoms, he was admitted to the Government General Hospital in Vijayawada on March 20 and after conducting blood tests he was declared Coronavirus positive on March 21.

Speaking to the media here on Saturday, the patient expressed his delight of winning over the deadly virus. He said he returned from Paris and reached New Delhi on March 15, and from there, he reached Hyderabad, and later to Vijayawada on March 17. As per the instruction of the government, he was in home iso-

YSRCP leaders not maintaining social distancing: Kesineni Nani

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

TDP MP Kesineni Srinivas (Nani) demanded that action be taken against the ruling party Ministers and MLAs for throwing the lockdown norms to the wind by organising meetings in violation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's anti-Covid-19 call.

Nani took objection to Ministers for trying to get publicity by cutting ribbons to open isolation wards rather than themselves observing preventive measures by avoiding crowd-based activities.

In a statement here on Saturday, he said that as people are striving to prevent the Coronavirus transmission, leaders from the ruling YSRCP are setting a bad precedent by organising social events involving hundreds of people in the State. Despite 21-day lockdown, they are conducting events throwing people's lives at risk.

Nani said that in Guntur, Chittoor, West Godavari and



He found fault with Minister for Tourism and Youth Advancement Avanthi Srinivas for inaugurating infrastructure. They were accompanied by dozens or hundreds of followers and party workers. Such public events have the potential to transmit the Coronavirus, defeating the purpose of opening health facilities to begin with. During this crisis, the focus must be on securing the State against any kind of community transmission rather than taking undue advantage out of such efforts, he said.

Nani said that when public representatives and Ministers are violating the norms of social distancing, it sends wrong signals to people about the priorities of the government.

Public health must be placed above any political considerations, he said

on April 3. Minister Taneti Vanitha violated the lockdown by taking part in the distribution of Rs 1,000 cash to the poor accompanied by the YSRCP leaders instead of volunteers.

Nani said that when public representatives and Ministers are violating the norms of social distancing, it sends wrong signals to people about the priorities of the government. Public health must be placed above any political considerations, he said.

NRT techies either furloughed or laid off in US

Continued from Page 1

Bigwigs like GE, British A, JC Penny, Macy's Victoria Secrets, Kohl etc. have apparently furloughed workers.

Anil, working in Columbus said, "About 80 per cent of the workforce in our company were put on furlough due to COVID-19. There are also 15 H1B employees who were laid off because as per the visa norms, they cannot claim unemployment benefits.

Those citizens and Green Card holders are being informed that they will stay on unpaid leaves and can claim unemployment benefits. However, my H1B colleagues had to bear the brunt. Now they have lost their job and may have to leave the country too."

Incidentally, those working on H1B visas cannot be furloughed. H1B visa holders and their employers who may want to furlough them face a legal

problem. The employer would have to amend their H1B status to keep them on the rolls even if part time, and they can be terminated. In case of H1B employee, if put under furlough, they have to be paid for the period.

As per the prevailing conditions, the employee needs to be terminated, and the H1B visa revoked, after he or she is offered a one-way ticket back to their home country. The problem for H1B work-

force is that if they are fired, they must leave the country in 60 days, according to a January 2017 regulation.

Indian-American Forums are hoping the Indian government would intervene and work relax the rules on H1B grace period for non-working days. H1B contractors and fired visa-workers are allegedly lobbying the Trump administration so they can stay in the country for at least six months.

Incidentally, those working on H1B visas cannot be furloughed. H1B visa holders and their employers who may want to furlough them face a legal

TS reports 43 more Covid-19 cases

Continued from Page 1

According to a report generated on Saturday afternoon, when the number of reported cases stood at 250, Hyderabad accounted for 105 cases; Warangal had 22 positive cases; Nizamabad had 18 cases and Karimnagar 17 cases.

About 15 patients each from Rangareddy and Medchal, and 7 from Nalgonda have been identified. Adilabad and Sangareddy reported six cases each, while Medak reported five cases. Jogulamba Gadwal, Badradri Kotagudem and Mahabubnagar reported four cases each, while Nagarjuna, Jagital and Janjgao reported two cases each. While Warangal rural reported 3 cases, Siddipet, Suryapet, Mahabubabad reported one case each.

"During this period, around 500 MW to 700 MW domestic load reduction is expected. All necessary steps have been taken to address sudden variation in demand before and after the event of shutting down the lighting loads during the brief 9 minutes' period. TS Transco is totally geared up to meet any fluctuation in electricity demand on Sunday at 9 PM," Prabhakar Rao said.

To overcome this variation of demand and to ensure smooth and safe operation of grid, a Special Monitoring Cell has been established at the State Load Dispatch Center at Vidya Soudha, Hyderabad.

All the electricity engineers and staff will make all-out efforts in overcoming this situation of instant switching-off the lighting load and instant switching-on the same within a brief lapse of time. All consumers are requested to avail power supply for all purposes duly switching-off the lighting and not to believe the rumours in social media, Prabhakar Rao requested.

"What we have to show is

1,023 with links to TJ test positive for COVID-19

'Made-in-AP' Corona kits in markets on Apr 10

Continued from Page 1

"We have the potential to produce over 3,000 ventilators in April and over 6,000 in May. The potential of making testing kits will increase from 10,000 in April to 25,000 in May, Malakondaiah said. Prior to releasing the ventilators and COVID-19 kits in the market, they would be subjected to intense testing and for this purpose, laboratories are needed. Some vested interests have worked against setting up of laboratories and levelled baseless allegations against Jitendra Sarma. A probe into this is underway," Malakondaiah said.

Further, she said that CT scanners will also be produced in the MedTech Zone.

The AP MedTech Zone Limited (popularly known as AMTZ) is an enterprise under the Government of Andhra Pradesh, a 270 acre zone, dedicated for medical device manufacturing. The objective behind this 'One-Stop-Solution' is not only to reduce the cost of manufacturing by up to 40 per cent or just simplify the end-to-end operations but also to reduce the import dependency, which is presently around 75 per cent. AMTZ envisions to put India on the global map of high end medical equipment production and make health care products affordable and accessible not only for India but for world at large.

According to the health bulletin, SPS Nellore district topped the COVID-19 case table in the state with 32 infections while Gunur district was close behind with 30 cases. It may be noted that one patient from both the districts was discharged as they tested negative after the quarantine period. The number of infections in Krishna district was 28 cases, followed by YSP Kadapa with 23. While Prakasam district recorded 21 COVID-19 infections, a 22-year-old person was discharged after undergoing quarantine and testing negative.

Visakhapatnam and West Godavari districts recorded 15 COVID-19 positive cases each. East Godavari district recorded 11 positive cases, while one patient aged 22 years was tested negative after quarantine and was subsequently discharged.

Chittoor district recorded 10 positive cases followed by four in Kurnool and three in Anantapur.

Vizianagram and Srikakulam districts did not record a single COVID-19 virus-positive case.

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When it didn't, he just packed his belongings and started walking, joining the exodus of many thousands of migrant workers trekking back to their homes with no food, no jobs and no savings.

Several hours into the walk, he said, they were told the Uttar Pradesh government would run bus services on Saturday from Anand Vihar in east Delhi to ferry stranded migrant workers.

Notwithstanding the threat of coronavirus infection, he joined the throng of workers to find a spot in the bus on Saturday night. In what was the beginning of 20 hours of bus rides, with the passengers packed in like sardines, the Uttar Pradesh Road Transport Corporation (UPSRTEC) bus first took him to Sitapur.

There, he waited for five hours for another bus to Lucknow. From Lucknow, he took a private bus to his village

outbreak in the national capital.

There was so much stress. I had no work and I was getting constant calls from home to come back. Initially, there was no transport, so I decided to walk down like others. Then on Saturday, channels started flashing the news that the Uttar Pradesh government had started the bus services from Anand Vihar, making the journey easier, he said.

The stresses are over but for the moment.

His wife is in hospital with the baby while he is under lockdown at home. But that's a small worry.

It's the bigger questions that haunt him as he starts earning a living again and get back to Delhi but doesn't know how or when.

Asked when he would come back to the national capital, he replied, As soon as this (coronavirus) crisis ends. But when will that be?

A question to which nobody has an answer.

outbreak in the national capital.

</div

'Unruly' Tablighis be killed with bullets: MNS

PTI ■ MUMBAI

MNS chief Raj Thackeray on Saturday said that the Tablighi Jamaat members who reportedly misbehaved with women medical staff during quarantine and are engaged in "some conspiracy" be killed by firing bullets. He also questioned the need for giving medical treatment to such people.

The MNS chief demanded that videos of such people being thrashed be made viral on social media, to instill sense of "trust" among people.

He also said the people would have felt satisfied had Prime Minister Narendra Modi talked about the current scenario and where the country is heading at in its fight against coronavirus than the latter just speaking about lighting up lamps and candles. In his message to the nation, Modi on Friday asked people to switch off lights in their homes and light lamps, candles and switch on mobile phone flash lights at 9 PM on April 5 to display collective spirit to defeat the coronavirus.

Speaking about harassment being faced by police and medical personnel, Thackeray said, "We can see the police being attacked and abused when they try to control the situation".

"The meeting (of Tablighis had taken place) at Markaz in



Delhi. Such people be killed by firing bullets at them. Why give them treatment? A separate section be created and their treatment be stopped," Thackeray told reporters here.

"If they think that their religion is bigger than the country and want to engage in some conspiracy...they are spitting at people, on vegetables, roaming nude before the nurses," he said

voking the Uttar Pradesh government's decision to invoke the stringent National Security Act against them. They are among the thousands who had attended a religious congregation at the organisation's New Delhi headquarter, now being seen as a coronavirus hotspot.

COVID-19 cases rise to 62 in Haryana

PTI ■ CHANDIGARH

The number of COVID-19 cases climbed by 18 to 62 in Haryana on Saturday, with Palwal district reporting the highest jump, the state health department said. The total includes 14 patients who have been discharged. There are 48 active cases in the state, it said.

According to officials, Tablighi Jamaat members from other parts of the country, who entered the state before the lockdown, accounted for majority of the 18 fresh cases reported.

They, however, did not give the exact number. The health department bulletin said Palwal has the maximum number of active cases in the state at 16, including 13 reported on Saturday.

Give more financial aid to states: Cong

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday appealed to the central government to empower states in their fight against coronavirus by providing them with more finances and resources.



Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrivastava said the Centre should also take state governments on board while evolving strategies to fight the deadly disease. "We have talked about cooperative federalism. Time has come that we should walk the talk. The Centre should take the states together with it, empower them by providing them with more finances and resources. It is only when the states are capable and when the

Centre has decentralised, that we can win this war against coronavirus," she said. Addressing a press conference via video, she said states are at the forefront of the fight against coronavirus, while implementing and executing various policies on the ground.

The Congress leader said the Centre should provide Rs one lakh crore to states to fight COVID-19, besides releasing pending GST dues of Rs 42,000 crore to state governments with immediate effect. "The states at this time are facing the biggest financial crisis in fighting the virus. The central government should provide a Rs 1 lakh crore package for states to fight COVID-19," she told reporters.

Healthy baby born to COVID-19 positive woman at AIIMS; first such case in Delhi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A coronavirus positive woman has given birth to a baby at the AIIMS here, official sources said, adding that the baby is "healthy and doing well as of now".

Dr Neerja Bhatia, professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at AIIMS who led the team which carried out the delivery said the baby boy was born on Friday evening, a week early, through C-section and is doing fine so far.

When asked if the baby's sample would be tested for COVID-19, she said, "We are going to monitor his condition and look out for symptoms. So far the baby is doing fine."

According to doctors, this is the first baby to be born to a coronavirus infected woman in Delhi. The baby's mother



The baby's mother who was nine-months pregnant had tested positive on Thursday after her husband, a senior resident doctor working in the department of physiology at AIIMS, was found to be infected with the virus

The doctor said the mother is also fine and though she has tested positive for COVID-19, she is asymptomatic at present.

The AIIMS has already prepared a protocol dedicated to the care of COVID-19 infected pregnant woman patients.

PTI ■ CHANDIGARH

His last meeting with the family was just a few minutes long -- the time it takes to have a cup of tea. And this was sipped outside the front door.

Dr Gurpal Kataria is posted at Punjab government hospital in Nawanshahr, a coronavirus hotspot. The frontline doctor and his team are taking care of the 18 infected patients admitted at the isolation ward there.

The doctor has little time now to visit his family in Jalandhar, 60 km away. He keeps in touch over the phone but the last, brief visit was two weeks back.

"I did not enter the home as a precautionary measure, just saw them and then returned on

who was nine-months pregnant had tested positive on Thursday after her husband, a senior resident doctor working in the department of physiology at AIIMS, was found to be infected with the virus. The doctor's brother has also tested positive

for the respiratory infection. The baby is with his mother since he will need breastfeeding. So far, there is no proof that suggests that the virus can be transmitted through breastfeeding, another doctor said.

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A 70-year-old patient has

died in Nawanshahr. Eighteen others, including a two-and-a-half-year-old child and three women, are in the isolation ward of the civil hospital, waiting for the day their tests results show negative.

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"For us this is like a place of

worship, where we get a sense of satisfaction when we see happiness on the faces of our patients," says the 54-year-old doctor.

"We counsel our patients on a regular basis and tell them there is no need to be scared and they will be fine. We try to keep them in positive frame of mind and keep their morale high," Kataria says. "We do not let them feel that they are stuck here."

"When they go back from here, they will certainly

remember us," he says.

He says all arrangements are in place at the government hospital to deal with any coronavirus eventuality. Medical teams are on standby, in case there is a spike.

Kataria's own team -- which includes a microbiologist, a rural medical officer, a pharmacist and a lab technician -- stays in houses within the hospital complex.

"I and my team are available round the clock here," he tells PTI over the phone.

Kataria got his MD degree from the Amritsar government medical college. His experience at the time of swine flu outbreak in 2009 has helped him in dealing with the coronavirus cases, he says.

Thane IMA seeks insurance cover for pvt doctors

PTI ■ THANE

Private medical professionals in Maharashtra's Thane city have sought insurance cover from the state government in light of the coronavirus outbreak.

In a memorandum to the state Health Minister Rajesh Tope, the Thane Chapter of the Indian Medical Association demanded insurance cover for health care professionals in the private sector similar to the ones provided by the Centre, Haryana and Delhi governments.

Most hospitals in Thane city were dealing with emergency and routine cases and a

SHORT READS



COVID-19: Over 100 labourers housed in Amravati shelter

AMRAVATI: The district administration here came to the rescue of over 100 migrant labourers and travellers during the COVID-19 lockdown by housing them in a shelter home in Nimbora in Maharashtra's Amravati district. The state has witnessed a mass exodus of migrant workforce amid the lockdown, with many labourers adopting any means possible to get to their hometowns. As many as 144 migrant labourers and travellers, who were stranded during the lockdown, were put up at a hostel belonging to the social justice department in Nimbora, district information Officer (DIO) Gajanan Koturvar said. Arrangements at the shelter were made in keeping with the norms of social distancing, he said, adding that masks, drinking water, soaps, mosquito coils etc, were provided by the authorities.

- Photo: Reuters



The USNS Comfort passes the Statue of Liberty as it enters New York Harbor in New York City, March 30, 2020. The floating hospital will take up to 1,000 non-coronavirus patients, to take the pressure off civilian hospitals.

Using 'red dot' signal, women escape domestic violence

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Social entrepreneur Iti Rawat recently received an email with a woman's picture with a red dot on her palm and a message "ma'am, I need your help".

The woman was indicating that she was being subjected to domestic abuse, a crime which saw a sudden spike ever since the lockdown was imposed in India in view of the coronavirus outbreak that has claimed at least 68 lives and infected over 2,900 so far.

The restricted movement due to the lockdown has specially hit the victims of domestic violence who suddenly found themselves trapped in their homes with their abusers.

Several women are either unable or too afraid to call the police to get help to move out.

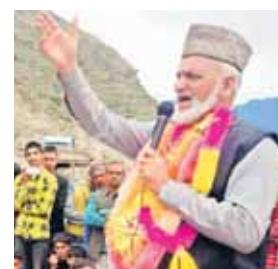
To help such women reach out, WEFT (Women Entrepreneurs For Transformation) Foundation, a not for profit body working for women's empowerment, launched a new initiative called 'red dot' under which citizens can identify a domestic violence victim by seeing a red dot on her palm and inform NGOs or authorities.



The US Centre for Disease Control and Prevention has recommended that Americans wear basic cloth or fabric masks that can be either purchased online or simply made at home

manual issued by the office of the government's Principal Scientific Advisor on home-made protective cover for face and mouth for curbing the spread of SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus.

The advisory also has a



and announced its bifurcation.

Welcoming the amendment, Saroori congratulated the people of Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday welcomed the amendment in the J&K recruitment rules to reserve all government jobs in the Union Territory for the domes-

tic. & J&K Congress vice-president and former minister G M Saroori, however, urged the central government to fulfill the "cherished demand" of the local residents for restoration of statehood. The Centre has amended its two-day-old order and reserved all jobs in Jammu and Kashmir for the domes-

tic of the Union territory — people who have stayed there for at least 15 years.

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tic of the Union territory — people who have stayed there for at least 15 years.

Besides, Saroori demanded constitutional guarantees over land rights for the people of the erstwhile state.

Without identifying anyone, he said some elements are trying to divide the society and asked people to remain vigilant against them. The former minister urged the Central government to fulfil the cherished demand of the local residents for restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir.



"My daughter, who has given the class 10 exam, always tells me to take care. She also feels proud that her parents are serving people," he says

Nawanshahr. Eighteen others, including a two-and-a-half-year-old child and three women, are in the isolation ward of the civil hospital, waiting for the day their tests results show negative.

Kataria says a major concern is the patients' morale. They often ask doctors about the coronavirus count, worrying how many people have died each day.

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PTI ■ CHANDIGARH

His last meeting with the family was just a few minutes long -- the time it takes to have a cup of tea. And this was sipped outside the front door.

Dr Gurpal Kataria is posted at Punjab government hospital in Nawanshahr, a coronavirus hotspot. The frontline doctor and his team are taking care of the 18 infected patients admitted at the isolation ward there.

The doctor has little time now to visit his family in Jalandhar, 60 km away. He keeps in touch over the phone but the last, brief visit was two weeks back.

"I did not enter the home as a precautionary measure, just saw them and then returned on

for the respiratory infection. The baby is with his mother since he will need breastfeeding. So far, there is no proof that suggests that the virus can be transmitted through breastfeeding, another doctor said.

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ward of the civil hospital, waiting for the day their tests results show negative.

SHORT READS**Lockdown: Cops stop 70 migrant workers from going to K'taka**

PUNE: As many as 70 migrant construction workers were stopped by the police here from going to Karnataka in a truck amid the lockdown, an official said on Saturday. The workers, currently living in Bibwewadi area of the city, were planning to return to their native places in the neighbouring state, he said. "We got a tip-off about it and stopped them from going," a senior official of Bibwewadi police station said. A case has been registered against the contractor and the construction workers under IPC section 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant), he said.

Liquor shop looted in Delhi amid lockdown

NEW DELHI: Amid the nationwide lockdown, some unidentified persons broke into a wine shop here and decamped with liquor bottles, police said on Saturday. During patrolling on Saturday morning, police found that the shutter of a wine shop at the Roshana Road in north Delhi was broken. The shutter of the wine shop had been forcibly pulled up and some liquor bottles and crates were stolen, a senior police officer said. A case under relevant sections of the IPC was registered at the Sabzi Mandi police station, he added.

Authorities take over 21 hotels to set up isolation wards

MUZAFFARNAGAR (UP): The authorities here have taken over 21 hotels for setting up isolation wards which can be used in an emergency situation due to COVID-19 pandemic, officials said on Saturday. The hotels will be used as isolation wards and doctors, along with para-medical staff, will be deputed in the facilities, said Additional District Magistrate Amit Singh. He said food and other necessary items will be provided to those who are kept in isolation in these hotels.

Drones help cops nab over 40 violating social distancing rule

PTI ■ KOCHI



At least 41 people, who ventured out for a morning walk in a posh area here early Saturday morning, were caught on night vision cameras of a drone deployed by the city police to enforce social distancing to prevent spread of the novel coronavirus.

The violators were 39 men and two women, police said.

They were held for allegedly violating Section 144 of CrPC clamped in the district prohibiting assembly of more than four people, police said.

They have been charged under IPC Sections 188 (Disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant), 269 (Negligent act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life) and Section 4 of The Epidemic Diseases Ordinance 2020 passed by Kerala government last week, the police said.

"The rule came into force to unify and consolidate laws relat-

ing to the regulation and prevention of epidemic diseases they said. Section 4 of the ordinance allows the state government to take special measures and frame regulations to tackle an epidemic disease. All have been released on station bail, police said.

The police headquarters have given drones to several districts including Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Kochi, Thrissur and

Kannur for carrying out surveillance to enforce social distancing. The drones having night vision can fly 40 minutes continuously at a time. In Kochi, the police started flying the drones at 4.30 am in the areas where the chances for the people to come out violating lockdown announced by the government.

"When we flew it (drone) in the morning we were able to see

They have been charged under IPC Sections 188, 269 and Section 4 of The Epidemic Diseases Ordinance 2020 passed by Kerala government last week, the police said

the people moving through the (Panampilly Nagar) walkway. They were warned by the police continuously asking them not to come out. Even after repeated warning, these people were coming out. They were ignorant, then we thought we have to take stringent action (against the violators)," G Poonguzhal, Deputy Commissioner of Kochi City Police, said.

PM directs officials to ensure sufficient medical equipment

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday chaired a meeting of the various empowered groups set up to respond to the coronavirus threat and directed officials to ensure sufficient availability of all essential medical equipment such as personal protective equipment, masks, gloves and ventilators.

Modi reviewed countrywide preparedness regarding availability of hospitals, proper isolation and quarantine facilities as well as disease surveillance, testing and critical care training, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said.

At the joint meeting of the empowered groups constituted for planning and ensuring implementation of COVID-19 response, the prime minister also directed the groups and officials concerned to ensure sufficient production, procurement and availability of all essential medical equipment such as PPEs, masks, gloves and ventilators, the PMO said in a series of tweets.

The government last Sunday

constituted 11 empowered groups to suggest measures to ramp up healthcare, put the economy back on track and reduce misery of people as quickly as possible post the 21-day lockdown imposed to contain the coronavirus pandemic.

These groups are empowered to identify problem areas and provide effective solutions, delineate policy, formulate plans, strategise operations and take all necessary steps for effective and time-bound implementation of plans, strategies or decisions in their respective areas, a notification issued by Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla had said.

Out of these 11 empowered groups, nine are headed by secretary-level officers, one by a NITI Aayog member and one by the NITI Aayog CEO.

The groups that were constituted include empowered group on medical equipment and management plan, empowered group on availability of hospitals, empowered group on essential drugs, medical equipment, empowered group on augmenting human resources by MSME and empowered group on facilitating supply chain and logistics management.

PM's appeal to switch off lights on Sunday could impact grid

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



tive resolve" to defeat the coronavirus.

Congress leader Shashi Tharoor also raised similar concerns. He said the prime minister should have thought about this while making the call.

"An unprecedented drop in electricity demand at 9 pm Sunday and an immediate surge at 9.09 pm could cause the electrical grid to crash. So Electricity Boards are contemplating load shedding from 8 pm and staggered return to normal after 9.09pm. One more thing the PM didn't think about," Tharoor tweeted.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday urged people to switch off the lights at their homes and light up lamps, candles or mobile phone torches for nine minutes at 9 pm on Sunday to display the country's "collective

PIL in SC seeks full wages for MGNREGA workers

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



A fresh PIL has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking a direction to the Centre and authorities to pay full wages to MGNREGA workers for the entire period of the nationwide lockdown. The 21-day lockdown from March 25 was announced by the government to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus.

The Public Interest Litigation (PIL) was filed by activists Aruna Roy and Nikhil Dey of the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan.

It said that over seven crore workers registered under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) Scheme be deemed to be on job during the lockdown period like other employees and they are paid full wages.

The plea, filed through lawyer Prashant Bhushan, assailed the direction of the Ministry of Rural Development and state governments that MGNREGA workers may be allowed to work wherever possible during the lockdown.

It has sought protection of

fundamental rights to health and livelihood guaranteed under Article 14 and Article 21 of the Constitution for over 7.6 crore workers under the employment guarantee scheme.

"By the order dated March 24, issued under... the National Disaster Management Act, and binding on all ministries/instrumentalities of the central government and state governments, the central government has placed the entire country under a 'National Lockdown' with requisite exceptions only for essential services/goods to protect lives/health of all citizens of the country by ensuring social

physical distancing," the plea said.

The guidelines of the Ministry of Rural Development saying that MGNREGA workers may be allowed to work is contrary to the lockdown order and it risked "health/lives of MGNREGA workers as it is not possible to ensure social/physical distancing in the nature of the works performed," it said.

Being largely involved in construction work, workers pass material from one person to another and social distancing is not possible, it said.

"Pertinently, COVID-19 is now present in almost all districts of the country which is a

serious health hazard for these vulnerable citizens particularly because the number of persons seeking work is bound to increase as many persons otherwise employed in other sectors are desperate for wages (including migrants who have returned from various cities/places)," it said.

Forcing over 12 crore workers to seek work daily during the lockdown when public transport is not available and police have clear directions to apprehend non-essential worker amounted to violation of right to life and livelihood of these vulnerable citizens, it said.

"As coronavirus cases have now spread to large parts of rural India, the arbitrary order exacerbates a public health emergency," the PIL said.

The plea has also sought a direction to authorities to issue "individual temporary job cards within 15 days to all migrants who have returned from the cities to their native villages".

Justice holds meet with HC judges for prompt hearing of urgent matters

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



The Supreme Court E-committee Chairperson Justice D Y Chandrachud has held a meeting through video conferencing with high court judges heading such committees to ensure urgent matters are heard promptly and litigants are not required to come to court during the lockdown.

Justice Chandrachud emphasised that prompt measures be adopted "at this time of crisis" and said the use of technology must be institutionalised even after the lockdown is lifted and normalcy returns.

The committee, in its meeting on Friday, also discussed the possibility of live streaming of court proceedings held by video conferencing but based on an assessment of technical issues like availability of bandwidth and dedicated servers, it was felt that the recordings should be hosted on court websites by the chairpersons of the high courts

have access to the proceedings.

The committee also noted that, ideally, judicial officers and advocates should work from their homes but it was left to the high courts to decide to what extent this was feasible.

Justice Chandrachud reviewed the measures initiated by the high courts in the operation of virtual courts and after noting the difficulties faced by some states in e-filing of cases, he proposed a meeting of the e-committee and submitted to the Department of Justice.

to discuss the issues.

Judges of 23 high courts, heading the computer committees, participated in the meeting.

The chairpersons of computer committees shared their views on steps taken and the challenges faced and agreed with the suggestions of Justice Chandrachud on taking prompt measures and institutionalising the use of technology.

Justice Chandrachud also informed the judges about an e-filing module which is in an advanced stage of development in the Supreme Court and it was agreed that such modes may be used during the lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic.

He suggested the high courts may use the funds unutilised so far from Phase II of the e-courts project for meeting immediate needs and assured that demands for funds or software will be promptly processed by the e-committee and submitted to the Department of Justice.

Cyber agency cautions against fake PM-CARES UPI IDs

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

CNI churches to live-stream special worship sessions

PTI ■ KOLKATA

With public gatherings banned due to the coronavirus outbreak, the Church of North India (Diocese of Kolkata) has decided to go for live-streaming so that members of the community can join from home the special worship sessions, lined up till Good Friday and Easter.

The CNI has decided on webcasting live-services during the Holy Week, starting this Sunday, a spokesman said on Saturday.

"While meetings, seminars, choir practices, which involves large gatherings, have been cancelled, the mass/prayer sessions have to continue and accordingly we have instructed all parish churches under our order to go for webcasting of holy events," the spokesman said. The Holy Week starts on Sunday (April 5) and ends on next Sunday (April 12), the day of Easter.

Special prayers will be held on April 5, 9, 10, (Good Friday) and 12 (Easter Sunday) and all will be streamed live on YouTube from the Bishops House. The spokesman said services had never been live-streamed in this fashion before the lockdown, as the situation did not warrant so.

"This time we feel the need to make community members feel together," he said.

On March 29, in a live streaming appeal to members of the community, Bishop Paritosh Canning of CNI, Kolkata asked everyone to be on guard against the coronavirus, "which has intruded into the territories of our state and country, and expressed firm belief that Jesus Christ will save us all from this pandemic."

WB govt shelves plan for virtual classrooms

Even as the Education department had booked the 4-5 pm time slot on DD Bangla for a week from April 7, a section of guardians and teachers have informed the timing is not okay with them and they are suggesting separate time slots, which cannot be accommodated

With the suspension of classes in schools due to coronavirus pandemic since March 16, Chatterjee told reporters on Friday that from April 7, during 4-5 pm, students from class 9 to 12 will sit before their TV sets and switch on the DD Bangla channel where in class room atmosphere some well-known teachers will give lecture on particular subjects.

"Unfortunately we have to shelf this plan which was aimed for helping the students missing their classes," the minister said on Saturday.

Chatterjee said the other decision to ask students to submit their home activity report during the period of suspension of classes till April 14, will continue to be in force.

Model questions for the activity report can be downloaded from state school education department portal by teachers of respective institution and sent to students via WhatsApp, mail after modification by the concerned teacher if they think so, he said. The questions will be framed as per the curriculum of the first summative exam in every school.

Chatterjee told reporters in videoconferencing that while the state had fixed the 4-5 pm time slot on certain subjects for class 9 to 12 students in state-run/aided schools, that timing was not mutually acceptable to both teachers and guardians.

"In such a situation, we have decided not to go ahead with the plan to hold virtual classes from April 7 as had been announced," the minister said.

Shah Rukh Khan offers his office for BMC quarantine

PTI ■ MUMBAI

personal office space to help expand our Quarantine capacity equipped with essentials for quarantined children, women & elderly. Indeed a thoughtful & timely gesture," BMC's official Twitter handle post read.

The 54-year-old superstar on Thursday announced various initiatives to help the country during the crisis. The actor has taken the help of his companies — Kolkata Knight Riders, Red Chillies Entertainment, Meer Foundation and Red Chillies VFX — to provide support to the central and state governments.

'Maha may extend lockdown'

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Maharashtra government may not lift the current lockdown on April 14, when the countrywide restrictions end, if the people of the state do not observe discipline and the number of COVID-19 cases rises, Health Minister Rajesh Tope said on Saturday. Tope urged people to observe strict discipline so that the number of cases goes down, which will then pave the way for lifting of the lockdown. He, however, said that the lockdown will be lifted in phases whenever it is done, so that "not all the people can be allowed to come on to the streets at one go".

CAPSULE**Hyundai commits support to central, state govts**

NEW DELHI: Hyundai Motor India Foundation (HMIF), the CSR arm of Hyundai Motor India, on Saturday said it will contribute relief funds to the central and state governments to fight against Covid-19 pandemic. The foundation said it is also preparing to provide the Indian medical fraternity with much needed protective and patient care equipment. "In these challenging times, our global vision - 'Progress for Humanity,' holds us firmly rooted to core values of community service," Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HMIL) MD and CEO SS Kim said in a statement. The company is committed to support India in this fight against the Covid-19 crisis and it is advancing its CSR initiatives that are aimed at enhancing support and care of society and communities, he added.

**FabHotels lays off over 100 employees, to cut up to 20 pc salary**

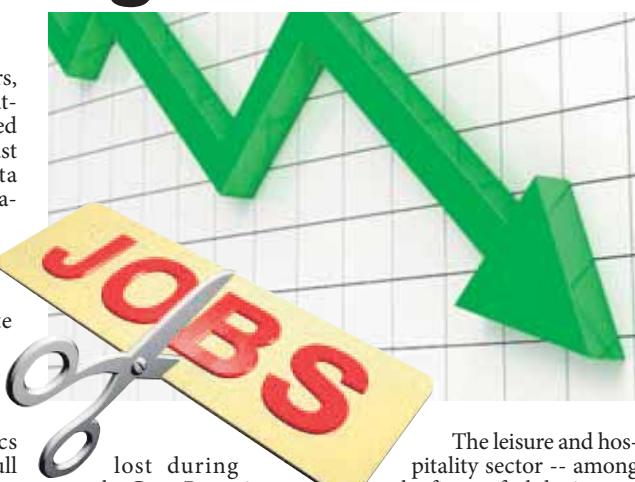
NEW DELHI: New Delhi, Apr 4 (PTI) Budget hotel chain FabHotels has laid off over 100 of its employees as a result of its 'resource optimization' exercise. According to an impacted employee, over 100 employees of the company are being laid off mainly from operations, tech, sales and supply acquisition teams. A letter by the company to a sacked employee said "as per the telephonic discussion with your reporting manager a few days back, we are writing to inform you that as a result of our resource optimization exercise, your position will be redundant going forward". Hence, "we would not be able to continue your employment with FabHotels. Your last date of employment with the company shall be March 30, 2020 in line with the contractual notice period," it added.

**Flight booking open from April 15: AirAsia**

Mumbai: Budget carrier AirAsia India on Saturday said bookings for its flights are open from April 15, but it is open to any change in case aviation regulator DGCA issues fresh directives on the issue. Domestic and international commercial flights in the country are suspended till April 14 amid the lockdown to curb spreading of coronavirus infections. Most of the airlines have commenced taking bookings for their flights from April 15 onwards. However, on Friday state-owned Air India said it has stopped bookings till April 30 and is awaiting a decision after April 14, when the nationwide lockdown is scheduled to end.

US employment plunges amid worsening corona damage

PNS ■ WASHINGTON



As the US economy craters, crippled by coronavirus shutdowns, businesses jettisoned jobs at an alarming rate last month, government data showed Friday, and the situation will get dramatically worse.

US employment plunged by 7,01,000 in March and the jobless rate surged to 4.4 per cent, the Labor Department reported.

Yet the department acknowledged its statistics could not yet capture the full extent of the damage, and its own weekly data on first-time claims for jobless benefits showed 10 million people lost their jobs in the last two weeks of the month.

With COVID-19 cases topping a million worldwide, a quarter of which are in the United States where the death toll is over 6,000, cities have turned into ghost towns and officials are struggling to find ways to ease the ruinous damage to the economy and individuals.

The drop in payrolls in March was unprecedented for the start of a recession and will get more than twenty times worse in April," said Diane Swonk of Grant Thornton.

"We will easily lose more than twice as many jobs as we

lost during the Great Recession during the first two months of this crisis alone," she said in an analysis.

The monthly report reveals the worst monthly job loss since the depths of the global financial crisis in March 2009 and the biggest single-month jump in the jobless rate in more than 45 years.

However, the Labor Department said it "cannot precisely quantify the effects of the pandemic on the job market in March," and errors in

counting those who lost jobs mean the unemployment rate was likely a full point higher.

Economists predict the figures in April will be devastating, with a double digit unemployment rate and as many as 20 million jobs destroyed.

The leisure and hospitality sector -- among the first to feel the impact of the travel restrictions imposed to contain the virus -- lost 459,000 jobs last month, the report said.

But the harm was widespread and notable losses also were recorded in healthcare, retail and business services.

The data were released on the same day as the government began a new program to encourage businesses to retain workers and rehire those who were laid off.

But House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said the government needs to do much more to soften the blow, and "extend and expand" on the \$2.2 trillion rescue package known as CARES passed just one week ago.

"It is imperative that we go bigger and further assisting

US employment plunged by 7,01,000 in March and the jobless rate surged to 4.4 per cent, the Labor Department reported

small business, to go longer in unemployment benefits ... and to give families additional direct payments," Pelosi said in a statement, calling for a relentless bipartisan effort to pass a second stimulus bill.

"This is terrible but unfortunately it's nothing compared to what's coming in April," said Ian Shepherdson of Pantheon Macroeconomics, who predicts a jobless rate of 12 to 14 percent next month.

The two surveys that make up the closely-watched monthly government jobs report are taken during the week that includes the 12th of the month, which in March was before the most restrictive of the lockdowns were imposed that closed businesses nationwide.

That means the "surveys predicated many coronavirus-related business and school closures," the report said.

Direct jute mills to resume ops, says Centre

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The Centre urged the West Bengal government on Friday to direct jute mills in the state, which are shut due to the nationwide lockdown, to resume operations in order to prevent any shortage in supply of packaging materials.

In a letter, the Union Ministry of Consumers Affairs, Food and Public Distribution told the state government that manufacturing units of packaging materials are exempted from the purview of the lockdown. "Procurement operations of foodgrain, for which availability of packaging material like jute bales are immensely required by major procuring states like Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Madya Pradesh where procurement operations will begin from April and peak season is for only two-three weeks only," the letter said.

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Stocks fall on Wall Street, heading for another weekly loss

PNS ■ NEW YORK

jump yet for deaths caused by the coronavirus in the country's hardest-hit state.

"The worry is, there's just too much uncertainty," said Mark Hackett, chief of investment research for Nationwide.

The S&P 500 was down 2.5% as of 2:05 pm. Eastern time. The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 526 points, or 2.5%, to 20,886, and the Nasdaq was down 2.6%.

Such losses would be striking during a normal market, but since the market began selling off in mid-February, the average down day for stocks has brought an even steeper loss of 3.8%.

"It shows that markets have already factored in dismal economic numbers for at least the next few weeks," said Peter Essele, head of portfolio management for Commonwealth Financial Network.



TAFE expands free tractor rental scheme to Raj, UP

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Farm equipment major TAFE is expanding its free tractor rental scheme to Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh to help small and marginal farmers during the coronavirus pandemic.

The company, which on Thursday announced the scheme to help small farmers in Tamil Nadu, said it will be offering a total of around 14,000 tractors and 62,000 implements rent-free in the two states for 90 days.

TAFE Chairman and Managing Director Mallika Srinivasan told PTI that the step has been taken to mitigate the impact of coronavirus pandemic on small and marginal farmers and the company would bear the cost of renting the tractors and implements.

"We had a good monsoon and the water level was good. The prospects for the Rabi crop were looking very good.



At that time, the unfortunate thing has come and hit us.

"So, from our side, what we are trying to do is a measure to support at this very crucial juncture, where they (farmers) have to have a good income from their current crop and be doing timely preparation for the next crop," she said.

From Monday, TAFE will start in a small way in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, she said.

Sharing the scale of the initiative in the two states, she

said in Rajasthan the company would have about 11,000 and 50,000 implements covering over 20 key districts, and in Uttar Pradesh about 3,000 tractors and 12,000 implements in over 20 districts.

The scheme will be for a period of 90 days starting from April 6, Srinivasan said.

Already in Tamil Nadu the company is offering 4,400 tractors and over 15,000 implements across 30 districts rent-free for 90 days, starting from April 1.

Parsvnath not to charge interest

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Realty firm Parsvnath Developers on Saturday said it will not charge interest on outstanding installments of all its existing customers for three months, starting March 15, to help customers amid coronavirus outbreak.

Real estate developers levies interest as a penalty, if property buyers fail to pay their instalments before the due date. The interest rate charged by builders are as high as 18 per cent.

The company has decided to provide an interest holiday on outstanding amounts to all its customers/home buyers for three months from 1 March 15 till June 15," Parsvnath said in a statement.

Nestle announces Rs 15 cr grant

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

FMCG major Nestle India on Saturday announced an initial grant of Rs 15 crore for providing food and essential groceries to the needy amid the coronavirus lockdown.

It will also support purchase of medical equipment for hospitals to fight against the Covid-19 outbreak, Nestle India said in a statement.

The company has already started with a contribution of Rs 1 crore to Narayana Hrudayalaya Foundation for purchase of ventilators for Delhi/NCR.

"We commit to initially, a

State power utilities gear up for blackout

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State load dispatch centres and transmission utilities are gearing up to deal with the possibility of any adverse impact on the electricity grid on Sunday following the Prime Minister's blackout appeal.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday urged people to switch off the lights at their homes and light up lamps, candles or mobile phone torches for nine minutes at 9 pm on Sunday to display the country's "collective resolve" to defeat the coronavirus.

There have been concerns

that the blackout may impact the electricity grid due to sudden drop in peak power demand, which was already down 25 per cent at 125.81 GW on April 2 compared to a year ago.

However, a power ministry spokesperson had on Friday said there would be no such impact on grid stability as everything had been taken care of. Meanwhile, the State Load Dispatch Centre (SLDC) of Uttar Pradesh has written to state utilities to take a series of steps to deal with the possibility of a sudden drop in power demand.

There have been concerns

MTal urges govt to maintain liquidity

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Medical Technology Association of India (MTal) has urged the government to ensure maintaining of liquidity in the healthcare sector in light of COVID-19 outbreak in the country. The government must, "consider deferring statutory taxes, fees, dues and compliances for a period of 5-6 months and direct the financial institutions, so that liquidity is maintained throughout the value chain, without creating any debilitating burden on any stakeholder," MTal said in a statement.

Putin says Russia ready to cooperate on cutting oil production

PTI ■ MOSCOW

Russia is ready to cooperate with Saudi Arabia and the United States to cut oil production, President Vladimir Putin said Friday.

Putin said Russia was willing to make agreements within the framework of the OPEC+ group and that "we are ready for cooperation with the United States of America on this issue," according to a statement published by the Kremlin.

"I believe that it is necessary to combine efforts in order to balance the market and reduce

production." Oil prices have tumbled in recent weeks in the face of a drop in demand and global economic uncertainty over the new coronavirus pandemic.

While Form 15H submitted by senior citizens, 15G can be filed by an individual whose taxable income is less than the exemption threshold.

In a separate order, the

CBDT said the assessors who

have filed application for issue

Central Warehousing Corp contributes Rs 5.65 cr

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC) has contributed Rs 5.65 crore to the PM-CARES Fund for tackling the coronavirus outbreak. CWC, a public sector unit (PSU) under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, has "contributed Rs 565.42 lakh (Rs 500 lakhs from CSR fund and employees' voluntary contribution of one day salary, Rs 65.42 lakhs) to the PM CARES Fund", it said in a statement.

Speaking with Energy Minister Alexander Novak via conference call, Putin said Russia was prepared to discuss "a reduction in the volume of about 10 million barrels a day, a little less, maybe a little more."

He said Russia was in close contact with partners Saudi Arabia and that he recently spoke to US President Donald Trump.

"He said Russia was in close contact with partners Saudi Arabia and that he recently spoke to US President Donald Trump."

"The Assessing Officer shall dispose off the applications by April 27, 2020, and communicate to the applicant regarding the issuance/rejection of certificate via e-mail," the CBDT said.

CBDT said: "In case if a person has submitted valid Forms 15G and 15H to the banks or other institutions for FY 2019-20, then these form 15G and 15H will be valid up to June 30, 2020, for FY 2020-21 also."

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To "mitigate the genuine hardship" of such persons, the

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

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Breathe@47

Amid the COVID-19 lockdown, rising cases and deaths, one thing that the citizens can take heart is the improved air quality index which is down to less than 50 in many parts of the country, a number that had stood at 222 a couple of months back in Delhi-NCR. SHALINI SAKSENA speaks with experts to tell you more



Azure sky as seen from Connaught Place during the ongoing lockdown in New Delhi

Photo: Ranjan Dimri/The Pioneer

Back in the 70s, 80s and even 90s, there was a time when azure sky was a norm. Then everything changed. Globalisation opened doors and the almost empty roads and no traffic snarls soon became a thing of the past. Soon the air quality index was touching 1,000 and beyond and many people ended up with several breathing problems.

Cut to March 25, 2020. Clear blue skies, a smattering of stars in the night sky and a clear view of the Capital for miles on end from the roof top without the usual haze is what Delhites are waking up to since the lockdown. While the circumstances that have led to the present situation is extremely unfortunate given that the number of COVID-19 cases as of April 4, 2020 stands at 3,474 and deaths at 91, there are a few numbers that are falling and people can take heart from it and breathe easy due to improved air quality.

Environmentalist BS Vohra tells you that the reduced AQI levels has one message to give. "It was all manmade. It was our fault that we allowed polluted industries to function and we allowed vehicular pollution to reach levels that people in Delhi were choked. Nature has given us a strong message — when we try and correct the wrong — when we stop things that create pollution — things change for the better," Roychoudhary says.

According to a data by SAFAR (March 30, 2020), the Capital has seen a reduction of 63 per cent in NOx and 49 per cent fall in PM2.5. Mumbai too witnessed a decrease in numbers — NOx 57 per cent down and PM2.5 down by 53 per cent, Pune: NOx stands at reduced percentage of 55 and PM2.5 at 38 per cent.

According to Anumita Roychoudhary, associate director general at the Centre for Science and Environment, the overall air pollution levels have dropped sharply after the lockdown because vehicles, factories, construction has stopped. "We don't want to depend on this kind of emergency to bring this change. But this crisis has proved that if health risk perception can provoke emergency response it can galvanise far reaching changes. Collective community action during this pandemic has forced us to reinvent solutions to reduce our vulnerability to toxic risk. We have made massive lifestyle adjustments to practice social distancing," Roychoudhary says.

Also, there is now no scope of ambiguity. "Today, we know the exact reason for the high AQI levels. Earlier, there were many studies that threw up different reading on what was contributing to the air pollution. Now, we know the real reason. We are being told that the mistake was ours and we need to take corrective action," Vohra tells you.

He paints a dismal picture if we don't learn the lesson this lockdown has taught us. "First, the lockdown was not something that human did to combat air pollution. It was forced due to COVID-19. The improved AQI doesn't mean man has done something. If the virus has not been there, things would be as it was before. There would have been no improvement in AQI levels. Second, there is going to be no long-term impact. If today, the lockdown is opened, it would not take more than a fortnight for things to be back to what they were. The AQI is going to shoot up once again if we allow the industries to work at the same pace and just as many vehicles to ply on the roads," Vohra says.

Dr Gufraan Beig, chief project scientist, System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting And Research (SAFAR) at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology tells you that they have put up data of the last two years to compare the NOx levels and PM 2.5 in the four SAFAR cities —

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Health risk associated with the ongoing

lockdown

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



**YOUR
WEEK
AHEAD**

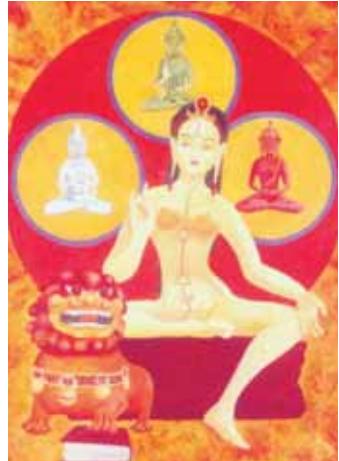
MADHU KOTIYA



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 wake-up 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.

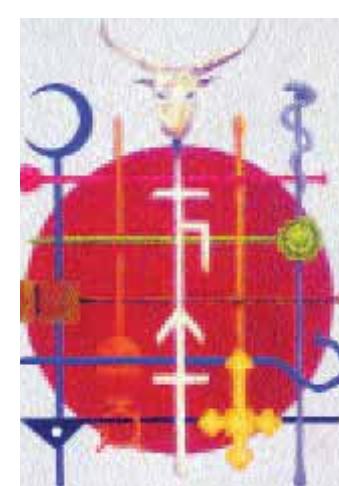
Lucky number 11
Lucky colour Pastel Blue
Lucky day Thursday



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 to 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.

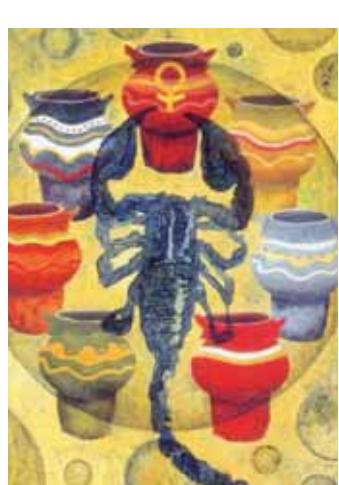
Lucky number 13
Lucky colour Rose Gold
Lucky day Tuesday



CANCER June 21-July 22

The week will bring new energy, stamina with good health. You are likely to put 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, their ideas and views are being respected and followed. On the personal front, your dynamic personality will gove 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 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.

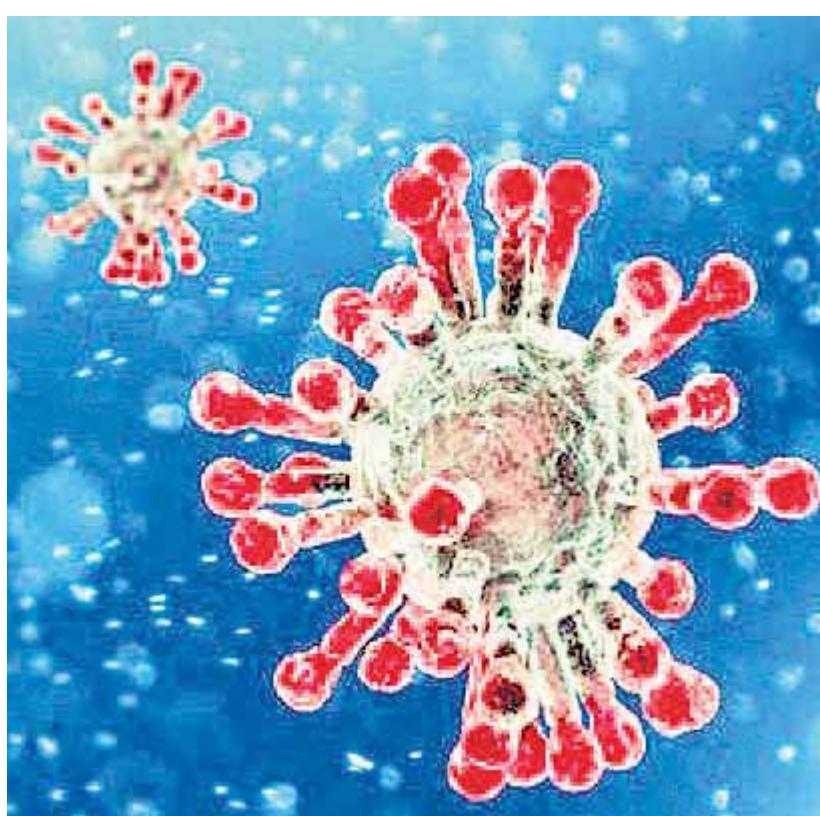
Lucky number 1
Lucky colour Golden
Lucky day Tuesday

Madhu Kotiya is a tarot card reader, spiritual healer, and Founder, MShezam 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 pandemics 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 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 navaratri 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 demon 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 armours, 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 conjurors, 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: 91-11-4984875/9818037273 Email: bharatbhushanpadmadeo@gmail.com

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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Recipe straight from the hills!

In a tiny hill of paradise in Uttarakhand, people love having a tingly-tang of 'Buran Chutney.' Kheem Singh Negi talks about its recipe

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

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

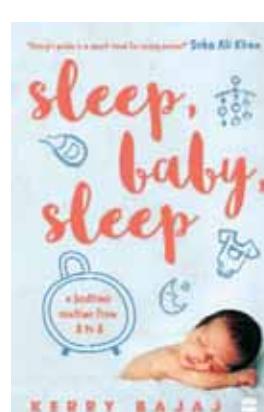
The hundreds of parenting decisions we make during the day will impact our children's night sleep.

Anchors. 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

SLEEP IN TIMES OF CORONA



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 screenetime. 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 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 rumble 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, 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 children 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!

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

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

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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

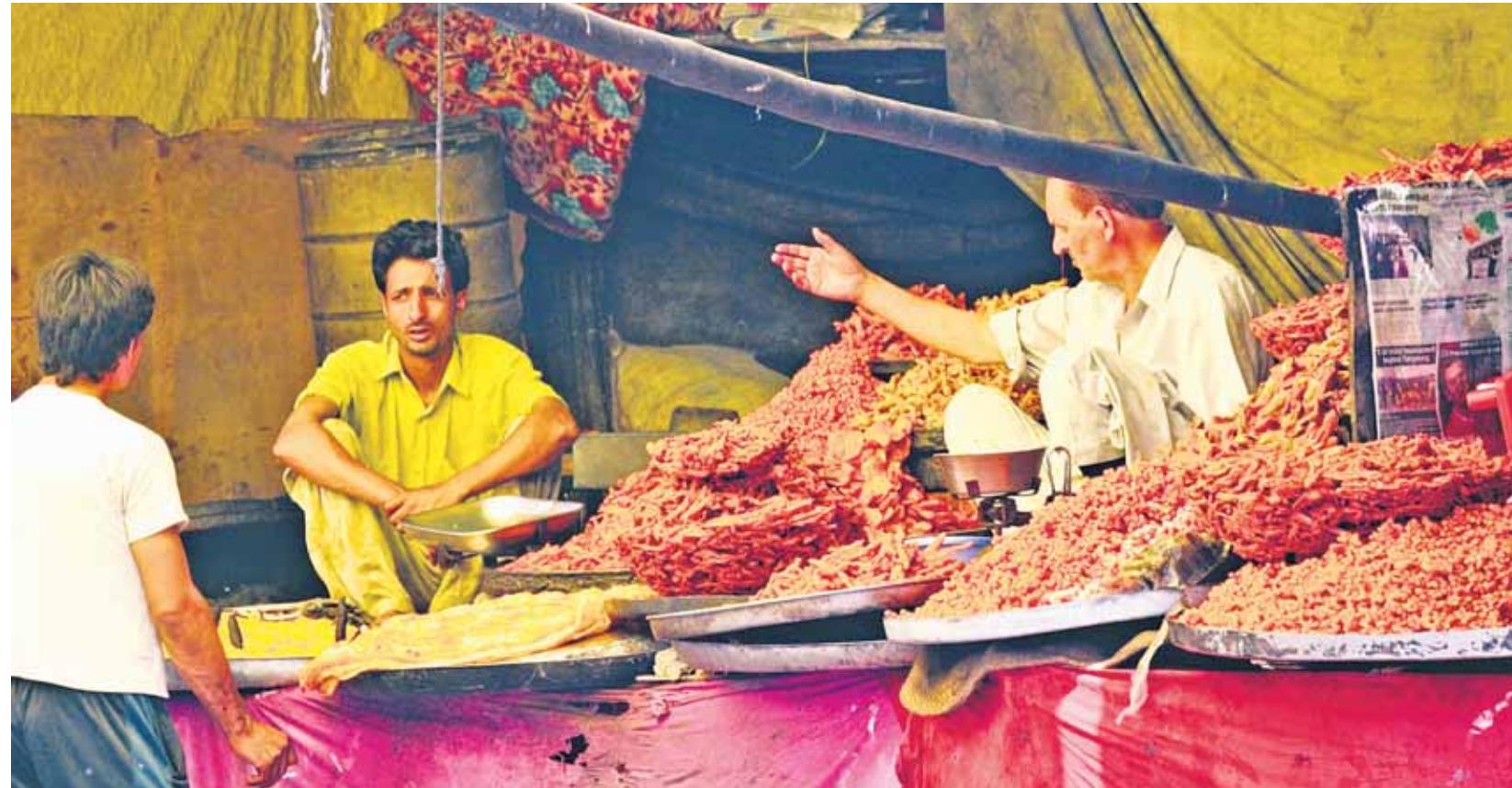
Article 370: A fresh perspective

Bashir 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 (excluding 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, Pathans, 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 separation 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 identi-



ty based on composite culture, social harmony and brotherhood to flourish. This very foundation of Kashmireiyat 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 firebrand 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 Farooq 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 during his election campaign in 1977 flaunted 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 field 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, economically 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

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 grandmother 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.

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.'

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

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 *rishi*'s 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 Sugreva, 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 — Yudhishthir, 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:



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.

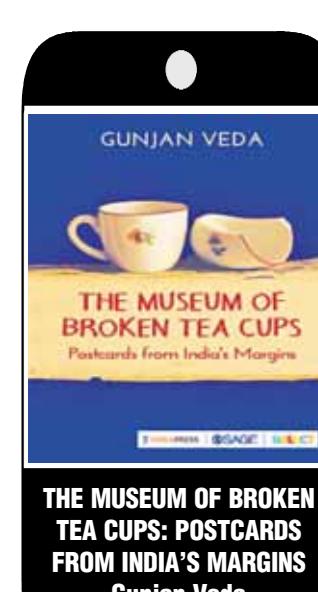
Aishwarya does not know if she is related to her mausi by blood. She doesn't know her maternal grandparents either. 'Mausi says my mother was her sister and she treats me like her own daughter. That's all that matters. I have seen her work in the fields to raise me. It is her name-Bharti—that I write 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



THE MUSEUM OF BROKEN TEA CUPS: POSTCARDS FROM INDIA'S MARGINS
Gunjan Veda
Yoda SAGE Select, ₹525

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 bua 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 bua and brought me to Phaltan in Satara district. Since that day my bua 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.'

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

TIPS TO FOLLOW WHILE MAKING BROWNIES: DON'T USE A MIXER TO STIR YOUR BATTER AS YOU MAY OVER MIX THEM. WHIP TOO MUCH AIR INTO THE EGGS FOR A GOOD TEXTURE. MIX EVERYTHING BY HAND IN A BOWL IF REQUIRED

In a tiny hill of paradise called Ranikhet in Uttarakhand, people love having a tingy-tang of 'Buran Chutney.' Kheem Singh Negi, an ex-serviceman residing here in Hyderabad, talks about its recipe and more, in an exclusive chat with SHIKHA DUGGAL



RECIPE STRAIGHT FROM THE HILLS!

Coming straight from the hills of Uttarakhand, the Buran chutney is loved by many and is a famous and favourite dish of Ranikhet. Its recipe has traveled over to as far as Hyderabad, through ex-serviceman Kheem Singh Negi.

With Coronavirus at its peak and the nationwide 21-day lockdown in place, Kheem Singh Negi is busy in the kitchen trying out ethnic dishes. "Buran chutney is a blend of sweet and tangy flavours made with wild, edible flowers called Buran aka pink rhododendron blossoms in the spring season. This flower is widely sold by the locals and markets in Ranikhet," informs Negi.

The flower is also used for making juices and yummy squashes. "But the Buran chutney is something I discovered myself and it tastes divine. You can keep munching on it and also have it with 'madua chapati' and 'dal-bhat,' Negi tells us. Talking about its health benefits, he says, "The chutney, an effective booster of immunity, keeps your blood sugar stable and betters the functioning of the liver too."

"Sugar and spices are added according to one's taste. It's more aromatic with mint leaves if you like it that way," Negi adds. With smoother texture and preparation that takes very little time, this chutney is sure going to be your favourite too. "You can serve it with hot grain chapatis garnished with fresh coriander and tantalise your taste-buds," he advises.

Kheem Singh Negi



HOW TO MAKE BURAN CHUTNEY

- Collect adequate Buran flowers
- Separate the parts of the flower
- Add peppermint leaves
- Boil tamarind in a cup of water, separate the water from it later on
- Add green chilies
- Grind all the above ingredients into a paste
- Add required salt as per taste
- Transfer it into a bowl and you're lip-smacking Chutney is ready to serve hot!

TIPS TO MAKE YOUR CHUTNEY YUMMIER

- Add a tinge of ginger, dry gourd or fennel powder
- If you wish to add vinegar, ensure to cook it well enough to eliminate the smell of vinegar
- Make use of green onions instead of normal ones.
- For tanginess, you can add raw mango and you're good to go.

■ SHIKHA DUGGAL

A square baked treat of chocolate is sure to water your mouth! Brownies come in various shapes, sizes and textures — from fudged to caked ones, the only difference is the density they bear. Decorated with toppings like nuts, frosting, chocolate chips, the batter for the brownie is made of brown sugar and vanilla. A 19th century-old delicacy, Chef Sandeep from the Explore Cafe at Ammuguda tells us more about this dessert.

"Rich and dissipated with refined flour and sugar, a brownie sounds very tempting but contains a lot of calories too. Adding adequate cocoa powder with the right balance of flour will make it tasty and healthier," says the chef. The supremely chocolatey dessert with a pinch of roasted walnuts can sometimes become hard to chew into, in hot summers like this, due to the insufficiency of wet ingredients.

"Remember that to have an amazing frosting, the proportion of sugar and butter must be in the right proportions. It will give you a glaze that will spread easily on top of the chocolate walnut brownie," suggests Chef Sandeep.

Calling attention to a very evident trick all the chefs tend to try, the addition of an extra egg to the brownie mix gives a cake-like brownie instead of a chewy one, shares the chef. "The extra egg adds volume and a soft texture," he adds.

So what are you waiting for? Don the chef's hat and try this easy-to-make Chocolate Walnut Brownie at home!

GLORIOUS relationship with brownies!

WHAT YOU NEED

- BUTTER: 4 tbsp
- BROWN SUGAR: 3/4th cup
- EGGS: 2 large sized
- VANILLA EXTRACT: 1 1/2 tsp
- COFFEE POWDER: 1/4 tsp
- COCOA POWDER: 4 tbsp
- BAKING SODA: 1/4 tsp
- SALT: 1/8 tsp
- CHOPPED WALNUTS: 1/2 cup



HOW TO MAKE

- Preheat the oven.
- Cream butter and sugar together in a bowl, beat eggs with vanilla extract, coffee powder, and melted chocolate.
- Stir cocoa powder, baking soda, and salt together. Add walnuts.
- Pour the batter into a pan and bake for the next 20-22 minutes. Cool it completely before cutting the pieces.

PRO TIPS

- Don't use a mixer to stir your batter as you may over mix them.
- Whip too much air into the eggs for a good texture.
- Mix everything by hand in a bowl if required.



FOLLOWING ARE SIMPLE STEPS TO HELP PRESERVE VEGETABLES:

- Wrap up your leafy greens
- Rinse them, wrap them up in a towel and keep them in your refrigerator.
- Tomatoes need no refrigerator
- Store them at room temperature, remove the green parts of the tomato and slice them. You can also store them in zip-lock bags.

- Freeze your green chilies
- Place them on a plate and cover aluminum foil. Freeze and then store in an airtight container.

- Preserve your green peas & add more flavour into your recipe

- Peel green peas and store them in a bowl. Now add some water to it. Boil the water and add 2tsp of sugar. Add chilled water, strain the peas and they are ready to be stored in zip-lock packets.

- How to not let your coriander leaves wilt
- Spread the leaves on a piece of paper and let them dry in. Now place the lower end of the coriander into a glass of water and store it in a cool place.

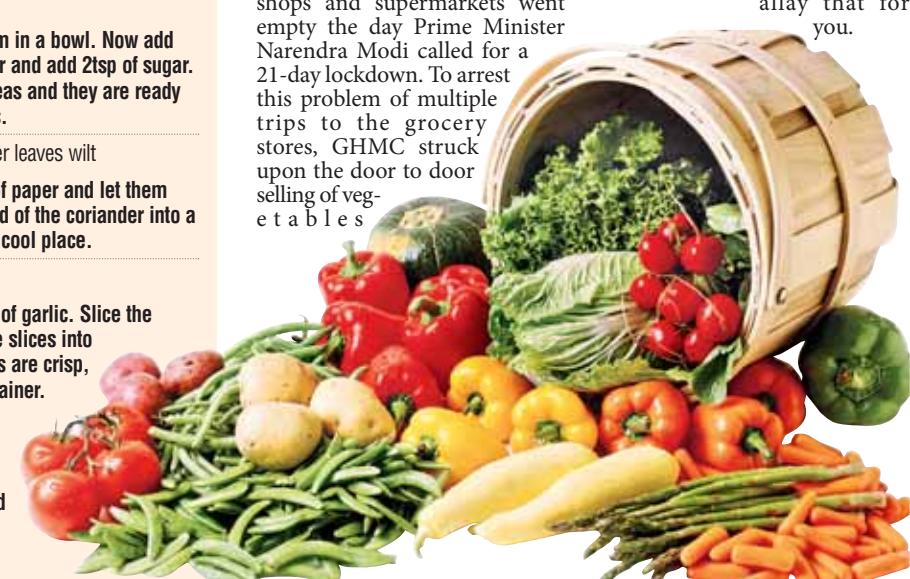
- Garlic cloves

- Nobody likes dwindling cloves of garlic. Slice the cloves into thin pieces, pop the slices into a bowl of water. After the slices are crisp, you can store them in any container.

- Get rid of the guilt over food wastage and try these simple tricks at home. You now know that you don't have to be a food expert for that!

How to preserve your veggies during the lockdown

There is still time for the lockdown to end and people have not much choice but to stock their groceries sensibly. Shopping for groceries turned nightmare when shops and supermarkets went empty the day Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for a 21-day lockdown. To arrest this problem of multiple trips to the grocery stores, GHMC struck upon the door to door selling of vegetables and fruits.



A lot of sacrifices were made by those who were in the forefront of the Telangana movement at different points of time. Some did not take up arms or stage protests, but still made significant, lasting contribution with their intellectual prowess. Mamidi Harikrishna, Director, Department of Language and Culture, Government of Telangana, is one of them. In an exclusive interview to **THE PIONEER**, he reveals how his numerous essays and other works reflecting the agony of Telangana people, the movement per se, and everything related to the state attracted the attention of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao. A senior official who wears many hats, Harikrishna has won accolades as a poet, painter, writer, translator, historian, critic and more. He is the man behind "Fusion Shayaree", a novel form of poetry that represents our multicultural and multilingual lives in contemporary society. He has penned hundreds of articles for various national and international journals and periodicals. He has edited over 25 books, including *Telangana Harvest: Telugu Short Fiction 1912 -2011* (2017). He

has won Nandi award twice. A perfectionist at work, Harikrishna tells *The Pioneer's*

K RAMYA SREE

how he ran away from in quest of his dreams as well as his abiding love for his mother and Telangana.

Typical Telangana village...

I was born in Shayampet, Warangal district. My village was very peaceful and close to nature as it was surrounded by lakes. When I speak about my childhood, I can only think of my village. We were economically stable as we usually had good agricultural produce. The village was dominated by the Padmashali community whose members were into handloom weaving. I grew up in a typical Telangana village.

Wanted to be a scientist...

I was interested in Science and wanted to be a scientist during my school days.

I always read beyond the syllabus. I did not score enough in Class X to take up Science. Instead, I chose HEC (History, Economics and Civics). That's how my love for history developed. During the 1980s and the 90s, like it is now, people were considered 'bright' if they studied Science and 'brighter' if they opted for Math. In such a situation, having chosen HEC, I decided that I must prove that HEC is no less than any subject. It was the end of my dream of becoming a scientist.

We can build a nation within 4 walls of classroom...

I like teaching. So, during my graduation I chose BA and did my B Ed. I believe in the dictum, 'Within the four walls of a classroom, we can build the nation'. We can influence ideologies at the budding stage. I was a state ranker in B Ed and went on to do my

With parents DR M Sudarshan, sisters Sravanti, Swati, Sukruti and brother Jayakrishna

RAPID FIRE:
HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOURSELF: A lone crusader
WHAT DO YOU HATE THE MOST IN ANOTHER PERSON: I don't hate anything in anyone. I accept people as they are.
FAVOURITE HOLIDAY DESTINATION: My hometown

WHO HAS INSPIRED YOU MOST: My mother
FAVOURITE FILM: I have a huge list as I am an ardent fan of cinema
HOW DO YOU START YOUR DAY: By seeing my mother's face
CITY YOU WISH TO VISIT: Rome

WEDDED TO CREATIVE WORK

Will direct a movie...

I have been a part of many movies and was also involved in the development of stories. I remember changing scenes of a few films even at the edit table, and am sure I will direct a movie sometime. I also read a lot of scripts and have made over 150 documentaries on various subjects, including world cinema and Telugu cinema. I have also interviewed some famous figures like Akkineni Nageswar Rao garu.

more. I cannot do anything in my life now. Now, you treat me like your son and not like your father. I took the responsibility of handling my entire family at the age of 22 itself. As I had three sisters — Sravanti, Swati, Sukruti and a brother Jayakrishna — I had the responsibility of getting them married, their education, among others. That is why, I never bothered about myself and decided to remain single. I chose not to marry.

Love Telangana as much as I love my mother...

I love Telangana as much as I love my mother. I decided that I could contribute to the Telangana movement by utilising my knowledge and writing skills. I started writing essays on the agony of people, the movement, and everything related to the state. I also decided to translate all poems written by great leaders so that this movement would be known to all and not just to Telugu people. That's the best thing I have ever done. Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao garu noticed my work and chose me to serve as the Director, Department of Language and Culture. This job has given me the opportunity to share my knowledge and explore myself. I have been working here since 2014.

Being the quiz master...

Every night I would conduct quiz competitions at home. I would divide my parents, brothers and sisters into teams, and ask questions. I used to ask questions that would help improve memory. My childhood was very interesting. I would not eat properly because I was very curious about extra curriculars.



With father and sisters

Creativity came from mom...

I was drawn towards literature, culture, cinema and all that because of my mother. She was a wonderful story-teller. She used to narrate stories of whatever books she read or whichever film she saw. She would narrate stories to beedi makers while they were working. I used to enjoy listening to her stories. From my childhood itself, I have nurtured the sense of creativity, love for literature and cinema because of my mother.

Running away from home...

I ran away from home once when I was in Class 9. My father would return home only around 11 pm after touring the villages nearby. He would get a hen while returning home. Back then, villagers would give hen, goat, and so on as a gift if they felt the treatment was good. My

mom was no more. That is when I understood what life is. On the 11th day of my mother's demise, my father said: 'Your mom is no



With actor Uttej and director Harish Shankar



Young Harikrishna with parents



With CM KCR



WORST SUBJECT IN SCHOOL: Biological Science
FAVOURITE CELEBRITY: Kamal Haasan
WHAT DO YOU TO RELAX YOURSELF: I don't like to relax. I like taking up tasks
HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH ANXIETY AND STRESS: I watch a movie