

MONEY 6

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WORLD 7

COVID-19 INFECTIONS TOP 6L GLOBALLY

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USUAL SUSPECTS
SWAPAN DASGUPTA

India has not lost its head in corona crisis

As of Saturday morning (9.45 am), the fourth day of the national lockdown, the number of coronavirus cases in India has touched 873. Does this mean that we are still behind the curve or, as many of the "experts" suggest, this is just the lull before the country experiences the pandemic tsunami?

Like the overwhelming majority of India, I don't know. Over the past three weeks all of us have been subjected to so many conflicting versions of this global epidemic that has changed the world in ways that none of us thought was possible that we have stopped trying to be amateur pundits. When the WHO announced that every corner of the world was vulnerable to the what President Donald Trump evocatively describes as the "Chinese virus", every person seemed to have a view of what needed and didn't need to be done. These ranged from doing as little as possible but acquiring immunity through different means to suggesting policy prescriptions. Today, the voices of the loud know-alls are becoming less and less heard. The "experts" have their views, but no one is sure whether this expert view will outlive 48 hours.

A strange form of collective helplessness is visible. As law-abiding citizens, the overwhelming number of Indians have confined themselves to their homes, hoping that after April 15 they will be able to pick up the pieces and return to the daily routine. Meanwhile, watching a re-run of the Ramayan, what many of us experienced each Sunday morning in the late-1980s, will have to suffice.

In moments such as this, there is an irresistible temptation to outsource decision-making to a higher authority. For most it is God — articulated in different ways. But this unseen force isn't the only one we bank on. The secular authority we put our trust in moments of anxiety is the Government. Although the trust is never blind, there is the temptation to let others — with information, expertise and resources at their command — take decisions and do the thinking on our behalf. This relationship of the citizen with the state is based on trust and — but only to a limited extent — coercion. If the trust broke down, there is no lathi-waving policeman who would succeed in imposing a national lockdown.

A national lockdown has been successfully undertaken in a country of India's size and diversity. I don't know if the lockdown will achieve its objectives. I pray it does. But regardless of the outcome, how we have conducted ourselves makes me proud to be an Indian. It also makes me proud of our leader

of the all-powerful French state broke down and produced social chaos. It was this upheaval that led to collaboration with the Germans and the trust placed in Marshal Petain and his fragile Vichy regime.

It may sound politically incorrect to say so, but imminent military defeat does not always lead to social breakdown and chaos. By the beginning of 1945, for example, it was sufficiently clear that the collapse of Nazi Germany was only a matter of time. There was just no way that Hitler's regime would be able to withstand the combined might of the USA and the Soviet Union. The Germans didn't give up and fought bitterly, despite the huge military and civilian casualties. But what has escaped attention is the fact that an unending tale of military defeats since mid-1944 and the decimation of nearly every German city by enemy bombers didn't lead to a social breakdown, as happened with less provocation in France. Till the very end the authority of the German state remained intact.

It is of course possible to read these two experiences with reference to the type of regimes France and Germany had at these moments of upheaval. France in 1940 was democratic while Germany in 1945 was a regimented, totalitarian state. Maybe totalitarian states have a better record of holding a society together in times of crisis. If, for the moment, the theory of COVID-19 being a grand Chinese conspiracy is ignored, it is worth looking at the relative success of the authorities in managing the total lockdown of Wuhan. True, the extent of inconvenience was perhaps understated by the absence of an open media and the rigid control that the state maintains over its citizens. But in the face of the pandemic, such extreme measures can be condoned.

It is the inability of democracies to emulate the Wuhan model that has led to Western European countries shying away from cracking the whip, leaving the last mile to people's good sense and failing to meet the desired objective. Apart from Northern Italy and Spain where the number of deaths have skyrocketed, most other democratic countries have faltered in imposing lockdowns.

It is in this context that the national lockdown in India must be seen. Frankly, if it hadn't been Narendra Modi at the helm, lesser leaders would have preferred to have settled for half-measures, citing a combination of economic constraints and human deficiencies. India is a democracy and there is total freedom for intellectuals, contrarians and the fifth columnists to point to deficiencies, real and imaginary. The international media, particularly those based in the Anglophone world, also find it easy to present India as a land of chaos, heartlessness and stupid bigotry. There is enough in the subcontinent to feed this appetite. But what needs careful scrutiny is the fact that a national lockdown has been successfully undertaken in a country of India's size and diversity. The economic costs of this lockdown will be unimaginably high. But the fact that we have put people over money is reason enough to believe that India hasn't lost its head in a crisis.

I don't know if the lockdown will achieve its objectives. I pray it does. But regardless of the outcome, how we have conducted ourselves makes me proud to be an Indian. It also makes me proud of our leader.

Migrants march to different tune

As exodus hits social distancing, Shah asks States to use disaster relief fund to rehab migrants

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The panicky march of the thousands of migrant workers is turning out to be major stumbling block for the Centre in its effort to enforce social distancing to curb the spread of coronavirus. With experts warning that such unruly assembly could help the contagion to explode — two migrant workers from Rajasthan tested positive on Saturday — the Home Ministry has come out with measures to deal with the grave situation.

The measures include raising tents along the highway to accommodate these workers and provide them food and medical assistance. The march of the migrants has alarmed health experts, who feel that it will defeat the very purpose of the lockdown. Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has also expressed unhappiness over the move by States Governments to arrange buses for migrant workers who want to return to Bihar.

"The entire purpose of lockdown will be defeated if thousands of migrants are sent to Bihar by buses. My Government has already asked the Bihar Resident Commissioner in New Delhi to coordinate with different State Governments and reimburse the cost involved in providing food and shelter to migrants who are on their way to Bihar. We have already announced ₹100 crore package for them," said Nitish on Saturday.

Nitish was right in his apprehension. At least two migrant workers, who travelled from Indore to Rajasthan amid coronavirus lockdown in the country, have now been found positive for COVID-19.

Against the backdrop of these developments, Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday spoke to many Chief

Ministers to accommodate the migrant labours in the States itself by providing food and shelter, rather than transporting them to their home States. Shah said the Government is committed to offer all support to migrant workers during the lockdown period and suggested that schools and colleges can be used for sheltering the migrant workers.

The Home Ministry changed the guidelines of State Disaster Relief Fund (SDRF) to allow States to use the fund for the purpose of rehabilitation of the migrant workers.

"With the intent of Modi Government to provide all possible support to migrant workers, the Union Home Secretary has again written to States requesting them to immediately set up relief camps for migrant workers/pilgrims, etc, who are returning to their domicile States or trying to do so during this lockdown period. States have been advised to give wide publicity and awareness, using public address systems, technology and by utilising the services of volunteers and NGOs," said the Home Ministry in a statement.

The Ministry also asked States to set up tented accommodation to ensure that these persons will stay in the relief camps till the lockdown orders are in place. The shelters are to be organised, keeping in view various precautions including social distancing, with adequate medical check up drives to identify and separate cases requiring quarantine or hospitalisation.

Meanwhile, Road Transport Minister Nitin Gakari asked NHAI chairman and toll operators to provide all help to migrant workers by providing food and water. "I have advised chairman NHAI and Highway Concessioners/ toll



Migrants wait to board buses to their native village, during a nationwide lockdown imposed in the wake of coronavirus pandemic, at Anand Vihar in New Delhi on Saturday

operators to consider providing food, water or any kind of support to migrant workers/citizens who are trying to reach to their respective native places. At this time of crisis we have to be compassionate for our fellow citizens," he said.

Commerce and Railways Minister Piyush Goyal has appealed to Industries and trade bodies to take care of their workers and not allow them to go to home States in the time of crisis. In a video conference, Goyal said, "Don't let your workers go away" to the industrialists across the country.

Talking to representatives from various manufacturing, industry and trading associations, He said they are not only their assets and resources, but also could become potential carrier of COVID-19, if they are allowed to migrate to leave en-masse during this pandemic.

Delhi-UP border choked as labourers rush to Bihar, UP

Kejriwal says Govt has arranged buses for migrant workers, but urges them to stay on
SHEKHAR SINGH ■ NEW DELHI



Migrants walk to their villages amid the nationwide lockdown at Delhi-Uttar Pradesh Border on Saturday PTI

Left without any source of income, thousands of migrants mostly from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar on Saturday hit the streets and highways connecting Delhi-NCR in hope to get support from the Government to reach their homes.

Their exodus choked Delhi-UP border at Ghazipur and Anand Vihar bus terminal

Saturday said his Government has arranged for buses to transport migrant workers who were already walking back via roads to their respective home States.

Also, the CM appealed to migrant workers leaving Delhi to stay back. Kejriwal in his Press briefing on Friday announced that food will now be served in 325 Government schools after which the Government will officially have the capacity to feed 4 lakh people across 500 centres.

Delhi Minister Rajendra Pal Gautam went to Anand Vihar to meet migrants.

Cases near 1K, fight stepped up

No community transmission; dedicated Covid hospital set up

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The count of confirmed COVID-19 cases raced towards 1,000 on Saturday, but the Centre maintained that India is yet to witness community transmission of the viral infection and it is focusing on management and prevention of the disease by ramping up Covid-19 hospitals, sample testing, contact-tracing besides intensifying social distancing measures.

According to Statewise confirmed case tallied by dif-

ferent monitoring sites, the total number of positive cases stood at 944 on Saturday evening. However, the Health Ministry's Saturday morning count showed 877 positive cases in the country. The tally was not revised till late in the evening. The pandemic has claimed 20 lives in the country. With cases on the rise, the Centre has asked the State Governments to set up health check-up camps and tents for migrant labourers who are travelling back to their native places to prevent them from spreading the disease, if any.

Giving details of the steps being taken to combat coronavirus which has killed over 28,000 people across countries, Health Ministry Joint Secretary Lav Aggarwal said that doctors from the States are being trained on management



A police officer requests commuters to stay at home during a nationwide lockdown to limit the spread of the virus in Chennai on Saturday PTI

of Covid-19 patients with the help of AIIMS in Delhi while rigorous contact-tracing is underway.

Many States are in the process of setting up dedicated Covid-19 hospitals.

They have also been asked to ramp up their capacity to manage an increasing number of cases. At least 17 States have started work on it.

'Quarantined' man bites woman to death

Theni: A young man under home quarantine for coronavirus after return from Sri Lanka suddenly ran out of his house nude and fatally bit a 80-year old woman in his neighbourhood in a village near here, police said on Saturday.

Govt procures 5 lakh testing kits from US

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid clamour over lack of coronavirus testing facility in India, the Government has been able to procure five lakh additional testing kits from the US.

R Gangakhedkar, the Head of ICMR, said on Saturday the country has now 111 Government testing labs and only 30 per cent of facilities are put to use so far.

He said 44 private laboratories have been given approval for testing and 400 people have been tested in private sector.

Gangakhedkar added that the country is now fully equipped to deal with the situation.

CAPSULE

GOVT PROBES KERALA MAN ROLE IN KABUL ATTACK

New Delhi: Central security agencies are looking into the role of a Kerala man believed to be a member of the ISIS, which has claimed responsibility for the Kabul gurdwara attack in which 25 people were killed, officials said on Saturday. Mohammed Muhsin (28), a resident of Kasargod, went to the UAE in 2018 from where he is believed to have joined the ranks with the global terrorist organisation in Afghanistan, they said.

BRAIN FEVER STRIKES BIHAR, 2 KIDS ADMITTED

Muzaffarpur: Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES), also known as brain fever, that had killed about 200 children in the State last year, has struck this north Bihar town again in what could be a double whammy in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

PM's Covid fund: Donations pour in

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Donations started pouring on Saturday soon after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a special fund — PM CARES Fund — seeking contributions from public to deal with the coronavirus crisis.

One of the first to contribute was film star Akshay pledging ₹25 crore. Cricketer Suresh Raina contributed ₹52 lakh — ₹31 lakh to PM's fund and ₹21 to Uttar Pradesh CM's fund.

"That is a brilliant fifty,

Raina" said Prime Minister to Raina's tweet.

Ratan Tata declared that Tata Sons will spend ₹1,000 crore and Tata Trusts will offer ₹500 crore for the development of medical facilities.

The Tata Group said these funds will be used for research, procurement of Covid-19 test kits and other medical equipments, including for the welfare of those working in health sector.

The IAS Association committed ₹21 lakh and one day salary of IAS officers to the fund.

Sea of corona queries floods Govt helplines

28 cr hit Union Health Ministry portal in 1 day

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Left locked down within the four walls of homes and flooded with scary information from various platforms on coronavirus, scared citizens are hankering for credible inputs on precautionary health measures and treatment practices online.

The Government's websites seems to be the most reliable at this difficult phase as on Friday itself, 28 crore people



logged in to the Union Health Ministry portal seeking answers to the range of queries they have on their mind about the viral infection.

Talking about the high online traffic, Lav Aggarwal, Joint Secretary Union Health

Ministry said just a few days ago, around 22 crore people had clicked on the Government website while on Friday, nearly 28 crore hit the Government portal.

He was responding to complaints that many times the

helplines launched by the Centre and States crashed. Obviously such issue arose from overloading.

"As the situation has evolved by every progressive day, we have increased the number of helplines. But load has increased," he said.

For the benefit of people and to ensure that their problems are sorted out at the earliest, the Ministry has raised the number of helplines.

"We had started from 10 helplines which we increased to 30. But now, in view of increased load on the existing ones, the Ministry has expanded helpline services to 150 which keep on ringing," said a senior health official.

'An actor should never say never'

Known for shows like Kalash and Bepanah Pyaar, APARNA DIXIT loves experimenting with roles and genres. She speaks with MUSBA HASHMI about her latest show and how she has evolved

What is your role in Pyaar Ki Luka Chuppi?

I play Srishti, a small-town girl with values. She is extremely talented but when it comes to love and family, she is emotional and thinks only from her heart. Her satisfaction lies in little pleasures of life and is family-oriented who believes in success but not at the cost of relationships. A lot of people will find the character relatable.

One thing that you like and dislike about your character?

I love everything about my character. From being soft spoken to respecting everyone, Srishti is a love driven person and has no anger or ego issues. The only thing that I dislike is, how she allows people to take her for granted which she will start realising soon. With different experiences in life, she is now learning to take a stand for herself.

From Mahabharata to now Pyaar Ki Luka Chuppi, how has your journey been?

My journey has been beautiful. I have played some amazing characters in the past and made friends for life in this journey. I feel grateful to be a part of this industry which has blessed me in ways for which I can't be thankful enough.

What was the most challenging project?

The most challenging project is also the one that is close to my heart — *Kalash*. I loved the graph that my character had. I got to play various shades and try different looks.

How do you think you have evolved as an artist?

An artist is always evolving. With

every new character that you play, a new project that you do, you learn something new. You become better at the craft day by day. As an artist, I am always on the go to learn and explore new things. It is a never-ending process.

With every new character that you play, a new project that you take, you learn something new. You become better at the craft day by day. As an artist, I am always on the lookout to learn and explore new things. This is a never-ending process

How do you think TV has evolved?

The last couple of years have seen an evolution in content with the shifting paradigm. Over the last decade, television has evolved progressively. The industry is witnessing a revolution by portraying strong independent female protagonists. Serials are being made where the conversation is around strong women characters. There are stories of empowerment of women

from small towns and villages of India which are finally being told. Content on TV is progressively influencing the lives of audiences who are now readily accepting strong headed women who are finally speaking up for themselves.

Having explored different genres, which one did you enjoy the most?

Having played various characters over the years, daily soaps have been the most enjoyable to me as I get to dramatise all emotions and the situations and story lines are also quite relatable. I absolutely enjoy every bit of my time on the sets which makes me enjoy my work all the more.

A role that you would say no to. I believe as an actor it is important to explore every role. An actor should never say never.

Upcoming projects.

Currently, I am only focusing on my show *Pyaar Ki Luka Chuppi* which airs on Dangal TV. If you engage yourself in different projects at the same time, you tend to lose focus. Therefore, I want to concentrate only on this show first. Rest only time will tell.



Plan Your Stay At Home Sunday

No chai breaks, no gossip sessions, no work buddies for 16 more days. While it's for our safety, work from home can get exhausting. From staring at your laptop for 10 hours to shuffling between multiple team calls, the one thing that can pump up your day, is some soothing music with a Bollywood *taarka*. Right?

We feel you and hence MTV Beats is here for you with a special line-up of artists and shows that you must follow to pump yourself up, while you stay put glued to your keyboards.

Jam it up with your favourite artists!

The next few days we are all going to be locked down at our homes for the sake of our own well being. But who says the lockdown has to be sad or boring? We have curated a special line up of artists who will dedicate a few minutes of their day during each of your working days from home with #MusicBeatsMusicFromHome.

Watch your favourite artists jam on the social media pages of MTV Beats and make the social media environment, musically +ve.

Log in and move to the melodious tunes of Darshan Raval, Dr Palash Sen, Shalmali, Nikita Gandhi, Shashwat Singh, Jonita Gandhi, Dhvani Bhanushali, Tulsi Kumar and Akull, who join you for jamming live on Instagram their homes for a week. An exciting surprise awaits you by a popular singer in the live session, stay tuned to know who and what that will be! Fans can also dedicate songs to their loved ones with MTV Beats Farmaash, where the artists will perform to the song requests during the Live and also call out the endearing dedications.

Not just that, fans will also get a chance to do a social-distancing chat and interact with the artist during the LIVE using the dual



video feature on Instagram. Who knows, you can be the lucky one talking to Darshan Raval tomorrow! So, keep your eyes on the Instagram page of MTV Beats, sharp at 5 pm.

Work from home playlists for all the busy-bees.

When work from home gets tough, MTV Beats gets going! As you dabble through a never ending to-do list, soothe yourself by listening to Bollywood melodies like *Hawayein* from *Jab Harry Met Sejal*, *Humraah* from *Malang* and *Shayad* from *Love Aaj Kal* and more on the channel. We're sure that nothing will motivate you more than a soulful splash of your favourite songs. Tune-in to the work from home playlist specially curated for the Bollywood *keeda* in you, anytime on MTV Beats.

Time to turn up the heat at home.

Party Kami Hai, Hum Party Karenge...but Apne Ghar Pe! Take a break from the monotony and dance your heart out with MTV Beats. Tap your feet to the rocking beats of *Haa Main Galat, Illegal Weapon 2.0, Muqabala* and wake up the disco dancer in you, with the House Party Playlist

to keep you pumped up and happy all the time.

Fitness is the new fun, with Sunny Leone.

21 din, Fitness in! Who would want to miss out on a workout when you have Sunny Leone as your fitness trainer? The ever-gorgeous Sunny Leone is here to give you some easy fitness tips on how to be Fit and Fab with FitStop, starting 26th March, every day at 9am only on MTV Beats. Sweat it out with your charming gym trainer and make your workout regime a fun-tastic one!

Choose your favourite 'Desi Kalakaar of the Month'.

Baithe Baithe kya karein, karna hai kuch kaam! MTV Beats is here to entertain you, all day long! Head to the social media pages of MTV Beats to choose your favourite 'Desi Kalakaar of the Month' with three easy steps. Together with the mentors, Akasa, Amit Mishra and Meet Bros, you can also judge and vote for your favorite participant on Desi Kalakaar, with just one click! Singing superstar ban ne ke liye chahiye sirf talent aur internet connection, and MTV Beats is here to give you the best platform with MTV Beats ke Desi Kalakaar.

TELLYTALE

PUJA'S WEDDING POSTPONED



Actor Puja Banerjee, who recently made her comeback on TV with Star Bharat's mythological show as grown-up Vaishno Devi, had recently announced her wedding with actor Kunal Verma on social media. She made an announcement that she will tie the knot on April 15 and started preparing for her wedding.

Puja and Kunal's wedding was supposed to take place in a traditional Bengali ceremony. However, the couple is now contemplating postponing their nuptials due to the coronavirus scare.

According to sources, Puja had applied for leaves and production house had granted her the same. As of now their wedding shopping has also come to a halt and Puja is spending time at home with her family due to lockdown situation in the city.

Puja shares: "The situation is such that we have to sit with our families and decide the situation after March 31."

Well let's hope, Puja and Kunal get married soon and their fans get to witness this grand moment in the coming days.

MEET KANNIKA'S BEST FRIEND

Kanikka Kapur, also known as Suman from the most loved show of Sony Entertainment Television *Ek Duj ke Vaaste 2* reveals on how she would select her partner. Kanikka is her Daddy's princess and certainly would not take any decision without considering with her father and she has the same clause for her future boyfriend.

Kanikka is best friends with her father and shares all aspects of her life with him. Her father too understands her and supports her and guides her wherever the need be. Kanikka who recently turned 25 has revealed



that her father has no problems with her dating somebody. It is just that the guy should follow some clauses set by her father. Speaking about the same Kanikka Kapur aka Suman said: "I am comfortable sharing my personal life with my parents and they have been supportive of it. I am currently not dating anyone but my father has surely set some clauses for me if I date someone in the future." When asked about what kind of a guy she or her father wants, she said: "The guy should be as responsible as I am. Currently I am focusing on my career and I expect the guy to do the same. Looks doesn't matter to me, but the guy should focus on building up his own career and support me in what I do. It is okay for me to date a guy who is outside of the industry, he should also respect my parents and treat them like his own. Also, he should have my father's approval. In short, my king will select my prince charming."

The current track of Kanikka's show is taking a major twist as Shruvan's secret would be revealed in Anish's party and the new friends Suman and Shruvan would be seen fighting while Suman slaps Shruvan. What is this secret? Will the two star-crossed lovers unite back?

ENT SPECIALISTS ON IBD

Sony Entertainment Television's latest offering, *India's Best Dancer* is garnering a lot of positive attention for its interesting content and the variety of talent that is being showcased on the dance show. The contestants who have come from different cities across the country are battling it out with each other only to bag the coveted title of India's Best Dancer. While the judges, Malaika Arora, Geeta Kapur and Terence Lewis are evaluating contestants on three factors mainly ENT, which is Entertainment, Newness and Technique, they are having a tough time scrutinising them considering the phenomenal talent that is being featured in the show.

One such talent who left the judges spellbound with her performance is Swetha Warrior from Kerala. Swetha performed western-classical fusion along with choreographer Aishwarya on the song *Dilbar*. She got positive comments from all three judges for her act. However, Malaika was quite intrigued by her performance and was happy to know that both Swetha and her choreographer Aishwarya hail from Kerala, which is also where Malaika belongs to. So much so that Malaika even coined a term for the two, she said on the show she would like to call them "Malla ke Mallus." Seeing them perform took the dancing diva back to her roots in Kerala and she even complimented their act in Malayali.

Swetha, who was happy to receive good remarks from judges, said: "I started dancing when I was three and half. My mother is my inspiration. She is a professionally trained dancer and I still learn from her." Swetha's mother was touched seeing her daughter perform on stage and the mother-daughter duo later even performed Bharatanatyam on the song *Aarni*

Je Tomar in front of the judges.

SIDDHAANTH'S TRANSFORMATION

Siddhaanth Vir Surryavanshi has been a popular TV face for years now and he has a



massive fan following, especially amongst the ladies. Being part of several top shows, we've seen him don several looks. But for Zee TV's upcoming fiction show — *Kyun Rishon Mein Katti Batti*, the actor wanted to have a slightly different look. Playing a dashing, jet setting businessman on the show, he had to look a certain way and the makers experimented with several looks with the actor before arriving on one!

To be the hot and happening Kuldeep as they had envisioned, Siddhaanth had to reinvent his fitness regime. He along with the makers wanted to break the image of onscreen fathers and hence, they planned to make him look like a desirable man with quite the physique. Thus began the actor's transformation where he had to lose some of his belly fat, build six pack abs and gain some muscle. For the same, he went on a special diet and worked out regularly for a period of six months and, well, the results speak for themselves. But the transformation wasn't easy for Siddhaanth! The actor had recently undergone a surgery and just as soon as he recovered, he took on the role and committed himself to playing it to the hilt!

The actor revealed: "You know, there is this notion in everyone's mind that all the fathers on TV shows look a certain way. But who says dads can't be sexy? So, to break this mindset, we finalized on a ripped look and I knew there was a lot of hard work in store for me, especially post my surgery. After being diagnosed with stage one arthritis in my shoulder last year, I had to get a surgery done for the same. In fact, when the show was offered, I was still undergoing rehab. But my transformation phase helped me not only get into the skin of the character but also feel fitter overall."

Talking about his regime, Siddhaanth mentioned: "I just worked out regularly for six months, not missing one day or one session. Having three different trainers allowed me to focus on all the aspects of my body and they helped me tone down and get into the shape that we envisioned for Kuldeep. I also focused on my diet, which comprised of healthy alternatives and protein-rich food which helped us achieve the ripped body look."

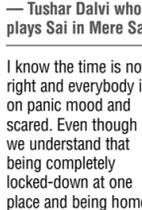
QUOTEUNQUOTE

Seeing my children's happy faces, spending time, wrestling and cuddling with them, is my happiness potion. I think the best thing that this catastrophe has brought is that we are getting to spend times with our families. Gyms are shut but for me fitness can never take a back seat. I've been working out at home religiously. Maintaining a positive mindset is even more important now.



— Ashish Chowdhry who plays MJ in *BeYhadh 2*

In times of the deadly Covid 19, I am majorly following reliable news sources in order to stay informed and avoiding public places and spending time with my family which we rarely get because of our busy schedule. Also, keeping my self busy by doing gardening and helping my wife with cooking and other household work.



— Tushar Dalvi who plays Sai in *Mere Sai*

I know the time is not right and everybody is on panic mood and scared. Even though we understand that being completely locked-down at one place and being home-bound is not easy to bear for so long but I would request all to avoid stepping out. We know the way Covid-19 is increasing day by day and people are falling sick and dying and we need to do our part to save us and others around us. Also, if you step out from your building to buy grocery, please get it for elderly in your society too and don't let them go out.

— Rishina Khandari who plays Rani in *Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein*

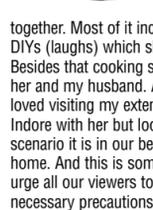
These are tough times. While we can't physically fight this virus, we can all do our bit and prevent it from spreading further by staying indoors and strictly observe social distancing. Given the schedule that we normally follow, it surely gets difficult to stay put indoors but this too shall pass. On the positive side, I'm spending a lot of time with my family and we are ensuring ways and means to keep ourselves occupied. From board games to movies to gardening and DIYs, we have been at it. I hope and pray for the well-being of everyone.

— Sourabh Raaj Jain who plays Chef Neil Oberoi in *Patiala Babes*

I am spending enough time reading all the novels in my 'To Read list'. I don't get enough time on the set to read despite sitting with it after almost every shot. Currently, I am reading a book that comprises of the most unusual poetries written that I started reading a couple of weeks ago. I hope to complete reading this book in the coming week. Other than reading, I also love folk music. I intend to sing and upload videos of it on my social media channels to keep myself as well as my fans entertained.

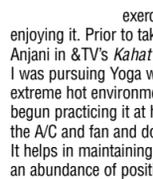
— Kamna Pathak who plays Rajesh in *Happu Ki Ultan Paitan*

The biggest thing I miss out the most on is spending time with my family especially my daughter. Now that I have some time, we've made a sort of to-do list to spend time together. Most of it includes trying all her craft DIYs (laughs) which she likes watching. Besides that cooking some delicious meals for her and my husband. Although I would have loved visiting my extended family back in Indore with her but looking at the current scenario it is in our best interest to stay at home. And this is something I would like to urge all our viewers too. Please take all the necessary precautions and stay indoors...*Kyunki hum ghar ke andhar, toh corona baha!* Stay safe and stay indoors.



— Shubhangi Atre who plays Angoori in *Bhabhiji Ghar Par Hain*

Due to shoot schedules, my fitness regime would often get neglected and I was able to work out for one or two days in a week. Now that I've got some time off, I have begun exercising at home and I'm enjoying it. Prior to taking up the character of Anjani in &TV's *Kahat Hanuman Jai Shri Ram*, I was pursuing Yoga which is performed in an extreme hot environment. I have once again begun practicing it at home where I switch off the A/C and fan and do the regular yoga asans. It helps in maintaining my weight plus brings an abundance of positivity especially at a time when we are enveloped in an environment of serious health concerns. My sincere urge to everyone is to take good care of your health by staying indoors and keep up with the exercise routines.



— Sneha Wagh who plays Anjani in *Kahat Hanuman Jai Shri Ram*

Shooting for a daily soap is hectic and during that time I didn't get time to watch even my show. So, finally now I am binge watching my show. Also I am a big time foodie and staying away from family, I don't get much of my favourite dishes so, I am learning to cook.

— Mohit Kumar who plays Shruvan in *Ek Duj ke Vaaste 2*

In this Quarantine season as the shoots are on hold, I am trying to use most of my time catching up with my hobbies. I really like painting but because of busy schedules I don't get enough time. But right now, I am making painting which I wasn't able to complete or the ones I wanted to make from long time.

— Akanksha Puri of *Vighnaharta Ganesh*



PM Narendra Modi ji gave a directive of 21-days lockdown which I will dedicatedly follow. I have been at home since last 15 days and I will be indoors unless the lockdown is lifted. I have stored basic essentials and I will only step out if I need to buy groceries or medicines. There are people who don't understand and leave their houses on bikes or cars, I really urge those people to stay at home as if we save ourselves, we will save the country. This is the chance to stay home and spend time with your family, eating healthy food, doing yoga and keeping yourselves fit and I myself am doing that.

— Bharti Singh host of *India's Best Dancer*

COVID-19 6th case reported in U'khand

21-year-old youth who recently returned from Dubai was found positive on Saturday

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The number of COVID-19 affected patients in Uttarakhand increased to six on Saturday when swab sample of a 21 year old youth, a resident of Dehradun was found positive for the disease. The youth had recently returned from Dubai. On complaint of fever he had gone to the OPD of Mahant Indresh Hospital on March 26. On the basis of symptoms and travel history, his sample was collected for test of COVID-19. On Saturday his sample was found positive for the disease. Interestingly the youth along with family was at under home quarantine at his residence in

Selaqui. After his report came positive, the administration shifted he along with his family to the Government Doon Medical College (GDMC) hospital. The GDMC hospital which has been converted into COVID-19 treatment facility now has four patients of the disease while many suspected cases of COVID-19 are also undergoing treatment there.

Meanwhile in view of large number of calls being made at the 104 helpline, the health department has decided to deploy psychiatrists and counsellors at the helpline. The department has floated the helpline for the COVID-19 related queries and help. The additional director, health, Yugal Kishore Pant said that the counsellors would advise people to remain mentally and physically strong during the crisis. The health department and the National Health Mission (NHM) has also issued an advisory on mental and physical health during the



lockdown. Pant said that the health department has made all the preparation to tackle the disease.

He said that 20 lakh triple layer masks, 11837 N-95 masks, 3360 personal protection equipment (PPE) kit, 40 infra red thermometer, 18 ambulances with ventilators and 318 ventilators are available. The department has also set up 2757 isolation, 636 ICU and 53 quarantine facility in view of the spread of infection of COVID-19.

In view of the expected spread of the disease, the administration has started looking for the volunteers which can be used when required. On Saturday, the district magistrate of Tehri, V Shanmugam directed the district education officer (DEO), S S Bisht to prepare a data bank of the students who are more than 20 year old and are enrolled in the National Cadet Corps (NCC) and National Service Scheme (NSS).

7 a.m to 8 p.m window on March 31 for inter-district travel

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

People wanting to travel from one district to another district will be allowed to do so from 7 AM to 8 PM on March 31. Announcing this decision on Saturday, chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat said that on the said date, people will be able to use private vehicles, taxis and buses to travel from one district to another within the given time period. He further said that considering the positive results of extending the daily lockdown window from 7 AM to 1 PM had achieved positive results so this system will be continued for shopping of essential commodities. Additionally, the state government is going to recruit about 500 doctors within the next couple of days, he informed.

The CM said that the window on March 31 is being given because information is being received from various sources about people who had ventured out of their home districts for some work are now stranded out of their homes due to the lockdown. However,



people will have to provide a valid reason for inter-district travel and if the reason is not valid they are liable to face action. Further, buses and taxis will have to be sanitised and social distancing will have to be maintained in these too. No stops will be allowed mid-way and there will be medical checks at various points. If any person is found to be a suspected or infected patient, that persons will be taken to the isolation ward. Legal action will be taken in case wrong information is provided. People will have to carry their identification card and inform about their destination. Regarding the 7 AM to 1 PM window being provided daily in the state-wide lockdown, Rawat said that this has yielded good results. He said, "Extending the

hours has prevented panic among the people. We are not seeing crowding now during the window and citizens are observing social distancing too. People have now started to understand the system so we will continue the window from 7 AM to 1 PM."

Rawat further informed that the Uttarakhand Sadan has been opened for Uttarakhandis stranded in Delhi. Arrangements for food and medical check ups have been facilitated for them there. Similarly, the Uttarakhand Bhawan in Mumbai has been opened for natives of Uttarakhand stranded due to the lockdown in Mumbai. Apart from this, the state government is going to recruit 500 doctors in the next couple of days. This will ensure

State to recruit 500 doctors within next couple of days: CM

Approval granted for medical colleges in Haridwar, Pithoragarh

PNS/Dehradun

Chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat has thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Health minister Dr Harsh Vardhan for swift approval granted for setting up of medical colleges in Haridwar and Pithoragarh. The approved cost for each of these medical colleges is Rs 325 crore. Under the central sponsored scheme, 10 per cent of the cost of establishing the medical colleges will be borne by the state government while 90 per cent of the cost will be borne by the Central government.

adequate number of doctors in the state. Further, the state government has provided one month life certificate relaxation to pensioners. A similar one-month extension has also been accorded for renewal of driving licenses.

Public co-operating in lockdown but strict action needed against loitering: CM

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

People of the State are now cooperating in observing the State-wide lockdown. In such a situation the administration must ensure that essential commodities and services are available conveniently to the public. At the same time, strict action should be taken against those found loitering outdoors without any valid reason. Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat said this while reviewing the COVID-19 situation in the state with senior officials on Saturday. Apart from this the CM also appealed the Bharatiya Janata Party workers to remain alert and exercise patience in view of the situation caused by the spread of novel coronavirus.

It is pertinent to mention here that Rawat has been monitoring the situation, arrangements and updates with senior officials of the state administration. On Saturday, while reviewing the situation, the CM said that those coming from outside the state should



be monitored constantly. Officials should also ensure that those ordered to remain in home quarantine should not step outdoors at all.

Social distancing must be observed strictly during the purchase of essential commodities. Though Uttarakhand is currently in the first stage of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is necessary to observe utmost alertness and precautions to prevent the situation from worsening. The

whole system involved in tackling the novel coronavirus situation must remain in the alert mode constantly, said the chief minister. The chief secretary Utpal Kumar Singh, director general of police Anil Kumar Raturi, principal secretary Manisha Panwar, secretaries Amit Negi, Dilip Jawalkar, Nitesh Jha and other officials were present in the meeting.

Meanwhile, the CM also asked the party workers to

remain alert and patient in these challenging times. He reiterated that any person suffering from cough, cold and fever should contact a doctor. Rawat said, "The nation is currently going through the COVID-19 epidemic. Prime minister Narendra Modi himself has addressed the nation twice in one week. The whole world is currently afflicted by this pandemic. This problem has just started in India but in a nation like ours

one can imagine how serious the situation can become considering the situation which nations like USA and Italy are in despite their various types of health facilities. Social distancing is the only way to prevent the situation from worsening. We have prohibited community prayers in mosques, temples, Gurudwaras and churches to ensure social distancing. Only the priests can conduct worship in such shrines for now. We should maintain social distancing and make others aware about the same."

Addressing the party office bearers he said that there are more than 11,000 booths. The booth level office bearers and party workers should check in the localities to ascertain that no poor or needy person sleeps on an empty stomach.

The Akhil Bharatiya Vidhyarthi Parishad has a very big structure.

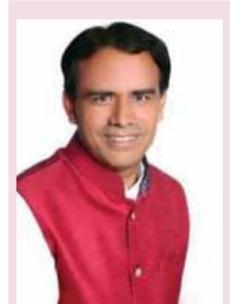
All such social organizations should help the administration in ensuring that the needy and poor are taken care of, stressed the CM.

Provide milk at doorstep of consumers: Dhan Singh

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The State Minister for higher education and dairy development, Dhan Singh Rawat has directed the officials that door to door supply of milk should be provided to the consumers. The Minister said this while undertaking a review meeting of the officials of the dairy development department at his residence on Saturday. The meeting was held to ensure the supply of milk in view of the lockdown of 21 days imposed to break the cycle of infection of COVID-19. The minister directed the officials that the mechanism of milk collection from the producers and distribution to consumers should remain unaffected by the lockdown. He also suggested that a control room should be setup at the directorate for the purpose.

In a measure aimed at providing relief to the producers, the Minister said that the special incentive would



The Min asks the officials to ensure that the mechanism of milk collection from the producers and distribution to consumers should remain unaffected by the lockdown

now provided by the cooperative milk federation. The incentive at present is being provided by the means of Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) to the producers. He said that the collection of milk should be increased and more and more milk producers should be included in the cooperative milk federation. Rawat said that the supply of cattle feed and silage to the milk producers

should be maintained and coordination with local administration should be done in case of any hindrance. The minister said that the surplus milk produced by the federations should be converted into MMP and white butter at the units of Meerut and Haryana so that they can be used for Anchal Amrit scheme when needed.

Duo booked for allegedly assaulting sanitation workers

PNS ■ HARIDWAR

The Roorkee Mayor and municipal officials reached the Roorkee civil line police station after sanitation workers of the Municipal Corporation of Roorkee (MCR) were allegedly manhandled by some residents. As part of measures to stall the spread of COVID-19, the MCR was undertaking sanitisation work in the Civil Line area here. Some members of a family allegedly started harassing and assaulting the sanitation workers with two of them being attacked. The police reached the site and brought one of the accused

assailants to the police station. Later, along with the mayor Gaurav Goyal, the municipal commissioner Nupur Verma and assistant municipal commissioner Chandrakant Bhatt reached the police station and demanded action against the culprits.

The Rural superintendent of police, Swapan Kishore Singh informed that Jadugar Road resident Subodh Chaudhary and his son Mohit had allegedly beaten two workers of the MCR. The workers had gone to sanitise the site when the duo allegedly beat them for not clearing a drain.

COVID-19 crisis: Many helping poor and needy

Many organisations and individuals have come forward to provide food and help to poor

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

At a time of the crisis precipitated by the spread of novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), human face of the society is also coming into fore. Many

individuals and social organisations are engaged in helping the poor affected by the lockdown of 21 days enforced to combat Coronavirus. The daily wage earners are one of the hardest hit by the lockdown as they are not able to get any work during this period. Thousands of such people are facing the problem in arranging two square meals a day. In Dehradun organisations like National Association for Parents and Students Rights (NAPSR), Mothers Angels Children Society (MAC), Jagatbandhu Sewa Trust, Amulya Jivan Sanstha and Dar -0E1- Akram educational society are providing cooked

food to about 500 people daily. While distributing cooked meals, the volunteers are strictly maintaining the necessary social distancing and also informing people about sanitizers they should adopt to combat the menace of Coronavirus. Apart from food, the volunteers are also distributing masks and sanitizers to the poor. The president of NAPSR, Arif Khan said that the food was provided to the needy at MDDA (ISBT), Turner road, Ajabpur and Ambedkar colony on Saturday. He said that large number of labourers and daily wage earners who are residents of other states have got stranded

in Dehradun. Many such people have started trekking back to their homes along with their families with no provision of food.

Arif added that the administration should make arrangements for return of these people to their homes. "Their safe return would also remove burden on the administration. The government should also distribute dry ration to the poor. Tomorrow we will cover the area around the Sahastadhara road to help the needy," said Arif.

At many places the policemen are providing food and other things to the destitute

and poor. A police officer was seen distributing dry ration to the poor near Rispana Bridge on Saturday.

"I am doing whatever little I can to help them," said the humble officer.

Many individuals are coming out to help the needy in their own ways. "I have asked my maid and driver to remain on leave till April 14.

I have given some advance salary to them and assured them their salary would not be deducted," said a defence colony resident.

On Saturday, the volunteers of 'Vichar, Ek Nai Soch' organisation distributed masks, sanitisers, fruit juice to

the police personnel, sanitation workers and other personnel involved in essential services. The president of the organisation Rakesh Bijalwan said that the police personnel, health workers and sanitation workers are corona warriors and they should be provided respect and safety.

The political parties are also asking their workers to help the poor during this time of need. On Saturday, the Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) chief Pritam Singh asked the party workers to help the poor in whatever manner they can. The BJP has also issued similar directive to its workers.

Online property tax submission in MCD rises due to lockdown

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The number of people submitting the property tax through the online mode has increased in the Municipal Corporation of Dehradun (MCD) as the state continues to observe a lockdown.

This year the MCD has collected more than ₹43 crore of property tax against its set target of ₹50 crore. So far, the corporation has extended the period of 20 per cent rebate six times in property tax as the extensions helped MCD to get more people to submit their taxes on time to benefit from the rebate.

Majority of the property tax payers submitted their respective amounts physically in the MCD office. The municipal officials had repeatedly appealed the citizens to pay the property tax conveniently online. However, at that time the online



submission of property tax hardly exceeded ₹1 lakh per day as the taxpayers generally preferred to submit the taxes in the corporation office.

However, in the past few days with the MCD first shutting its property tax office to prevent crowding and then with the lockdown being imposed, the

percentage of property tax submission through the online mode has increased in MCD. According to the MCD tax superintendent Dharmesh

Painuly, "The percentage of people submitting property tax through the online mode has increased by about 10 per cent." He added that due to the lockdown in the state, more people have started submitting the property tax online in which the percent of residential property taxpayers is more.

This month is apparently the last month for the submission of property tax but due to the threat of COVID-19 the campus of MCD is closed. Therefore, the Dehradun mayor Sunil Uniyal 'Gama' appealed the people to submit the property tax through online mode.

On being asked about the extension of date in the submission of property tax, 'Gama' said that for now people should keep depositing the tax online and decision in this regard will be announced soon.

Police arrest man for spreading misinformation on social media

PNS ■ HARIDWAR

On Saturday a video of a COVID-19 mock drill in Uttar Pradesh was shared on the social media by a Rishikesh resident claiming it was a clip of a COVID-19 patient being caught at Natraj Chowk in Rishikesh.

This misinformation was then circulated by many in Rishikesh and elsewhere. Taking cognisance of the video clip, a police team identified and arrested the person allegedly responsible for spreading the misinformation. Rishikesh police station senior sub inspector Omkant Bhushan informed this correspondent that 43 year old Rishikesh resident Manoj Kumar has been arrested and will be presented in the court.

The police appealed to the public of Rishikesh to verify



facts before believing and sharing any information or video clip on the social media. In case any misinformation or rumour is found to have been circulated on the social media,

immediate action will be taken and cases under relevant sections will be registered against the group administrator and person accused of spreading misinformation.

CM deposits money from personal account to relief fund

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

In view of efforts needed to tackle the situation resulting from the novel coronavirus pandemic, the chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat has deposited a cheque for Rs one lakh from his personal account in the CM relief fund. In addition to this, he has already approved a sum of Rs 15 lakh from his MLA local area development fund towards efforts for protection from the spread of novel coronavirus. It is pertinent to mention here that so far various elected



public representatives of both the BJP and Congress have allocated money from their MLA funds towards efforts being undertaken to tackle the situation resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Himachal CM takes stock of situation in wake of COVID-19

PNS ■ SHIMLA

Himachal Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Saturday held a video conference with all the Deputy Commissioners, Superintendents of Police and Chief Medical Officers of the State from Shimla to take stock of the situation in wake of curfew in the State due to outbreak of Corona epidemic.

He directed the officers that it should be ensured that there was no inconvenience to the people and sufficient essential commodities were made available to them during the relaxation period of curfew. He also asked the DCs that proper social distancing must be ensured between person to person during relaxation period of the curfew.

Thakur urged the people of

the State to purchase the essential commodities from the shops nearer to their homes by maintaining appropriate social distancing as it was the proper way to break the chain of corona virus. He said that only one person of a family should be allowed during relaxation period of curfew for taking essential commodities.

He directed the Deputy Commissioners to ensure that production in pharma industries was not affected as they were manufacturing several life saving drugs. He also asked the Deputy Commissioners to make adequate arrangements of food and shelter to the vulnerable sections of the society. He said that such people should be provided food and shelter for which school buildings could

He directed the Deputy Commissioners to ensure that production in pharma industries was not affected as they were manufacturing several life saving drugs

also be utilized.

Thakur asked all the DCs to ensure that inter and intra State exodus must be completely stopped for at least 4-5 days because this could prove very counterproductive and defeat the sole purpose of social distancing. He said that instead of this, the deputy commissioners must motivate

such people to remain stationed wherever they are and ensure proper arrangement for their food and shelter.

He said there were adequate number of ventilators in all the three medical colleges earmarked for treatment of Covid-19 virus, adding that sufficient number of PPE kits were also available in health institutions of the State.

The Chief Minister said that as many as 2409 people had come from the foreign countries to the State so far out of which 724 people had completed 28 days of surveillance period.

He said investigations of 29 persons for COVID-19 had been done today out of which 24 samples from Tanda Medical College were found negative and report of 5

samples collected in IGMC Shimla were also found negative.

He said that 179 persons had so far been investigated in the State for corona virus, adding that the COVID-19 positive person admitted in Tanda Medical College was found negative on Saturday.

MOVEMENT OF VEHICLES BRINGING ESSENTIAL ITEMS BEING MONITORED, SAYS CM

Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur said that movement of vehicles bringing essential items was being monitored regularly so that common people can get them easily. He said that in the border districts of Bilsapur, Chamba, Kangra, Sirmour, Solan and Una essential items were supplied.

Thakur said control rooms

in the State were monitoring the movement of vehicles round the clock to ensure that there was no dearth of essential items in the state.

He said Deputy Commissioners have been directed to take the help of NGOs and four thousand trained volunteers of disaster management to tackle COVID-19.

Thakur said that there was ample stock of eatables such as wheat, rice, pulses, sugar, edible oils, kerosene, salt etc in the state and directions have been given to the Food and Civil Supplies Corporation to get more stock from other states so that there was no scarcity of these items in future. He urged the people not to do panic purchasing as there was more than adequate stock of essential items in the state.

Ranchiites stay at home as lockdown finds more buyers

GOVT EXTENDS HELP TO LABOURERS

PNS ■ RANCHI

Streets in Ranchi were relatively emptier on Saturday in comparison with the first three days of the lockdown – an indication that awareness about the gravity of the situation and the importance of social isolation was gradually finding buyers in the State capital.

Vegetable markets on Saturday were also less crowded, and even the ones present at the markets maintained safe distance from

one another. Vegetable sellers at Morhabadi Bazar said that Bazar was bustling on Thursday and Friday. However, the number of customers reduced considerably on Saturday. "People were panicking on the first three days of the lockdown. Maybe that is why the vegetable markets and grocery shops were overcrowded," said Banshi Mahato, a vegetable vendor at Morhabadi Ground.

The District Administration has tightened the noose around citizens who tend to violate the lockdown norms and move out of their houses without any genuine purpose. Police personnel deployed across the city dealt with such people with an iron fist on Saturday and ensured that commoners do not move

out of their houses. Rakesh Pandey, a police personnel deployed at Harmu Chowk said, "People who have a valid reason to come out of their houses – like buying grocery, medicines or vegetables – are allowed to cross this square. On the first day of the lockdown, many youths came out on bikes, and had to use mild force to force them indoors," he said.

While many activists are raising concerns over the future of daily wage labourers, the Government has issued phone numbers of different IAS officers to address problems of labourers returning from different States of India. According to sources working closely with daily wage labourers, the COVID-19 pandemonium has led to

return of more than one lakh labourers from across the country to Jharkhand. The same facility is also available for Jharkhand labourers who are stuck in other States during the lockdown, a press communiqué from the Government said.

Although rail services have come to a standstill during the 21-day lockdown, South Eastern Railways on Saturday sanitized bogies of different passenger trains in a bid to ensure that they are safe for passengers when rail services resume, a press communiqué from South Eastern Railways said.

Railway staff was also provided hand sanitizers and masks on Saturday. Different offices at Railway Stations in Ranchi and Hatia were also

sanitized on Saturday, sources said.

Meanwhile, hospitals remained vacant on Saturday. Barring a few patients visiting the Outdoor Patient Department (OPD), there was no major rush at any of the Government hospitals.

The fear of getting infected by Coronavirus also kept commoners away from private hospitals in the State capital. The Government has set up isolation wards in all Government hospitals as well as some private hospitals in Jharkhand.

However, no patients has tested positive for Coronavirus in the State so far. Only suspected patients are being kept in the isolation wards across Jharkhand, health officials said.

Distressed Chandigarh family threatens to commit suicide, cops rush to help

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Timely intervention of Chandigarh police saved the lives of a three-member family of a daily wage, living in Mauli Jagran area of the City as they were going to commit suicide due to financial constraint. The family members decided to take the extreme step after they were left with no money for food, said the police.

Following country-wide lockdown to halt the spread of the coronavirus outbreak, male member of this family who was daily wage could not get work for the last few days.

Police said information was received through Control Room, Chandigarh that one

The family members decided to take the extreme step after they were left with no money for food, said the police

lady along with her husband and kid aged four years were going to commit suicide due to her financial condition as they had no money for food and medicine for treatment of their four year old child.

SHO Maulijagran with DSP East, Dilsher Singh Chandel reached the spot, where lady Ramdevi, wife of Ranjit Kumar, resident of Vikas

Nagar, Mauli Jagran, Chandigarh age about 27 years along with her husband and child four years met and disclosed her financial condition and why she was going to commit suicide.

The police officials immediately arranged food for them and also provided financial help to the family for their medicine. She was then sent back to her home. "She will be kept under surveillance through beat staff", said Chandel while talking to the Pioneer. He said Chandigarh administration is committed to provide all sort of assistance to the citizens during lockdown. At many places, food packets are distributed among poor people in the City, he added.

Ranchi Mayor donate 5 months salary, ₹5 crore from civic funds

PNS ■ RANCHI

In an attempt to boost morale of people to fight against Corona virus epidemic, Ranchi Mayor Asha Lakra on Saturday announced that the municipal body will provide Rs 1 crore from the Civic Amenities Fund and she has also donated her 5 months salary to Ranchi Municipal Corporation (RMC).

Speaking to media after holding review meeting on sanitizing preparation, Lakra appealed to the people of the State Capital especially the elite, to come forward to help the Civic Body in the hour of

crisis. The Mayor said that being the Capital of the State, all the centers of the Government are here. "In such a situation, the Government should have come forward and give fund to the Corporation but it is not arranging a fund even after 20 days is not right. After the lockdown was imposed, the corporation was constantly trying to ensure that the Government would arrange funds immediately, but nothing like this happened. In such a situation, the danger of cleanliness has come in front of the Capital," she added. Elaborating future plan

Lakra said that the changes will be made in the cleaning system of Ranchi. "The entire city will be cleaned by dividing it into five zones. Additional laborers will be employed for this. Sanitization should be done regularly in all areas of the City so that somehow the virus can be dealt with properly," she added. Apart from this, the Mayor also instructed for regular cleaning of drains, spraying of bleaching powder throughout the city. She also directed the officials of the civic body to prepare a list of laborers residing in all the wards who do not have any food arrangement.

Capt urges Finance Min to release ₹2,088Cr GST compensation

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh on Saturday sought urgent intervention by the Union Finance Minister to mitigate the crisis caused by COVID-19 outbreak in the state, including immediate release of GST compensation arrears of Rs 2088 crore as well as deferment of instalments of Industrial and Crop loans by the Commercial Banks.

In a letter, that followed a telephonic conversation, the Chief Minister sought from Nirmla Sitharaman some additional urgent steps to mitigate the crisis caused by the outbreak of COVID-19 global pandemic. The Union Finance

Minister had earlier called up the Chief Minister, who subsequently sent her a detailed letter listing out certain important proposals to help out the state in this critical time, according to an official spokesperson.

In addition to the Punjab-specific GST compensation arrears, the Chief Minister proposed that the balance GST compensation due may be released with other States.

In his letter, Capt Amarinder further proposed that the Centre should ask the RBI to raise the ways and means advances for all States to tide over the shortfall in receipts. He also suggested that the Government of India may raise the borrowing limit of

States under the FRBM Act from 3% to 4%.

In addition to deferment of instalments of Industrial loans, the Chief Minister has asked that Commercial Banks should defer loan instalments for Agriculture/Crop loans, which the Punjab Government had already done for the State Cooperative Banks. Further, in line with the initiative taken by the State Government with respect to Cooperative Banks, he has also sought waiver of three months' interest on Agricultural/ Crop loans by Commercial Banks.

Referring to the special insurance already announced by the Union Finance Minister for Health Workers, the Chief

Minister has asked for a one-time special insurance on similar lines also for sanitary workers and police personnel, as they too are frontline warriors in the fight against COVID-19. He has also sought Grant of Rs. 300 crore for health infrastructure and personnel for fighting COVID-19.

Given the delay in harvesting of Wheat already announced by the state government, the Chief Minister has asked for bonus to farmers for delayed procurement of wheat to incentivise social distancing and prevent over-crowding in Mandis.

In another key suggestion, the Chief Minister has proposed doubling of the

component of 25% funds under Centrally-Sponsored Schemes that can be used as flexi funds for State specific needs, including for mitigation/restoration activities in case of natural calamities as per Ministry of Finance O.M. of 6th September 2016. The component of 25% flexi funds may be raised to 50% and also be fully funded (100%) by Government of India as a one-time measure in 2020-21, he proposed.

The Chief Minister requested the Union Finance Minister to consider these proposals favourably in overall national interest to help mitigate the crisis caused by the unforeseen and exceptional situation.

272 in isolation wards across Jharkhand

73,000 travelers in home-quarantine

PNS ■ RANCHI

At least 272 suspects of COVID-19 were admitted in isolation wards of various hospitals across Jharkhand as of Saturday, an official communiqué from the National Health Mission (NHM) said. On the other hand, a whopping 73,000 odd emigrants with travel history to different affected States in India were kept in home-quarantine across Jharkhand, it added.

While Jharkhand is among the few States that have not reported even a single case of Coronavirus, doctors and health workers here have collected samples of at least 179 patients so far and 175 of them have tested negative. The lab test reports of the remaining four suspects are awaited, NHM officials said.

Besides the 73,000 travelers on home-quarantine and 272 at hospitals, the State has also maintained surveillance on 911 passengers – this mostly includes people who have traveled from foreign countries, sources in NHM said. Out of the 911 passengers under surveillance, 163 have completed their observation period of 28 and came out asymptomatic, health officials said.

The number of travelers identified in Jharkhand witnessed an over 50 per cent increase in 48 hours or so. The number of such "emigrants"



reported on Thursday was 45,000 and it rose to 73,000 on Saturday – a pattern that indicates that many residents of other States have traveled to Jharkhand after the Coronavirus outbreak, officials from the Health Department said.

On Saturday, health workers here collected samples of 26 suspects and the lab test reports of 22 of them came out negative, the NHM said in an official statement issued on Saturday evening. Some doctors have also raised concerns over the lack of testing facilities in Jharkhand. They said that the lack of testing could be a reason for no reportage of positive cases.

The President of Indian Medical Association's (IMA) Jharkhand Chapter has also written to the health secretary, Nitin Madan Kulkarni, here raising concern over the testing procedure followed in Jharkhand. In his letter, he

No new coronavirus patient reported in Punjab on Saturday

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

No new case of coronavirus was reported from Punjab on Saturday, a Bulletin of the state government said.

In another positive development, the state's first case -- of an NRI belonging to Hoshiarpur -- was discharged after being cured. The state has seen one death of an elderly man, who too has a travel history to Germany via Italy.

"All other 36 cases are stable and close contacts of all the positive cases have been put under quarantine and surveillance," the bulletin of the government said.

As per the Punjab Health Department bulletin, samples of close contacts and high-risk cases are being collected and sent to designated labs for testing. Teams are working for surveillance.

SBS Nagar saw the highest number of 19 coronavirus patients, followed by Mohali and Hoshiarpur districts with six each, Jalandhar five and one each in Amritsar and Ludhiana districts.

The bulletin said swab tests of 264 patients have been awaited, while 596 patients tested negative out of total 898 samples collected, which amounts to 4.2 per cent positivity.

The state on March 9 tested the first positive case for the coronavirus. The man returned to Amritsar from Italy's Milan via Delhi on

March 4 along with his two family members. The patient belongs to Hoshiarpur town and has been hospitalised in the Government Medical College in Amritsar along with his son.

COVID-19 CASES RISE TO 20 IN HARYANA

The number of Coronavirus cases in Haryana increased to 20 on Saturday, with a person testing positive for the disease in Faridabad, the health department said.

The total number of positive cases from Faridabad has reached three, as per the department's bulletin. The number of positive cases reported from Gurgaon stands at 10. Four cases have been reported from Panipat and one each from Palwal, Panchkula and Sonapat.

The test reports of 126 samples is still awaited while 430 samples were found negative, according to the bulletin.

As per government officials, so far, samples of 574 persons have been taken in Haryana. Out these, 20 were positive and reports of 430 persons were negative.

According to official, out of 11,904 travellers, 11,259 with travel history to coronavirus-hit countries have been put under home isolation. 185 persons have been currently hospitalised in the State, as per the bulletin.

Curfew passes in Punjab through Cova App

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

People in Punjab can now get their curfew passes for emergencies, report mass gatherings, know home quarantine patients and foreign returned travellers, on the COVA App, which will also soon provide facility to request for groceries and other essentials, as well as consultation with doctors.

Several states have adopted the unique Corona Virus Alert (COVA) app, which is underway for implementation in two provinces in Canada. The App was launched earlier this month to disseminate official information about COVID-19 pandemic.

The App, launched by Punjab Government along with Digital Punjab Team, is available on Android PlayStore and iOS AppStore. As of March 28th, it has more than 4.5 Lakh user registrations and more than 20,000 views of the dashboard per day. The application is available in English, Hindi and Punjabi.

While the App is up and running in Haryana, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh, work on adoption of the App is in progress in Manipur, Meghalaya, MP, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Uttarakhand, Delhi and Leh, according to Vini Mahajan, Additional Chief Secretary, Department of Governance Reforms. A total of 11 State Governments have requested access to the COVA Application and dashboard for their respective states and



districts, she said.

The application aims to sensitize people and share with them protective and preventive measures that need to be adopted. The application also informs citizens of government advisories and notifications related to the matter and encourages them to check for symptoms effectively.

Several new features have been added to the App, according to Vini Mahajan. These include Covid-19 Dashboard, Government Notifications, Audio Video awareness, Search of foreign returned travellers, Chat using BOT, issuing of Curfew Pass, Reporting mass gathering, marking oneself as Home Quarantined and Geo Fencing of Home Quarantined. Approved applications for Curfew shall have an E-Pass sent to the registered phone number.

The Admin Portal, which lies with the district administration and Government Headquarters, offers various reports with the collected information for monitoring, assessing the situation and taking necessary actions. The Dashboard shows thematic maps of confirmed, suspected and home quarantined cases, while for home quarantined citizens, there are features such as geo tagging to track movement beyond premises.

Monitoring of home quarantined individuals is done in such a way that the dashboard alerts the district administration if the person leaves his premises, without permission. Updating and managing information of registered patients, as well as management and action on reported mass gatherings, are also available on the App.

Be prepared, PM tells AYUSH professionals



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Maintaining that the country must be ready to use the entire healthcare workforce to meet the Covid-19 challenge, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday asked Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy (AYUSH) professionals to be in all readiness so that if the need arises, help from private doctors connected with alternative medicine system may be sought by the Government.

Currently, there are 7,99,879 AYUSH professionals from various streams across the States. It has been observed that Indian rural health system is totally dependent on ayush practitioners and Government hospitals.

The National Health Policy 2017 has already advocated mainstreaming the potential of AYUSH systems within a pluralistic system of Integrative healthcare.

Interacting with AYUSH professionals, he also underlined the importance of countering and fact-checking unsubstantiated claims of AYUSH having cure for the disease. He asked AYUSH scientists, ICMR, CSIR and other research organisations to come

together for evidence-based research.

Interacting with AYUSH professionals from around the country through video conferencing, the Prime Minister said that there role has increased manifold in the ongoing efforts to tackle COVID-19.

He also observed that the network of AYUSH practitioners is spread throughout the length and breadth of the country and "it is imperative for them to utilise this network, while working according to WHO guidelines, to spread the message of good practices which need to be adopted in the efforts to control the spread of the virus."

Last week, the Union Cabinet had approved the inclusion of AYUSH Health and Wellness Centre (AYUSH HWC) component of Ayushman Bharat in the National AYUSH Mission (NAM). It aimed at establishing a holistic wellness model based on AYUSH principles and practices focusing on preventive, promotive, curative, rehabilitative and palliative healthcare by integration with the existing public health care system.

Modi also praised the AYUSH Ministry in promoting yoga at home to de-stress the mind and strengthen the body during this difficult phase.

Modi also suggested that AYUSH medicine producers

Modi interacts with Chhaya, frontline warrior against corona

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Prime Minister also interacted with Chhaya, a nurse of Pune's Naidu hospital, to applaud frontline corona warriors like her and a medical student from Kashmir, Nizam, who was rescued from Wuhan, to know his experience and take feedback about the Government's assistance to him and 60 other students along with him.

could utilise their resources towards producing essential items like sanitisers which are in high demand and exhorted them to utilise the platform of telemedicine to reach out to the public and generate constant awareness to fight the pandemic. He also highlighted the importance of enforcing social distancing with full vigour to counter the spread of the pandemic.

The AYUSH practitioners also lauded the Prime Minister for leading the country's fight against COVID-19 and talked about the impact of these traditional practices towards boosting immunity.

All BJP MPs to release ₹1 cr each from their MPLAD fund: Nadda

DEEPAK K UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

BJP president J P Nadda on Saturday announced that all party MPs will release ₹1 crore from their annual development fund to the Central relief fund to fight coronavirus pandemic even as he, through a video-conferencing, spoke to State BJP presidents of West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka and reviewed party's programme to feed five crore people daily.

Nadda, who announced BJP parliamentarians' contribution of ₹1 crore through MPLADS (Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme) fund, also said that all party MPs and MLAs will donate their one month salary as well towards the country's fight against the pandemic.

"All MPs & MLAs of Bharatiya Janata Party will donate their one month remuneration/salary to the central relief fund to support the fight against Covid-19. All MPs of BJP will release Rs 1 crore from their MPLADS fund to the central relief fund in support to fight against Covid-19," he said in his tweet.

The party at present has 386 MPs — 303 in Lok Sabha and 83 in Rajya Sabha. An MP gets ₹ 5 crore every year as part of the MPLADS.

Nadda through videoconferencing reviewed party's cooked food distribution programme by speaking to state

presidents, General Secretaries, senior office bearers, MPs, MLAs and district presidents of West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, and sought them to make the food distribution a success. He said not a single person should be left hungry "in this hour of crisis".

BJP General Secretary (Organization) B L Santosh was present during the meeting.

Nadda asked BJP workers to help out administration of respective states in the conduct of transportation and enforcement of lockdown as also assist the people who are self-quarantined. BJP has an estimated 11 crore of workers and is thus also recognized as the largest party in the world. A week before the lockdown, BJP had cancelled its all programmes across the country.

BJP president appreciated union health ministry's establishment of a task force, purchase order of 40,000 new ventilator, five lakh antibody kit through ICMR and seven lakh RNA kit and described it as positive step. Modi-government has made provision of ₹15,000 crore to deal with COVID-19.

Nadda highlighted Prime Minister's "statesmanship" during the crisis and his meetings with every section of society and in this series recalled his videoconferencing with the editors of print and electronic media as also with RJs (radio jockeys).

BRO personnel working hard to replace 'Daporijo bridge'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Notwithstanding the threat of COVID-19, the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) personnel are working relentlessly to completely replace Daporijo bridge (430 feet Multi-Span Bailey Bridge), the only lifeline of Upper Subansiri district, Arunachal Pradesh to restore Lines of Communication for all 451 villages and security forces located along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) facing China.

The armed forces have also activated isolation wards near the LAC and the Line of Control (LOC) facing Pakistan to deal with any case of the pandemic. The Army may also recall retired personnel with medical expertise if a need arises to shore up resources.

Giving details of the BRO undertaking the mission to construct the bridge, officials said here on Saturday more than 100 personnel of 23 BRTF/Project Arunank, on special request from the local administration, is working in full swing in spite of the dilapidated state of the existing bridge.

They said the BRO is committed to opening this vital line of communication by planned date, with all necessary precautionary measures. This bridge will ensure uninterrupted supplies like food and ammunition to the soldiers deployed on the LAC besides catering to the needs of the local population, sources said.

The BRO is the lead construction agency to build strategically important roads all along the LOC and LAC in inhospitable terrain and inclement weather. At present, the BRO is entrusted with the responsibility of constructing 72 strategic roads mostly in states having the LAC facing China.

Given this backdrop, the BRO in the northern part of the country is presently engaged in snow clearance operations on Manali - Leh axis, day and night despite inclement weather and COVID 19 threat to provide relief to Lahaul valley and Ladakh in an earlier time frame. Presently, Rohtang Pass and Baralachala Pass are being cleared by four snow clearance teams. This is the first time, BRO personnel were inducted by air to Sarchu to carry out snow clearance of mighty Baralachala Pass from Sarchu side.

In a connected issue, Director General Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS) Lt General Anup Banerji said here isolation wards at peripheral hospitals were activated at Army formations along LOC and LAC.

Moreover, "Intensive information, education and communication campaigns are going on for serving personnel. Leave extension of those on leave as well as curtailment of leave to bare minimum have been imposed. Segregation facilities have been set up to observe troops already back

from leave from various States," he said.

As regards the ongoing efforts to fight the pandemic, he said 28 Service Hospitals were earmarked as COVID hospitals for managing purely Corona virus cases. This will include Armed Forces as well as civilian patients transferred from state health authorities, in case their capacity is overwhelmed.

Banerji also said as of now, there are five hospitals across Army, Navy and Air Force which can carry out COVID test. These include Army Hospital Research and Referral, Delhi; Command Hospital Air Force, Bangalore and Armed Forces Medical College, Pune; Command Hospital (Central Command) Lucknow; Command Hospital (Northern Command) Udhampur. Six more hospitals are being equipped shortly with the resources to begin testing.

On the availability of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), the AFMS chief said it is a challenge at national as well as global level, adding that advisory for rational usage of PPE has been issued to the Services.

"The AFMS is presently geared up with adequate PPEs for use in our hospitals. Additional procurement is also being planned to tide over crisis foreseen during the coming weeks and months since the Armed Forces have been directed to augment medical resources for the civil health set up also," he added.

Min urges corporate, biz houses based along highways to help migrant workers on move



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Ravishankar Prasad on Saturday said he would advise corporate and business houses, which have their factories or premises along the highways or roadsides, to provide help to migrant workers on the move in the wake of coronavirus shutdown.

"If any India corporates have factories or premises along roads in Delhi, UP or Bihar, I would advise them to make arrangement for their food and shelter after isolating them," said Prasad even as he pointed out that the

Government was reviewing the situation on a daily basis.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has tasked all in the government to take a specific responsibility and spoken to all Chief Ministers and bodies of pharmacist and doctors, he said adding constant supervision is being made as to how masks, ventilators or other medical equipments are being purchased.

On why the Government did not envisage workers' exodus and make arrangements while it airlifted Indians from abroad, Prasad said if workers had stayed back provisioning for food would have been

made. "If you go out, you are inviting trouble... Long walk of 500 km is not acceptable," he said.

The Minister said he has personally spoken to 19 District magistrates and SPs in Bihar and has been told by them that all migrant workers who have come from abroad and outside Bihar have been quarantined.

Prasad said the Uttar Pradesh Government has opened community kitchens at different places to provide support to labourers on the roadsides. He said all States including Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh were cooperating and working in unison.

Online education on rise since corona outbreak

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With people and students staying indoors ever since the beginning of the country wide lockdown, there has been an increase of users on the digital platforms of education.

According to the HRD Ministry, the digital education initiatives have registered an increase in users and HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank said that the access to the National Online Education Platform SWAYAM and other Digital Initiatives has tripled in the last one week.

The increase in the users is also because of the provision of free access. Earlier the courses on SWAYAM were time bound and students needed to register in advance.

The SWAYAM courses can now be viewed by any learner free of cost without any registration. About 50,000 people have accessed SWAYAM since March 23, 2020. This is over and above the 25 lakh students/learners who are already enrolled in the 571 courses of the January 2020 semester of SWAYAM. SWAYAM has about 1900 courses which can be accessed by people in over 60 countries. The videos of the SWAYAM Prabha DTH TV channels are viewed by around 50,000 people every day. The National Digital Library is now being accessed by about 43,000 people daily which is more than double of the usual number of persons accessing it. The Education portals of NCERT like Diksha, e-pathasala, NROER and NIOS and the other ICT initiatives like Robotics education (e-Yantra), Open Source Software for Education (FOSSEE), Virtual experiments (Virtual Labs) and Learning programming (Spoken tutorial) are also experiencing very large access rates.

National Book Trust too has opened for free downloads of several titles in the last one week.

Human rights bodies ask police to ensure marginalised are not mistreated during lockdown

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Amnesty International and the Human Rights Watch (HRW) on Saturday urged police forces in the country to act with restraint while maintaining law and order during the coronavirus lockdown.

The lockdown has left millions stranded, struggling to search for food and water, Amnesty International India (AII) executive director Avinash Kumar said in a statement. "Unfortunately for these people, a state machinery has become a larger threat than the COVID-19 pandemic," he said.

This is "unfortunate" and the Indian Government must

ensure that "insensitivity and brute force be replaced by people-friendly measures in battling the pandemic," he said.

Kumar said India should respect and protect the rights of those under quarantine and ensure that their basic needs are met, including adequate shelter, food, water and sanitation.

HRW South Asia director Meenakshi Ganguly too urged Indian authorities to ensure that everyone has access to food and medical care, and that the poor and marginalised are not mistreated or stigmatised.

"The Indian Government's responsibility to protect its people from the outbreak should not come at the cost of

human rights violations," she said.

Tens of thousands of out-of-work migrant workers are stranded with rail and bus services shut down in the country. "Police actions to punish those violating orders have reportedly resulted in abuses against people in need," she alleged.

Indian police should be ordered to act with restraint while enforcing the lockdown. In several states, photos and videos show police beating people who are trying to get essential supplies. In West Bengal,

police allegedly beat a 32-year-old man to death, after he stepped out of his home to get milk," she said.

Cong forms task force to mitigate people's sufferings



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday constituted a task force to intensify efforts of party-ruled States to deal with the situation due to COVID-19 and help mitigate the sufferings of people.

The task force includes former Union Ministers P Chidambaram, Jairam Ramesh, M Veerappa Moily and Tamradhwaj Sahu.

A statement from the AICC said that the Congress president Sonia Gandhi has constituted a task force to intensify the efforts of Congress-ruled State Governments to deal with the situation prevailing on account of COVID-19, in a coordinated manner.

The members of the task force will start work immediately with the respective Congress-ruled State Governments to ensure that the daily distress and suffering of people is mitigated, the statement said.

"P Chidambaram, Jairam Ramesh, Tamradhwaj Sahu and Veerappa Moily, i.e. the chairmen of respective manifesto implementation committees in the Congress-ruled States will be its members," the Congress communication added.

The Congress has been criticising the Centre for not initiating enough measures to mitigate the sufferings of the poor and marginalised, who are facing hardships in view of the countrywide lockdown declared by the Prime Minister.

UP to release 11K prisoners for 8 weeks

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh Government ordered the release of around 11,000 convicts and undertrials housed in 72 jails of the State to ease overcrowding and thereby prevent the spread of coronavirus.

A high-level committee headed by senior judge of Allahabad High Court, Justice Pankaj Kumar Jaiswal, and two

members, Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Awanish Awasthi and DG (Jails) Anand Kumar made the recommendation to the Government which was approved by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday.

Of the prisoners to be released are 8,500 under-trials and 2,500 convicts.

Earlier, the Supreme Court had ordered all states to con-

sider the release of convicts on parole, whose punishment was not of more than seven years, so that the jails could be saved from overcrowding to prevent the spread of virus among prisoners.

As per officials, undertrials would be given bail for eight weeks on personal bonds while the convicts would be given parole for eight weeks in a similar manner.

Punjab, Haryana farmers explore 'sell-from-farm' option to neutralise 'corona effect'

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Given the mass exodus of labourers due to the nationwide lockdown, farmers of Punjab and Haryana are exploring the option of 'off-market' sale or what they call it as 'sell-from-farm'. For its part, the Maharashtra Government has asked farmers to form groups to sell vegetables and other essential items directly to consumers during the lockdown and to allow farmers to ferry the produce. Presently, 1,600-1,800 wholesale mandis has started func-

tioning partially and fully despite the shortage of labourers. There are 6,900 mandis in the country.

Farmers across the country are in panic because the ripening fruits and vegetables will rot because mandi operations have almost stopped, and labour cannot reach farms due to transport bottlenecks. Marketing of produce is now becoming a challenge for the farmers. Officials of Haryana Agriculture Department said that farmers who usually sell their crops through an established supply chain that was set

up by the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee's (APMCs) have adopted a method to avoid market yards and sell their produces from their doorstep. Several farmers have started to sell their products from the farm and started supplying through their tractors.

According to farmers, losses will mount because it is harvest time for grapes, watermelons, bananas, muskmelon, chana, cotton, chillies, turmeric, jeera, coriander, onion and potato. Farmers are more concerned about dispose of their veg-

etables and fruits that is perishable.

Yudhvir Singh of Bharatiya Kisan Sangh, claimed that most of the APMCs are closed at all major markets. "There are restrictions regarding the movement also. So in a scenario like this, the farmers have no option but to sit at home with their produce lying on the field. Therefore, more and more farmers are now resorting to this mode of trade because they need money immediately so that by March end, they can repay their loan obligations," Singh added.

Binod Pandey of All India Kisan Mahasanghan said that at a time when APMCs are closed and supply chains are disrupted, the off-market sales model may rescue many farmers, who are often found off-guard and are vulnerable in times of natural calamities or market-driven fluctuations.

"Therefore, more and more farmers are now resorting to this mode of trade because they need money immediately so that by March end, they can repay their loan obligations," Pandey added.

Officials of agriculture

ministry said that in Haryana, most of the APMCs have been closed. Some of them are opened but facing uphill tasks due to shortage of labourers.

In Gujarat, There was confusions as grain APMCs has been told to open markets on Thursday, but on Friday said that they had spoken to all farmers and traders, with all of them having agreed to resume on April

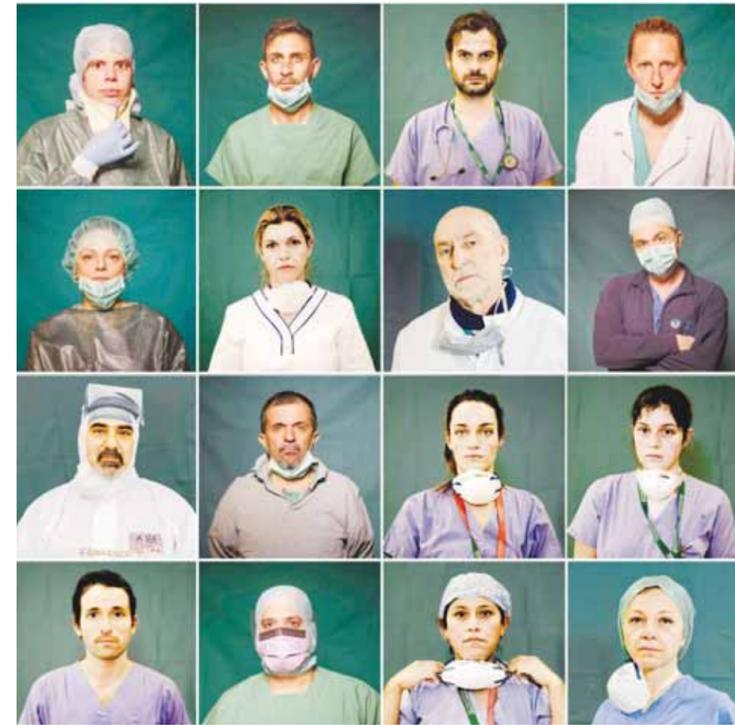
2. In Mumbai, several restrictions have been imposed on mandis to avoid gatherings. However, most mandis dealing in essentials have started func-

tioning. Grain market, vegetables, onion-potato all have resumed operations with staggered timing for loading, unloading and traders.

According to officials of Ministry of Agriculture, over 2,000 wholesale mandis have started functioning after the nationwide lockdown across the country. In Azadpur mandi, which is Asia's largest subzi mandi also are opened. There is no shortage of vegetables and fruits but there is no labour. Several trucks of farmers come to Azadpur on Saturday.

The agriculture ministry says there is no scarcity of vegetables and fruits in mandis. The grain mandis get activated during the time of harvest. Right now, the focus is on vegetable and fruit mandis. To normalise supply in major cities, the Centre has asked Mother Dairy's Safal vegetable outlets in Delhi, Safal Bangla retail outlets in Kolkata, Hopcoms retail outlets in Bengaluru and similar outlets in Chennai and Mumbai to monitor movement of supplies and coordinate with local administration.

ITALY'S MEDICAL HEROES



A combo of portraits of Italian doctors and nurses taken during a break or at the end of their shifts in Rome, Bergamo and Brescia, Italy. The intensive care doctors and nurses on the front lines of the coronavirus pandemic in Italy are often almost unrecognizable behind their masks, scrubs, gloves and hairnets their only barrier to contagion. Associated Press photographers fanned out to photograph them during rare breaks from hospital intensive care units in the Lombardy region cities of Bergamo and Brescia, and in Rome. In each case, doctors, nurses and paramedics posed in front of forest green surgical drapes, the bland backdrop of their sterile wards

Tech volunteers use 3D printers to make crucial virus masks

Edinburgh: 3D printer owners across Britain have answered the call of health leaders by teaming up to produce thousands of face visors to protect medical workers from being infected with coronavirus. The project, known as 3DCrowdUK, launched on Monday after medical institutions raised the alarm about potential equipment shortages due to the closure of supply factories affected by the virus. "We are basically getting all the people around the country who have 3D printers and we're enlisting them in our project to create face shields for the NHS," digital artist and 3D printer owner Seb Lee-Delisle told AFP. "We literally set it up on Monday and by now we have got hundreds and hundreds of people involved." The shortage of masks arose after factories in China closed due to the spread of the coronavirus in January and February. The masks are easy to assemble. Once the 3D printers have created the headband, a plastic film is placed on the front and elastic attached the back to hold it in place. AFP

Clashes erupt as people try to enter virus-hit Hubei

Beijing: In a rare display of public anger in China, dozens of people in central Hubei province, the epicentre of the coronavirus outbreak till recently, attacked official vehicles after they were stopped from crossing a bridge and travel to neighbouring Jiangxi after the lifting of the lockdown. Hubei province with over 56 million people was kept under lockdown from January 23 as part of aggressive measures to bring down COVID-19 cases which rapidly spread in the area. Videos on Chinese social media on Friday showed unprecedented scenes of police from Hubei and Jiangxi clashing on the bridge connecting the two provinces over barricades erected from stopping Hubei people from moving out over fears of coronavirus spreading. Policemen from both sides argued over how to verify if people were allowed to enter Jiangxi, according to local media reports. It was a major relief for millions of people in Hubei province, when the Chinese Government which kept it under lockdown lifted the restrictions on travel. The Government will permitted people from the province to travel if they hold a green health code, meaning no contact with any infected or suspected COVID-19 cases. PTI

Virus prevention measures turn violent in parts of Africa

AP ■ JOHANNESBURG
Police fired tear gas at a crowd of Kenyan ferry commuters as the country's first day of a coronavirus curfew slid into chaos. Elsewhere, officers were captured in mobile phone footage whacking people with batons. Virus prevention measures have taken a violent turn in parts of Africa as countries impose lockdowns and curfews or seal off major cities. Health experts say the virus' spread, though still at an early stage on the continent, resembles that of Europe, adding to widespread anxiety. Cases across Africa were set to jump above 4,000 on Saturday. Abuses of the new measures by authorities are an immediate concern. PTI

Wall Street tumbles after US tops world in virus cases

FIANS ■ NEW YORK
US stocks ended significantly lower amid the fast-growing spread of coronavirus in the country. On Friday, the Dow Jones Industrial Average slumped 915.39 points, or 4.06 per cent, to 21,636.78. The S&P 500 decreased 88.60 points, or 3.37 per cent, to 2,541.47. The Nasdaq Composite Index shed 295.16 points, or 3.79 per cent, to 7,502.38. Xinhua news agency reported. 10 of the 11 primary S&P 500 sectors traded lower, with energy down 6.93 per cent, becoming the worst-performing group. Utilities climbed 0.53 per cent, the only gainer among the sectors. The US became the country with the most COVID-19 cases worldwide on Thursday, according to Johns Hopkins University. As of 2 pm Eastern Time on Friday (1800 GMT), there were 94,238 confirmed cases in the United States, with 1,438 deaths, data from the university's Centre for Systems Science and Engineering showed. A shocking number of Americans applied for jobless benefits last week due to the coronavirus outbreak. US initial jobless claims, a rough way to measure layoffs, were registered at 3,283,000 in the week ending March 21, an increase of 3,001,000 from the previous week's revised level, the Department of Labor reported Thursday. The reading easily crushed the previous record rise of 695,000 in October 1982. Following a Senate approval earlier this week, the US House of Representatives on Friday passed a US \$2 trillion COVID-19 stimulus package by voice vote, sending it to President Donald Trump for signature. PTI

Pak anti-graft body summons Sharif in 34-year-old case

Lahore: Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who is set to undergo a heart procedure next week in London, has been summoned by 34-yr-old anti-graft body to appear before it on March 31 for allegedly misusing his power in a land case when he was chief minister of Punjab province in 1986. PTI

PUBLIC NOTICE
ICICI Bank Branch office: ICICI Bank Ltd, Shal tower Plot no 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bag, New Delhi -110055
Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank hereby inform that all scheduled auctions, to be held for the period between April 1, 2020 till April 14, 2020 under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 stands postponed until further notice, due to unprecedented outbreak of Corona Virus (COVID-19). The list of auction that has postponed given hereunder:

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s)/Co Borrowers/ Guarantors	Details of the Secured asset (s) with known encumbrances, if any	Scheduled Date & Time of Auction
1.	Satyaveer Singh (Borrower), Suman (Co-Borrower), LBDEL00001386142	Flat No. 1, 1st Floor, Plot No. S-2, Block-A, Shalimar Garden Extension-2, Ghaziabad (UP)- 201002 Area of Property- 600 Sq Feet, Types of Property: Residential Flat	April 09, 2020, From 12:00 PM onwards

Dated: 28-03-2020
Place : Delhi/NCR
Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

UJVN LIMITED
(An Uttarakhand Govt. Enterprises)
H.O.: UJVNL, Maharni Singh, GIS Road, Dehradun -248006. CIN No. UJ49101UR2001SC025866
Tel.: 0135-2763508 Fax: 0135-2763507 Website: www.uttarakhandjalvidyut.com

Date Extension Notice-2
Due to unavoidable reasons, the dates of tender invited for "Hiring the services of Ambulances, fitted with all standard accessories, medical facilities and fittings as required for round-the-clock duty (i.e. 24X7), on rental basis for 12 months for nearby village affected people of Vyasi project" against NIT No. 09/UJVNL/03/EE(Civil-I)/VP/2019-20 are hereby extended as follows:
1. Last Date/Time for receipt of bid : 20.04.2020 up to 17.00 Hrs.
2. Date of opening of bid: 21.04.2020 at 15.30 Hrs.
All other terms & conditions of the tender shall remain unchanged. Details of Tender & subsequent addendum/corrigendum/cancellation etc. may be obtained from the Nigam's website www.uttarakhandjalvidyut.com.
Executive Engineer (Civil-I)
Vyasi Project, Lakhwar Bhawan, Dakpathar
Ref. No.: 178/Dated : 27.03.2020
"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

Himalaya Food International Ltd
(Formerly, Himalaya International Limited)
Regd. Office: 118, 1st Floor, 12 Gagandeep Building, Rajendra Place, New Delhi-110008
Tel. +91 11 45108609, Fax: +91 1704 225178
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website: www.himalayafoodcompany.com

NOTICE
Notice is hereby given that the Extra ordinary General Meeting (EGM) of the Company had scheduled at Head office of Company at Village ShubhKhera, Paonta Sahib, Himachal Pardesh-173025 on Monday, 30th March, 2020 at 3.00 P.M. to transact the business as set out in the notice convening the said Extra ordinary General Meeting.
However in the light of recent decision of 21 days lockdown in Whole Country by Govt. of India on account of the spared of the COVID-19 pandemic, the said EGM has been postponed till the situation normalised. The details of the same will be shared with shareholders in due course. Company will intimate Rescheduled date with shareholders when situation normalised.
For Himalaya Food International Ltd.
Sd/-
Place: Delhi Surabhi Maheshwari
Date: 28.03.2020 (Company Secretary)

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General public is hereby informed that a girl namely Kanchan D/o Chandra Bahadur, R/o H.No. 22, Gali No. 6, Sainik Enclave-2, Mohan Garden, Delhi, Age : 25 yrs., Height : 5 ft., Complexion : Fair, Face : Round, Wearing : White Colour T-Shirt, Black Colour Pant and Black-Red Colour Chappal in Feet, has been missing / kidnapped since 11.03.2020 from the area of PS. Ranholia. In this regard a case DD No. 33-A dated 12.03.2020 has been lodged at PS. Ranholia, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local Police to trace out the missing / kidnapped girl but no clue has come to light so far.
if anyone have any information about this missing / kidnapped girl please inform undersigned
Website: http://cbi.nic.in, Email: cbc@cbi.gov.in, Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641, Fax: 011-24368639
SHO
PS. Ranholia, Delhi
DP/97/OD/2020. Ph.: 011-28363001, 28363002, 28363003

Will speak to banks to facilitate cash flow, ensure timely access: FM

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Lauding efforts of bankers in this difficult time, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday said that she will speak to all banks to facilitate cash flow and enable timely access to all. She also assured that she will talk to states and ensure that there are no restrictions in the movement of cash, bankers, vendors or bank mitra. "Appreciate the service Bank Mitra/Banking Correspondents are undertaking across the country. Will talk to states — request no restrictions in their movements. Will speak to all banks to facilitate cash flow. Let's ensure timely access to all," the Finance Minister said in a series of tweets. It is to be noted that the Government earlier this week announced a slew of measures, including direct benefit transfer of cash assistance to poor, old age people and disabled, for mitigating hardship posed by outbreak of coronavirus. "The entire banking fra-

Tata Trusts announces ₹500 cr to fight COVID-19

FIANS ■ MUMBAI
In one of the biggest gestures of corporate benevolence, the Tata Trusts on Saturday announced an amount of Rs 500 crore to fight the COVID-19 pandemic raging around the world. Tata Trusts Chairman Ratan N Tata said the current situation in India and across the world is of grave concern and needs immediate action. "In this exceptionally difficult period, I believe that urgent emergency resources need to be deployed to cope with the needs of fighting the COVID-19 crisis, which is one of the toughest challenges the human race will face," Tata said. He made a pledge to protect and empower all affected communities with a commitment of Rs 500 crore for waging the "war against virus". The amount would be used

Tata Sons announces ₹1K cr

Mumbai: Tata Sons announced an additional Rs 1,000 crore support towards fighting COVID 19. This is in addition to the Rs 500 crore announced by the Tata Trusts. N Chandrasekharan, Chairman Tata Sons said, "The current situation in India and other parts of the world owing to the impact of COVID 19 is very worrisome and requires our very best action." and knowledge management and training of health workers plus the general public. He said Tata Trusts, Tata Sons and Tata Group companies are joined by committed local and global partners and the government to fight this crisis on a united public health collaboration platform which will strive to reach sections that are underprivileged and deprived. "We are deeply grateful and have immense respect for every person of member organisations who have risked their lives and safety to fight this pandemic," Tata said in a statement.

Maruti Suzuki in partnerships to produce ventilators, masks, PPEs

New Delhi: Automobile manufacturer Maruti Suzuki India on Saturday said it has entered into an arrangement with AgVa Healthcare to scale up the production of ventilators. According to the company, through this arrangement it intends to reach a volume of 10,000 units per month. "AgVa Healthcare would be responsible for the technology, performance and related matters for all the ventilators produced and sold by them," the company said in a statement. "MSIL would use its suppliers to produce the required volume of components and use its experience and knowledge to upgrade systems for the production and quality control of the higher volumes. MSIL would also help to arrange financing and obtain all permissions and approvals required to enable the higher production. IANS

Mother Dairy doubles supply of fruits, vegetables to over 300 tonne/day in Delhi-NCR

New Delhi: Mother Dairy has doubled its supply of fruits and vegetables in Delhi-NCR at over 300 tonne per day to meet the rising demand amid the nationwide lockdown even as it faces some logistics challenges, a senior company official said. "Before the lockdown, we used to supply 160-180 tonne of fruits and vegetables per day in Delhi-NCR through our Safal retail stores. Now, we are supplying more than 300 tonne every day," said Pradipta Sahoo, business head of Safal. On Friday, Mother Dairy supplied 320 tonne, he said adding the company could increase it to up to 400 tonne per day. He pointed that there are logistics challenges like shortage of labourers and transportation issues but the company is managing. PTI

Infosys terminates services of employee making inappropriate post on social media

New Delhi: Infosys on Friday said it has terminated the services of the employee who had made an "inappropriate post" on social media related to the coronavirus outbreak. Infosys, in a tweet from its official handle, said social media post by the employee is against its code of conduct and its commitment to responsible social sharing. "Infosys has completed its investigation on the social media post by one of its employees, and we believe that this is not a case of mistaken identity," it noted. The individual, whose post triggered an outrage on Twitter on Thursday, had said "Let's join hands, go out and sneeze with open in public. Spread the virus." IANS

GEM creates separate page for medical equipment to help Govt fight Covid-19

New Delhi: Public procurement portal GEM has created a dedicated page on its platform for medical and protective equipment like thermal scanners, biohazard bags and disinfectants to help the Government fight Covid-19 pandemic, an official said. It has created several categories for medical supplies such as COVID-19 sample collection kit, reusable vinyl/rubber gloves (cleaning), eye protection (visor/goggles), disposable thermometers, single use towels, thermal scanner, cardiac monitors, ICU beds, ambulance, stretcher, wheel chair, portable x-ray machines and surgical isolation face shield, among others. PTI

Hyundai Motor's CSR arm ordering advanced testing kits for coronavirus from Korea

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Hyundai Motor India Foundation (HMIF), the CSR arm of Hyundai Motor India, on Saturday said it is ordering advanced diagnostic testing kits for coronavirus infection from South Korea as part of its measures to combat the pandemic. These advanced kits have a very high level of accuracy and can help serve over 25,000 people, Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HMIL) said in a statement. "Post receiving the shipment, the kits will be distributed in consultation with the Centre, and state governments to the hospitals in affected areas," it added. PTI

Cyber security risk increases amid 'work from home' trend

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI
With companies across the globe turning to work from home, via the online medium amid the COVID-19 outbreak, threats to cyber security have increased. Deepak Bhawani, CEO at Alea Consulting said: "Companies, large and small, will be impacted due to ramifications of work from home, as this will lead to cyber security risk concerns. Proprietary corporate data is being accessed from laptops and home PCs that may not have the same level of firewall and security as in-office setups. Management and IT managers will subsequently need to reassess the risk to their data, and proactively evaluate their data loss prevention processes, as this can impact their reputation going forward, he added. Further, cybercriminals has also started to exploit fears around the COVID-19 outbreak to conduct email scams, phishing and ransomware attacks. Palo Alto Networks' Regional Vice President for India & SAARC Anil Bhasin said: "Cyber-criminals have been exploiting fears around the COVID-19 outbreak to conduct email scams, phishing and ransomware attacks. These emails and messages entice users to open malicious attachments by offering more information related to the COVID-19 situation but contain malicious files masked under the guise of links, pdf, mp4 or docx files. With employees taking to work-from-home, cyber security threat multiplies, says Debashish Mukherjee, VP, Regional Sales APAC at SonicWall. "These are exactly the times when hackers get creative with their malicious intent of hacking into devices and stealing data," Mukherjee said. From creating malicious links to developing otherwise unsuspecting apps, the hackers of the digital age are getting creative in executing their attacks. PTI

BRIEFS

NHPC AIRLIFTS MEDICAL MATERIALS TO IMPHAL
New Delhi: Keeping in view COVID-19 pandemic and 21 days countrywide lockdown to fight the crisis, in a major humanitarian gesture, NHPC Limited, India's premier hydropower company has arranged airlifting 2.6 metric tonnes of medical materials for Government of Manipur from New Delhi to Imphal on March 28. AK Singh, Chairman and Managing Director, NHPC said, "NHPC is fully committed to stand with the nation in this moment of crisis and has already earmarked Rs 4.5 crore to fight the COVID-19 pandemic in the country. The timely supply of medical material is most crucial and therefore we have aided the airlifting of medical material to Imphal which is remotely located and difficult to reach by road."
NTPC WITH NATION TO FIGHT AGAINST CORONAVIRUS
New Delhi: NTPC Ltd, India's largest power producer, has stepped up its vigil against global pandemic of COVID-19 by converting its hospitals into dedicated Covid-19 units. NTPC has already utilised its 45 hospitals/health units to make isolation facilities and procured requisite number of equipment for the medical staff to handle such cases effectively. As many as 121 beds, with all facilities, have been turned into isolation wards in these hospitals. PTI



GLOBAL DEATH TOLL OVER 28,000

While US now leads world in reported infections — with more than 1,04,000 cases — 5 countries exceed its roughly 1,700 deaths: Italy, Spain, China, Iran and France

Virus infections top 6L worldwide, long fight ahead

AP ■ BERLIN
The number of confirmed coronavirus infections worldwide topped 6,20,000 on Saturday as new cases stacked up quickly in Europe and the United States and officials dug in for a long fight against the pandemic.

The latest landmark came only two days after the world passed half a million infections, according to a tally by John Hopkins University, showing that much work remains to be done to slow the spread of the virus. It showed more than 6,07,000 cases and a total of over 28,000 deaths.

While the US now leads the world in reported infections — with more than 1,04,000 cases — five countries exceed its roughly 1,700 deaths: Italy, Spain, China, Iran and France.

"We cannot completely prevent infections at this stage, but we can and must in the immediate future achieve fewer new infections per day, a slower spread," German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who is in quarantine at home after her doctor tested positive for the virus, told her compatriots in an audio message. "That will decide whether our health system can stand up to the virus."

The virus already has put health systems in Italy, Spain and France under extreme strain. Lockdowns of varying severity have been introduced across Europe, nearly emptying streets in normally bustling cities, including Paris where

drone photos showed the city's landmarks eerily deserted.

Merkel's chief of staff, Helge Braun, said that Germany — where authorities closed nonessential shops and banned gatherings of more than two in public — won't relax its restrictions before April 20.

Spain, where stay-at-home restrictions have been in place for nearly two weeks, reported 832 more deaths on Saturday, its highest daily total yet, bringing its total to 5,690. Another 8,000 confirmed infections pushed that count above 72,000.

Doctors, nurses and ambulance drivers in its worst-hit regions are falling ill at an alarming rate and working nonstop. More than 9,000 health workers in the country have been infected.

"We are completely overwhelmed," said ambulance medic Pablo Rojo at Barcelona's Dos de Maig hospital. "Seven or eight (patients transported today) and all with COVID-19. ... And the average age is decreasing. They're not 80 years old anymore, they are now 30 and 40 years old."

"Sometimes you become a bit paranoid, you don't know any more when you pick up the phone if you have cleaned your hands, if you've sanitized them or not. You touch your face with your hands," Rojo said.

Spain has struggled to get coronavirus tests and protective gear for health workers. The government has started flights



This image taken from drone video shows the empty streets of Paris around the Arc de Triomphe during lockdown

AP

to transport the supplies directly from China to reduce waiting times.

As the epicenter has shifted westward, the situation has calmed in China, where some restrictions on people's lives have now been lifted. Six subway lines restored limited service after the city had its official

coronavirus risk evaluation downgraded from high to medium on Friday. Five districts of the city of 11 million people had other restrictions on travel loosened after their risk factor was downgraded to low.

For most people, the coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. But for others,

especially older adults and people with existing health problems, the virus can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia, and lead to death.

More than 130,000 people have recovered, according to Johns Hopkins' tally.

In one way or another, the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak have been felt by two powerful and the poor alike.

On Friday, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson became the first leader of a major country to test positive for the virus.

He said he would continue to work from self-quarantine. Countries are still scrambling bring home some citizens stranded abroad by border closures and a near-shutdown of flights. On Saturday, 174 for-

eign tourists and four Nepali nationals on the foothills of Mount Everest were flown out days after being stranded on the only airstrip serving the world's highest mountain.

In neighboring India, authorities sent a fleet of buses to the outskirts of the capital to meet an exodus of migrant workers desperately trying to reach their home villages during the world's largest lockdown.

Thousands of people had fled their New Delhi homes after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a 21-day lockdown that began on Wednesday and effectively put millions of Indians who live off daily earnings out of work.

In parts of Africa, virus prevention measures have taken a violent turn as countries impose lockdowns and curfews or seal off major cities, with police in Kenya firing tear gas and officers elsewhere captured in mobile phone footage whacking people with batons.

In the United States, New York remained the worst-hit city, but Americans braced for worsening conditions elsewhere, with worrisome infection numbers being reported in New Orleans, Chicago and Detroit.

New Orleans' sprawling Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, along the Mississippi River, was being converted into a massive hospital as officials prepared for thousands more patients than they could

accommodate.

In New York, where there are more than 44,000 cases statewide, the number of people hospitalised with COVID-19 passed 6,000 on Friday, double what it had been three days earlier.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo called for 4,000 more temporary beds across New York City, where the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center has already been converted into a hospital.

The struggle to defeat the virus will take "weeks and weeks and weeks," Cuomo told members of the National Guard working at the Javits Center.

President Donald Trump invoked the Defense Production Act on Friday, ordering General Motors to begin manufacturing ventilators.

Trump signed a \$2.2 trillion stimulus package, after the House approved the sweeping measure by voice vote. Lawmakers in both parties lined up behind the law to send checks to millions of Americans, boost unemployment benefits, help businesses and toss a life preserver to an overwhelmed health care system.

Dr. John Brooks of the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention warned Americans remained "in the acceleration phase" of the pandemic and that all corners of the country were at risk.

"There is no geographic part of the United States that is spared from this," he said.

Around the Globe

Scottish Secretary Alister Jack has developed symptoms of COVID-19, as the number of people with the coronavirus to die in the UK Passed the 1,000 mark on Saturday

The streets of Moscow were eerily quiet on Saturday with shops and restaurants shuttered after new measures to combat the spread of the coronavirus came into force. Officials in the Russian capital this week stopped short of imposing a full lockdown, but ordered elderly residents on Thursday to stay and home and closed all non-essential services for one week from Saturday

Four passengers have died aboard cruise ship carrying scores of people with flu-like symptoms that has been stranded off Pacific coast of South America for several days, liner company said. The Zaandam, with 1,800 passengers on board, is currently in Panama's territorial waters, having been prevented from docking in several countries due to virus fears

Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong on Friday said "the tide is still coming in" as the city-state reported 49 new confirmed coronavirus cases, taking the number of COVID-19 patients in the country to 732. Lee said the tide has not turned here. "The tide is still coming in and we have to keep a very vigilant eye as the virus is still getting into Singapore," he said

With families across Europe confined to their homes to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus, fears are rising of a surge in domestic violence. From Berlin to Paris, Madrid, Rome and Bratislava, associations that help victims of domestic violence have sounded the alarm after Europe overtook China to become the epicentre of the pandemic. "For many people, their home is already not a safe place," says the German federal association of women's counselling centres and helplines (BFF)

Canada Prime Minister Justin Trudeau: No Canadians with symptoms can board planes, trains

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has announced the donation of 2,50,000 protective face masks, which had just been located in United Nations storage facilities, to the United States for use in hard-hit New York City

US Navy hospital ship heading to NYC for coronavirus aid

Washington: President Donald Trump will send off a naval hospital ship on Saturday before it heads to New York City, as he aims to highlight the federal response to the coronavirus pandemic. The USNS Comfort, a 1,000-bed hospital ship, had been undergoing planned maintenance, but was rushed back into service to aid the city which is now the epicentre of the nation's outbreak. It is scheduled to arrive

Monday at a Manhattan pier a week after its sister ship, the USNS Mercy arrived in Los Angeles to perform similar duty on the West Coast. The president acknowledged that making the 140-mile trip to Naval Station Norfolk wasn't necessary, but said he was doing it to recognize the work of sailors and medical professionals who worked to get the ship out of maintenance more than a week ahead of schedule. **AP**

Spain counts 832 deaths in 24 hours, pushing toll to 5,690

Madrid: The death toll from coronavirus in Spain surged over 5,600 on Saturday after a record 832 people died in 24 hours, and the number of infections soared over 72,000, the government said.

Spain has the world's second-highest coronavirus death toll after Italy with 5,690 fatalities. The number of confirmed cases have jumped

to 72,248 as the country moves to significantly increase testing.

Although Spain's latest figures showed a daily increase of more than 8,000 cases, the rate of new infections appears to be slowing, with officials saying the epidemic appeared to be nearing its peak.

Madrid remains the worst-

hit region, with 2,757 deaths and 21,520 infections, leaving hospitals and mortuaries overwhelmed, and the regional authorities working to open a second temporary morgue in an unused public building near the airport to house the dead. An initial site was opened last week at the ice skating rink at the Palacio de Hielo (Ice Palace) shopping centre. **AFP**

Abe says country at critical stage

Tokyo: Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe says the country is at a critical stage in dealing with coronavirus infections but not at a point to declare a state of emergency.

Abe says Japan has managed to keep clusters under control by carefully following infection routes. But the initial strategy is now having a difficulty, with a rise of infections that are no longer traceable -- an early sign of infection explosion.

He says once there is infection overshoot, "our strategy of slowing down the peak of the infections will instantly fall apart." He adds "under the current situation, we are just barely holding up. But I understand we are standing on the edge." Abe convened a taskforce Thursday, the day after Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike made a



stay-at-home request to its 14 million residents after seeing a spike in the number of new cases of the COVID-19 to 41. Japan has 2,180 confirmed cases, including 712 from a cruise ship, with 59 deaths, according to the Health Ministry. **AP**



A Lebanese activist tries to set himself on fire in protest after security forces ask protesters who have been holding a sit-in in Martyrs Square to dismantle their tents and go home in line with a nighttime curfew imposed by the Government to help stem the spread of the coronavirus in Beirut, Lebanon on Friday **AP**

UK VIRUS DEATHS PASS 1,000: OFFICIAL

London: The number of coronavirus deaths in Britain jumped by 260 in one day to pass 1,000, official data showed on Saturday, the day after Prime Minister Boris Johnson himself tested positive. At 5:00pm (1700 GMT) on Friday, the death toll was 1,019, up from 759 at the same time on Thursday, the health ministry figures showed.

As of 9:00am on Saturday, a total of 120,776 people in Britain had been tested, of whom 17,089 were confirmed positive.

Johnson and his health minister, Matt Hancock, were confirmed on Friday to be among those infected, although both said they had only mild

symptoms. Their cabinet colleague, Scottish Secretary Alister Jack, revealed on Saturday that he too had developed mild symptoms and was self-isolating, but had not been tested.

In a video message on Friday from Downing Street, where he lives and works, Johnson said he would continue to lead the government's response to the outbreak.

Media reports suggest his pregnant partner, Carrie Symonds, who normally lives with him in Downing Street, moved several days ago to the couple's south London home to self-isolate there. **AFP**

Brazil's Bolsonaro makes life-or-death gamble

Rio De Janeiro: Even as coronavirus cases mount in Latin America's largest nation, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro has staked out the most deliberately dismissive position of any major world leader, calling the pandemic a momentary, minor problem and saying strong measures to contain it are unnecessary.

Bolsonaro says his response to the disease matches that of President Donald Trump in the U.S., but the Brazilian leader has gone further, labeling the virus as "a little flu" and saying state governors' aggressive measures to halt the disease were crimes.

On Thursday, Bolsonaro told reporters in the capital, Brasilia, that he feels Brazilians' natural immunity will protect the nation. "The Brazilian needs to be studied. He doesn't catch anything. You see a guy jumping into sewage, diving in, right? Nothing happens to him. I think a lot of people were already infected in Brazil, weeks or months ago, and they already have the antibodies that help it not proliferate," Bolsonaro said. "I'm hopeful that's really a reality."

A video titled "Brazil Cannot Stop"

that circulated on social media drew a rebuke from Monica de Bolle, a Brazilian senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics.

"Do you know what will happen, Bolsonaro? Brazil WILL stop. Your irresponsibility will bring thousands to avoidable deaths," she tweeted Friday.

"The destroyed lungs of these people, as well as the organs of those who won't be able to have medical care, will fall on your lap. And Brazil will not spare you," Bolsonaro, 65, shows no sign of wavering even as the nation's tally of confirmed COVID-19 cases surpasses 3,400, deaths top 90 and Brazilians overwhelmingly demand tough anti-virus measures. Pollster Datafolha this month found 73% of people supported total isolation, and 54% approved of governors' management of the crisis. Bolsonaro's backing was just 33%.

Does Bolsonaro actually believe, as he says, that the virus will be vanquished by a cocktail of drugs and Brazil's tropical climate? It's possible, but analysts say a more calculated political gamble may underlie his increasingly defiant position. **PTI**

Vatican official tests positive

Vatican City: The Vatican says neither Pope Francis nor any of his closest aides are involved with six cases among Vatican residents or employees who tested positive for COVID-19.

Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni has confirmed news reports earlier in the week that an official of the Holy See's secretariat of state office tested positive for the coronavirus. Bruni also has confirmed that the official lives at the Santa Marta hotel where Pope Francis lodges, too.

The health condition of the official "doesn't at the moment present any particular critical" aspects, according to Bruni. But as a precaution, the official has been admitted to a Rome hospital for observation.



Bruni says more than 170 COVID-19 tests have been conducted on Vatican employees and residents of the hotel. The Vatican hasn't specified if Francis was tested.

But Bruni added: "I can confirm that neither the Holy Father nor his closest collaborators are involved" with infected cases. **AP**

UJVN LIMITED (An Uttarakhand Govt. Enterprises)
H.O. "Ujjawal" Maharani Bagh, GMS Road, Dehradun-248006
Telephone- 0135-2763508, 2763808, Fax-0135-2763507
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866, Website: www.uttarakhandjalvidyut.com

Time Extension Notice-II

In reference to e-Tender No. 13/E.E.(Gen)/RPS/Kig/2019-20 invited by this office it is to inform that time extension notice has been uploaded on e-procurement portal. Please quote your bids accordingly. For further details kindly log on to <http://uktenders.gov.in>. All other terms & conditions of tender shall remain unchanged.

1. Last Date/Time for receipt of bid in the portal : 20-04-2020 up to 16:00 Hrs.
2. Last date of submission of original documents : 21-04-2020 up to 17:00 Hrs.
3. Date of opening of bid on the website : 24-04-2020 at 11:00 Hrs.

No. 176/ Date: 27.03.2020 Executive Engineer (Generation)
"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

UJVN LTD.
H.O. "UJJAWAL" Maharani Bagh, G.M.S. Road, Dehradun-248006
Telephones : 0135-2763508, 2763808 & Fax: 0135-2763507
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866 Website: www.ujvnl.com

Date Extension Notice -1

Due to unavoidable reasons, the dates of tender invited for "Finishing Work of Hathiyari Power House of Vyasi HEP (120 mw) in District Dehradun (Uttarakhand)." against NIT No: 10/UJVN/03/EE(Civil-I)/VP/2019-20 are hereby extended as follows:

1. Last Date/Time for submission of bid on the portal : 20.04.2020 up to 17:00 Hrs.
2. Last date & Address for Submission of original documents : 21.04.2020 up to 17:00 Hrs in Office of the Executive Engineer (Civil-I), Vyasi Project, Lakhwar Bhawan, Dakpathar (Distt-Dehradun).
3. Date and time of opening of bid on the website : 22.04.2020 at 15:30 Hrs.

All other terms & conditions of the tender shall remain unchanged. Details of subsequent addendum/corrigendum/cancellation etc. may be obtained from the website. Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal "<http://uktenders.gov.in>"

Letter No. 180 Executive Engineer (Civil-I)
Dated : 27.03.2020 Vyasi Project, Lakhwar Bhawan, Dakpathar
"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

UJVN LIMITED
H.O. "UJJAWAL" MAHARANI BAGH, GMS ROAD, DEHRADUN-248006
(Tele.: 0135-2763508, 2763808, Fax: 0135-2763507)
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866, website: www.uttarakhandjalvidyut.com

Date Extension Notice - 2

Due to unavoidable reasons, the dates of tender invited for "Procurement of TMT bar of grade Fe-500 conforming to IS:1786 for Vyasi HEP" in District-Dehradun (Uttarakhand)." against NIT No: 08/UJVN/03/EE(Civil-I)/VP/2019-20 are hereby extended as follows:

1. Last Date/Time for submission of bid on the portal: 20.04.2020 up to 17:00 Hrs.
2. Last date & Address for Submission of original documents: 21.04.2020 up to 17:00 Hrs in Office of the Executive Engineer (Civil-I), Vyasi Project, Lakhwar Bhawan, Dakpathar (Distt-Dehradun).
3. Date and time of opening of bid on the website: 22.04.2020 at 15:30 Hrs.

All other terms & conditions of the tender shall remain unchanged. Details of subsequent addendum/corrigendum/cancellation etc. may be obtained from the website. Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal "<http://uktenders.gov.in>"

Executive Engineer (Civil-I)
Vyasi Project, Lakhwar Bhawan, Dakpathar
पत्रांक सं 179 / दिनांक 27 / 03 / 2020
"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

Virat 'boss' of Indian cricket

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Head coach Ravi Shastri has called Virat Kohli the "boss" of Indian cricket and said the support staff is there to "take the burden off" the skipper.

Batting maestro Kohli has been at the heart of India's world-record 12 Test victories in a row on home soil.

"The captain is the boss, I always believe that. The job of the coaching staff, as far as I'm concerned, is to prepare the guys in the best possible way to be able to go out there and play brave, positive, fearless cricket," Shastri said.

Shastri was speaking to former England captains Nasser Hussain and Michael Atherton and Rob Key during a *Sky Cricket Podcast*.

"The captain leads from the front. Yes, we are there to take off the burden but you leave him to do his job in the middle. The captain sets the tone and is encouraged to set the tone. In the middle, he controls the show."

Shastri, who took over as the head coach in 2017, largely attributed India's march to top of the ICC Test rankings to Kohli.

He also spoke about how Kohli's relentless focus on fitness rubbed on to his teammates.

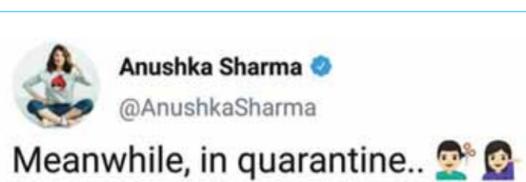
"When you talk about fitness, the leadership came from the top and that is Virat. He is not a guy to mess around."

"He woke up one morning and said if I want to play this game I want to be the fittest player in the world and compete against the best in all conditions and he let his body go through one hell of a lot."

In recent years, Kohli is one of the very few regulars of the team to have played almost non-stop, across formats.

"It was not just the training but the sacrifices he made with his diet. I could see that change happening all the time. He got up one day and said 'Ravi, I'm vegetarian!'"

"When he sets those standards, it rubs off on others. Test cricket for



10:31 am · 28 Mar 20 · Twitter Media Studio

It is not often that the Indian cricketers get time off the field, but the coronavirus outbreak has seen them get a break and the players are looking to not only follow the dikt of the government and stay indoors, but also looking to make the most of it by spending time with their loved ones. Skipper Virat Kohli can be seen getting a haircut from wife Anushka Sharma in a latest Instagram post. In the video posted by Anushka, Virat says: "This is what quarantine does to you, you allow things like these to happen, getting a haircut with the kitchen scissors. Beautiful haircut, by my wife."

us is the biggest form. It's the benchmark. We want to set standards," Shastri said.

'WELCOME REST'

Sport coming to a standstill owing to the COVID-19 pandemic is a "welcome rest" for India cricketers, feels Ravi Shastri, who has spent barely 10-11 days at home since leaving for the World Cup last May.

"(This rest) cannot be a bad thing because towards the end of the New Zealand tour, you could see some cracks coming up when it came to mental fatigue, physical fitness and injuries," Shastri said.

According to him, the players may use the time to re-energise themselves, especially after a gruelling New Zealand tour where India played five T20Is, three ODIs and two Tests.

"The amount of cricket we have played over the last ten months, that was beginning to take its toll. Guys like me, and some other guys from the support staff, we left India on May 23 for the World Cup in England. Since then we have been at home for 10 or 11 days.

"There are certain players who played all three formats, so you can imagine the toll it has taken on them, especially being on the field, adjusting from T20s to Test match cricket and all the travel that goes with that because we travelled quite a lot," Shastri said.

After the World Cup, the Indian team travelled to the West Indies, then played a long home series against South Africa that was followed by a full tour of New Zealand.

"So it has been tough but a welcome rest for players," the coach said.

India is currently in a 21-day lockdown and according to Shastri, his players knew something like this was imminent when the series against South Africa, right after the New Zealand tour, was called off.

"It came as a shock but to be honest, having been on the road during the South Africa series, we guys anticipated it," he said.

"We knew something was on the cards as the disease had just started spreading. When the second ODI was called off, we knew something was gonna happen and a lockdown was imminent."

"I think the players knew it was coming, they sensed it in New Zealand. There were apprehensions towards the end of that tour, when flights were coming through Singapore, out of Singapore."

"By the time we landed (in India), I thought we got out at just the right time. There were only two cases in New Zealand at that time, that has rocketed now to 300."

"The day we landed, that was the first day they were screening and testing people at the airport. So (we came back) just in the nick of time."



Colin de Grandhomme celebrates Virat Kohli's wicket AP

Kohli wasn't only one to struggle in NZ: Hesson

IANAS ■ BENGALURU

Former New Zealand coach Mike Hesson feels that India were probably the best equipped team to have played a Test series in New Zealand in recent years even though they ended up losing 2-0. India were completely outplayed by the Kiwis, losing the first Test by 10 wickets and the second by seven. But the former Kiwi coach begs to differ and feels that the conditions were tough.

"I thought India are probably be the best equipped to have travelled to New Zealand, but the conditions were challenging," Hesson told the *Mumbai Mirror*. "They weren't ridiculous in any means, and they were challenging in both games (in the two Tests which India lost)."

India had batted first in both Tests and Hesson said that was an important factor as conditions got better as the matches wore on. "The New Zealand conditions were challenging for everybody, especially in the first innings. Things certainly got easy later on. The first innings was challenging for anyone coming from overseas," he said.

Hardly any Indian batsman made a mark in the series, including captain and second ranked Test batsman in the world Virat Kohli. Hesson feels that Kohli and the others simply didn't get any time to adjust to the conditions.

"When the ball seams, there is very little time to adjust. You need time to adjust your technique. He certainly was not the only one (to have struggled). Also, New Zealand's plans for Virat were exceptional. New Zealand have had the best of attacks for a long time and they challenged the Indians," he said.

Dhoni's India ambitions might be over: Bhogle

IANAS ■ NEW DELHI

With uncertainty looming over the upcoming edition of the Indian Premier League, celebrated cricket commentator Harsha Bhogle feels it might be the end of the road for MS Dhoni as far as his ambitions of playing for India are concerned.

"My gut feel is that his (Dhoni's) India ambitions might be over. I don't think Dhoni would have been looking to September-October for the T20 World Cup. Maybe if he just had a great IPL but my gut feel is that was beyond him," Bhogle said while speaking on *Cricbuzz*.

The IPL, which had already been postponed to April 15, could be cancelled after India went into a 21-day lockdown from March 25 to fight the coronavirus pandemic.

Dhoni, 38, last played for India at the 2019 World Cup in England where the Men in Blue were knocked out in the semi-finals. Since then, he has been on a sabbatical and is due to appear on the cricket field in the upcoming IPL edition.

The former India captain who will turn 39 in July was practicing with his team Chennai Super Kings (CSK) but had to cut short his stay in Chennai after the IPL was pushed back.

Bhogle further said that even though Dhoni might not make it to the Indian team for the T20 World Cup, he still may want to contribute for CSK.

"Last year towards the end of the IPL, towards the end of the league stage I got an opportunity of doing a couple of post-match presentations and there was Dhoni and he wasn't holding back at the presentations which were normally three four minutes but this one seven to nine minutes almost and when Dhoni is in that talkative mode we don't stop him," he said.

However, Dhoni's childhood coach Keshav Banerjee said the wicketkeeper-batsman should be a part of India's squad for the T20 World Cup.

"In a World Cup, you need experience. Rishabh Pant is still learning an KL Rahul as a keeper for a World Cup, I don't think that's the best idea when Dhoni is available for selection," Banerjee had said.

"This Indian team still needs him in a World Cup. Behind the wicket, he is an asset and in the middle, he still binds the innings together," Banerjee added, backing his ward who led India to 2007 T20 World Cup and 2011 50-over World Cup titles besides winning the 2013 ICC Champions Trophy as captain.

Love the way Raina does his business at CSK: Hogg

IANAS ■ SYDNEY

Former Kolkata Knight Riders spinner Brad Hogg has picked countryman David Warner and Chennai Super Kings deputy Suresh Raina as the best batsmen in the powerplay overs when it comes to Indian Premier League.

Taking to *Twitter*, Hogg posted a video where he said: "At the top is David Warner. He is very strong on the offside, he runs hard between the wickets, he is a busy batsman."

"I absolutely love the way Raina does his business down at CSK. He comes in at vital situations and revitalises the innings. He targets certain bowlers and rotates the strike well."

The fate of the 13th edition of the Indian Premier League is hanging in balance as the coronavirus outbreak has seen the tournament postponed after it was supposed to



Suresh Raina during CSK practice session PTI

start from Sunday with defending champions Mumbai Indians taking on Chennai Super Kings in the opening encounter at the Wankhede Stadium.

While the BCCI is confident that they can pull off the league even if it starts from the first week of May, an important area of concern will be the entry of the foreign players as visa restrictions need to be removed first.

RAINA DONATES

Suresh Raina has pledged ₹52 lakh in the fight against coronavirus. While he is set to give ₹31 lakh to the PM-CARES Fund, he will hand ₹21 lakh to the UP CMs Disaster Relief Fund.

In his message to his followers on Instagram, he further asked everyone to do their bit and stay at home as the world fights the pandemic that has brought countries across the globe to a standstill.

Piedt eyes cricket career in USA

PTI ■ JOHANNESBURG

In an unusual move, South Africa off-spinner Dane Piedt is giving up his career in the ICC elite member nation and will move to the USA, with dreams of guiding the associate into a World Cup one day.

Piedt, who has played nine times for South Africa, will leave for the United States in the next few months to be part of the new Minor League T20 tournament, which is due to launch this summer.

"The USA were given ODI status last year so it's not completely out of the question," Piedt told *ESPNCricinfo*.

"I just signed the deal this morning but no one really knows when I will be able to travel. It was an opportunity I just couldn't pass up, financially and for lifestyle reasons, but it was still a tough

decision to make."

While he doesn't see himself being picked in the South African team in the near future after losing ground to other spinners, Piedt fancies his chances in America, where there is a dearth of cricketers with experience of playing in the top-flight.

"Shammoo (Tabraiz Shamsi) has really made a mark in white-ball cricket and Keshav (Maharaj) has done exceptionally well for the Test side, he has done exactly what the team needs," Piedt said.

"And if you look at the sched-

ule, South Africa are not due to tour the subcontinent again soon and that's the only place where I might get a game."

The spinner has never travelled to the USA and doesn't even know where he will be based in the long term.

Piedt said he has been taking tips from former South Africa seamer Rusty Theron, who helped him secure the deal.

Theron has been living in the USA for several years and made his ODI debut for the country last year.

"He has given me some information, especially about the cricket scene there. It's a decent set-up and I know they have some good cricketers like Xavier Marshall and a few Australians and Indians who played in national Under-19 teams and then moved."



I've been thinking about how to articulate my thoughts on this for a couple of days now, so here goes. Everyone knows how much the Olympics means to me and how proud I will be to participate in my home country. Of course I am disappointed that it won't happen this year, but we'll all be ready to go stronger than ever in 2021! I support Prime Minister Abe's brave decision and the IOC 100%. Sport will eventually unite us again and be there for us always, but that time is not now. This is the time for people from all countries, backgrounds and races to rally together to save as many lives as we can. To me, that is the Olympic spirit. To the people of Japan: stay strong, hang in there, and let's show the world our beautiful country when the time is right in 2021. Stay safe everyone, take care of each other, be kind and we will make it through. Love, Naomi

Naomi Osaka on Saturday said Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and IOC took a brave decision of postponing 2020 Tokyo Games due to the coronavirus pandemic. In a post on her Twitter, Osaka said that although she was disappointed that Olympics will not take place this year, she is sure that "we all be ready to go stronger in 2021"

Gopi praises SAI's online workshop for athletes

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The frustration to remain in the confines of their homes amid COVID-19 lockdown is palpable and no wonder SAI's various training modules of online workshop kept athletes and coaches glued on the opening day, earning praise from none other than Pulla Gopichand.

The sessions on opening day was attended by athletes and para athletes from all sport, including Olympic probables shooters Divyash Panwar, Apurvi Chandela, Abhishek Verma, Anish Bhanwala, boxers Lovlina Borgohain and Nikhat Zarin along with swimmer Srihari Nataraj.

Praising the initiative, national badminton coach Gopichand said: "In these testing times with the Coronavirus, it is important to keep oneself physically and men-

tally active and find ways to use our time better. These online sessions will certainly help in achieving that."

"Sport is not only about being competitive, challenges will be thrown up and it is how we face them with the best of our ability and keep moving forward," the chief national coach said.

The first session of the 24-series workshop started on Friday with physiotherapist Dr Nikhil Lately speaking about how to train at home during the time of Corona, getting over 8K views.

This was followed by a session on nutritional requirements during Corona by Ryan Fernando, which had more than 15K viewership from athletes, coaches and fitness enthusiasts.

Gopichand and former Indian hockey captain Viren Rasquinha were among many others.

Speaking about the sessions, Olympian wrestler Pooja Dhandu said: "The sessions are very informative. It helped me think differently about training while at home and helped me focus on the key areas. I look forward to the other sessions as well."

Lately on his part said: "For a lot of us, the moment the lockdown is lifted, we can get back to doing what we do, but it's not same for athletes."

"They are unsure if they will be at the same level as they used to be in the absence of regular training and competition."

"This is why we need to come forward and help our athletes and make them utilise their time and these online sessions initiated by SAI are so useful. With the nationwide reach that SAI has, it will definitely have a positive impact."



World Athletics president Sebastian Coe AP/File Picture

New Tokyo date 'won't satisfy everybody': Coe

PARIS: World Athletics president Sebastian Coe admitted on Friday that settling on a new date for the Tokyo Olympics in 2021 will not satisfy everybody.

"All sports have made it pretty clear they have particular challenges at particular times of the year," said Coe.

"We are probably not going to reach a solution that meets with the approval of every sport."

"But there does have to be an element of flexibility and there is going to be flexibility for the next two years."

The 2021 World Athletics Championships, for example, are scheduled to be staged in August next year in Eugene, Oregon.

The 2020 Olympics, which were set for July 24-August 9 this year, were postponed until 2021 by the International Olympic Committee this week.

However, there is no definite date yet for the rescheduled Games with IOC chief Thomas Bach saying on Tuesday the Olympics "must be rescheduled to a date beyond 2020 but not later than summer 2021".

There have been suggestions even that the rebooted Olympics could be held in the spring and so allow athletes to avoid competing in the brutal heat and humidity of Japan's summer.

"There are clearly demands for this decision to be taken as quickly as possible — the athletes and the federations need clarity," added Coe.

"Once the decision is made, we can build (the calendars) around it." AFP

IOA ask NSF's their tentative roadmap for postponed Olympics

NEW DELHI: IOA President Narinder Batra on Saturday said the Tokyo Olympics qualification events, postponed due to COVID-19 pandemic, will be held once the health crisis is resolved and asked the National Sports Federations (NSFs) to prepare a list of such tournaments in their respective sports.

The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) President also asked the top brass of all the NSFs to share calendar of their athletes' preparations for the Tokyo Games.

"The qualification events which were postponed will happen again at revised dates once this virus issue is resolved. Draft tentative planning for

that. Please share details of all the qualification events yet to happen in your sport," Batra wrote in a letter to the presidents of all the NSFs.

Batra also said the IOA and NSFs need to plan on the extension of contracts of the coaches whose tenures were to end this year.

The contracts of many coaches, including those from abroad, were to end by August when the Tokyo Games were to end before they were postponed to next year.

"As you are already aware that 2020 Olympics is postponed to 2021. We now need to plan for: Extension of Contracts for HPD (High Performance Director), coaches, support staff etc till end of 2021 as many such contracts are ending in



IOA president Narinder Batra in file picture IOA/Twitter

2020, the process needs to start as soon as possible," the IOA chief said.

"Draft training calendar for Athlete's preparation for 2021 Olympics. Please update on the present location of the athletes and their health," he said in the letter with copies marked for Sports Ministry and Sports Authority of India.

He said under the present circumstances, it will be very difficult to give any confirmations "but this is just to get everyone on same page".

Nearly 80 Indian athletes have so far qualified for the Tokyo Olympics in seven sports — athletics, archery, boxing, equestrian, hockey, shooting and wrestling. The IOA was expecting to rise the number to more than 120. PTI

the pioneer agenda

FROM THE INSIDE

Beyond political ideologies
Spiritually conscious people respect all others on a spiritual plane, irrespective of their material position

2



4

Revive age-old traditions
It is time to remember our collective obligations, remain alert, and revive our tradition of maintaining cleanliness

There's no bad consequence to loving fully, with all your heart. You always gain by giving love
— Reese Witherspoon



STOP, LOOK & GO

RULES OF COMMUNICATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA

In times when social media is proving to be an important tool of information and expression, it is best to use this medium effectively to build relationships with people in your areas of interest and engage with them. Treat people with the same respect as you would expect from them, writes HORY SANKAR MUKERJEE

Social media is new opium of our masses. A two-way gate, where you listen to people and connect with people, instantaneously. Almost everyone uses it, in some form or the other, consciously or unconsciously guilty of making mistakes. With its rising popularity comes the challenges of bullying, trolling, circulating fake news, misinformation, violence, FOMO (Fear of missing out) and manipulations of facts. In such volatile environments, the onus cannot be put on 'no one', but 'everyone'. It becomes essential that we act 'now' to communicate with a sense of responsibility, empathy, care and compassion. The 'traffic light' approach-stop, look and go, is the first check point for you.

Stop: Stop before you read, write and post. Pause for a minute. You probably may want to revisit if you want to read, write or post.

When I started investing, I had an ocean of information floating around, later to realise that I do not have enough bandwidth to read, much of it being repetitive and things I never need to know. I pruned it down to two, saving time. Social media is loaded with information. Everything that you read; you forget some, retain some and use some of this information later. What goes in, eventually, comes out in some form. Ensure that you are reading or writing about things which is worthy of your attention and not garbage for your mind, heart and soul. Would you be more interested to read about a celebrity and his Mauritius vacation or a scientific invention that has the potential to change the world? While both are okay depending on 'who you are, what you want to read and where your interests lie', thumb rule is to 'downplay what you do not want to read'. Keep asking, 'am I enriching myself by reading this piece of information?' If yes, move ahead, if no, shun it down or block it. Limit yourself to an area or two that interests you. It could be your hobby, research, work or a social group.

The post that you just read is a wonderful piece and it agrees/disagrees to your established thought processes. Your hand itches to put down some comments, give a 'piece' of your mind to the author or laud him. Do you want to spend your precious minutes and is it worth doing it? If you are still not convinced, think about the dog who barks when your car passes by. It really does not matter for both. Irrespective of what role you play (dog or the driver), remember that the dog will forget after your car has passed and the driver will not have a second glance on you. When you are hurt, angry, rejected, dejected, in pain, avoid writing. When you want to vent out your frustration, correct someone who is grossly incorrect, bully someone or troll, rethink your decision. Applauding, appreciating, sharing

your thoughts can be done without being a miser or sarcastic.

Stop being a virtual source of junk or a JIJO — Junk In, Junk Out. We have this precarious habit of sending out the information to everyone we know, or 'think' we know. Stop being the middleman for junk. People probably may be thoroughly offended with the piece of information shared, and you risk losing your personal brand and reputation. Be careful with your action. First, avoid spreading information unless it comes from an authentic source and second, avoid passing it on to others. If at all you need to, ensure that the information you spread around, is not negatively impacting any person, organisation or group adversely.

Look: Look, if your words or actions would demean someone, socially, physically or mentally. Are you being sarcastic, rude or just posting to have fun at the cost of the other? Is your intention good and acceptable?

If you have now decided to write it down, forward or post, ensure that you have a sanity check in place. Avoid the usage of 'biased' words. Ascertain your company's policies on social networking. Avoid posting or writing on topics related to acts that are defamatory, political, or religious in nature. Ensure that the nature of your post is not damaging you or your organisation's reputation. Are you oversharing, things which are untrue or unverifiable? Are you reacting to events or incidents, especially when things are flaring up? Are you lying or speaking half the truth? If yes, hold your message back. Remember that your image will be associated with 'your' content. Would you like to risk your reputation?

Go: Go, only if you are clear of your conscience that this is now ready for sharing, reading and adds substantial value to your readers. Posting to the social media means exposing yourself to everyone. Remember that some organisations as well as governments take keen interest in what you post. Their decisions as well as your future employment opportunities and your image can be severely affected based on what you post or what your interests are.

Communicating in the world of social media is different and complex. The audience is diverse and can reach out to everyone. You also need to keep doing the right things to keep your audience engaged. Here are some tips that are likely to help you:

Get your facts: Have you done your research for what you want to write. If you want people to read, you will need to engage them in a few words. The relevance of your content would matter the most to your audience. Understand your audience before you write and post. Get the right demographics



IN THIS CHAOS OF ENGAGING IN MULTIPLE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS AND DELIVERING ENGAGING CONTENT TO YOUR AUDIENCE YOU NEED TO BE EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT WITH WHAT YOU DO. IF YOU ARE THE ONE, WHO ENGAGES MOSTLY INTO READING AND NOT GENERATING CONTENT, YOU SHOULD SPEND TIME CHOOSING ON WHAT YOU INTEND TO READ OR NOT TO READ/COMMENT



and their level of understanding. Write content that is original or things that people would not have read anywhere. Your audience will check the 'freshness' of your post before it is read till the last.

Choose the right social platform: Choose the right platform. While posting on all platforms seems beneficial, it may not actually have the desired results. Find out what works for you. Do not spend money on a medium (if you are running a business) and forcing it to work for you. What works in Twitter, does not work with Facebook or vice versa.

Talk in a language, they understand: If you are a technology consultant writing a blog, you will need to use terminologies that your audience understand. Ensure that you know for whom you are writing and what you are writing. Keep it simple, precise and clear. Remember the KISS principle — Keep it simple, silly. Keep your language simple, easy to comprehend. Use headings, bullets and images. Avoid writing dragging paragraphs with one or two central ideas.

Use the 'right' images and videos: Never under play or over play with this powerful tool. It helps you tell a story and a picture is worth thousand words. But when the content is lousy and boring and refuses to engage the audience, it creates negativity. It can make or break your post, therefore use with clarity and be clear about how it helps you achieve your objective.

Call to action: Do you want only likes or upvotes or do you want to hear from your audience, or do you want them to share the content? Prompt your audience with what action you would want them to take. If you have not, then probably they would not.

Cross promote your profile or other content: If you are using multiple platforms or writing on different topics that interests you, ensure that you are cross promoting yourself. Ensure that you link to other articles, posts and write ups that interest you or encourage people to click on other things that you would have written.

In this chaos of engaging in multiple social media platforms and delivering engaging content to your audience you need to be effective and efficient with what you do. If you are the one, who engages mostly into reading and not generating content, you should spend time choosing on what you intend to read or not to read/comment. Follow the traffic light approach and spend a part of your day engaging with social media content.

If you are the one doing both, you may find yourself hard pressed against time. Your effectiveness will be guaranteed when you make the best use of the platforms. Here are things that would help you become effective:
First, give it some quite time of your day. It

should not be the first thing in the morning, while driving or on the dining table but some time to respond to the social media activities. Ensure that you are not at the habit of responding immediately nor delaying your responses. You must have something original to offer or a pressing need. If you are talking something which people already know, you will not be able to garner their interest.

Second, cut down on peer pressure to 'be in'. 'Are you on Instagram?' and you immediately start off with an account. You are a member of many such platforms, which you rarely visit or maintain. Can you find out a way to rationalise your social platform requirements? Can it be limited to only three? Ask these questions: First, are my contacts available in the platform I am using? Second, does the connections really justify a new platform? Third, how much of my leftover time will it take to manage this new platform.

Third, if you are managing your business and needs to connect to your customer or stakeholders, you cannot be doing it, alone. Take professional help. Agencies that will help you get your word ahead. In case you cannot, fix up a person from your organisation who would be doing that.

Fourth, remember that managing social media for businesses are different from that of individuals. The approach, methodology, purpose, usage, time required would be different. Responding to the messages, creating engaging content and writing is different. Use the most suitable platform. Don't force it to work. Consider your limitations.

Fifth, acknowledge that social media is a two-way communication method. Just as you write, it is important to listen. When you listen, you tend to understand the likes and dislikes, of your audience, sharpening yourself. This needs a balance with your interests and skills sets. People will read you or follow you only when you are consistent. If you are irregular or spending too little time, posting or writing, your audience will not be incentivised to come back to read. A teaser on 'what follows next' can also motivate people to come back.

Use social media effectively to build relationships with people in your areas of interest. Share your expertise, offer help and engage with them. Treat them with the same degree of respect you would give, when you meet them in person. There is no denying that social media is effective in connecting with people and an excellent way to collaborate. But be aware that it is making us indolent and disrupting our need for a great conversation.

The author is Principal — Education, Training and Assessment at Infosys Ltd; Author of The Gift of the Gab: The Subtle Art of Communicating, published by SAGE Publications India

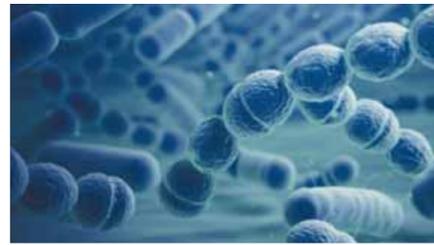


THE PRACTICE OF PEACE AND RECONCILIATION IS ONE OF THE MOST VITAL AND ARTISTIC OF HUMAN ACTIONS
— THICH NHAT HANH



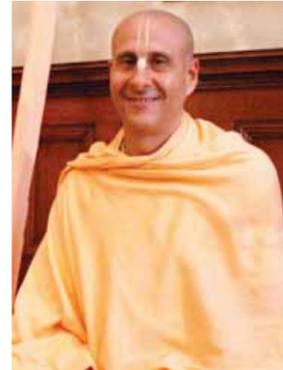
HIDDEN SOULS
PRAMOD PATHAK

Lessons to learn



These are difficult times. More importantly, these are times to learn some most basic lessons which humanity forgot in its ambitious march to conquer everything. As the threat of Covid-19 spreads, mankind realises how vulnerable it is in the face of a crisis that emanates from the nature. The difficulties have their own lessons to offer. They are testing human resilience in times of adversity. That mankind will emerge from this is also certain. History has proved this time and again. Of course, a price was paid each time, but what mattered was the indomitable will to survive from the crises. However, the essential point was that with time the same mistakes that led to those crises were forgotten and the same pursuits went on. Human beings have hardly learnt from their past mistakes and their memories are woefully short. But the micro-organisms keep on learning from their past and continuously adapt to regain their strike power. The multidrug resistant micro-organisms that give rise to the same old diseases that struck humanity ages ago keep on bouncing back. The coronavirus that has struck this time with a vengeance is a grim reminder of this basic fact. The adaptability of the virus is something that must give humanity a lesson or two. There are other lessons, too, that the present crises offers. First and foremost, that despite those geographical boundaries, racial and cultural differences, the uniformity in reaction to this corona threat proves emphatically that humanity has a common thread. And the collective unconscious hypothesis of Carl Jung holds goods. Rightly did Napoleon opine that two things unite humanity — fear and self-interest. Look the way people are reacting globally. Same 'me first' mind set where it comes to survival interest, and same 'me-not' mind set when it comes to threat. Though it is rather a tall order, yet can we not think of others, for a change? Rather than thinking of buying provisions to last till eternity can we not think of leaving something for the others to buy? An extreme example is that of the people of the United States of America who as per newspaper reports are going for panic buying of guns and cartridges. And the reason is quite strange. It is based on a chain of assumptions. First that the virus threat will last long. Second, if it lasts long there will be scarcity of basic necessities. Third, the deprived will be forced to think of snatching and looting those who have it. So the conclusion is that the guns will have to be used for defense. The point is how much can be stored and how many can be kept at bay by fire power. Sanity is giving way to vanity. To quote former President of the US, John F. Kennedy — "If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich". We need to learn to share our resources in these trying times. In times of crises that threaten collectively, we need to stand collectively. Not just for me and myself but for us. These adversities are times that test not just our wit and grit, but also our character. There is little justification of people running from isolation wards and risking others. Behaving responsibly is what these times call for. Time to be human and act human.

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doesn't fit in traditional cultural ideas.

Leftists see such a place as a police state where people are controlled with the help of security establishment. Spirituality achieves aim of protection of one's culture and heritage, religious tenets not through enforcing beliefs upon people by coercive means but by educating them about its importance, benefits and relevance. Such educated people willingly adhere to traditions if they find reasonable logic behind them.

There is no wonder that western world is getting more and more enamoured by the oriental wisdom over the decades, since there has been consistent efforts by various eastern philosophers to logically introduce them with their philosophy and practices, it has resulted in mushrooming of Yoga studios, *kirtan* clubs and Ayurvedic treatment centers all over the West especially USA. There are 300 million yoga practitioners all over the world including 36 million people in USA itself, it is an indication that people are increasingly adopting an age old practice when results are proven with the help of education and practical demonstration.

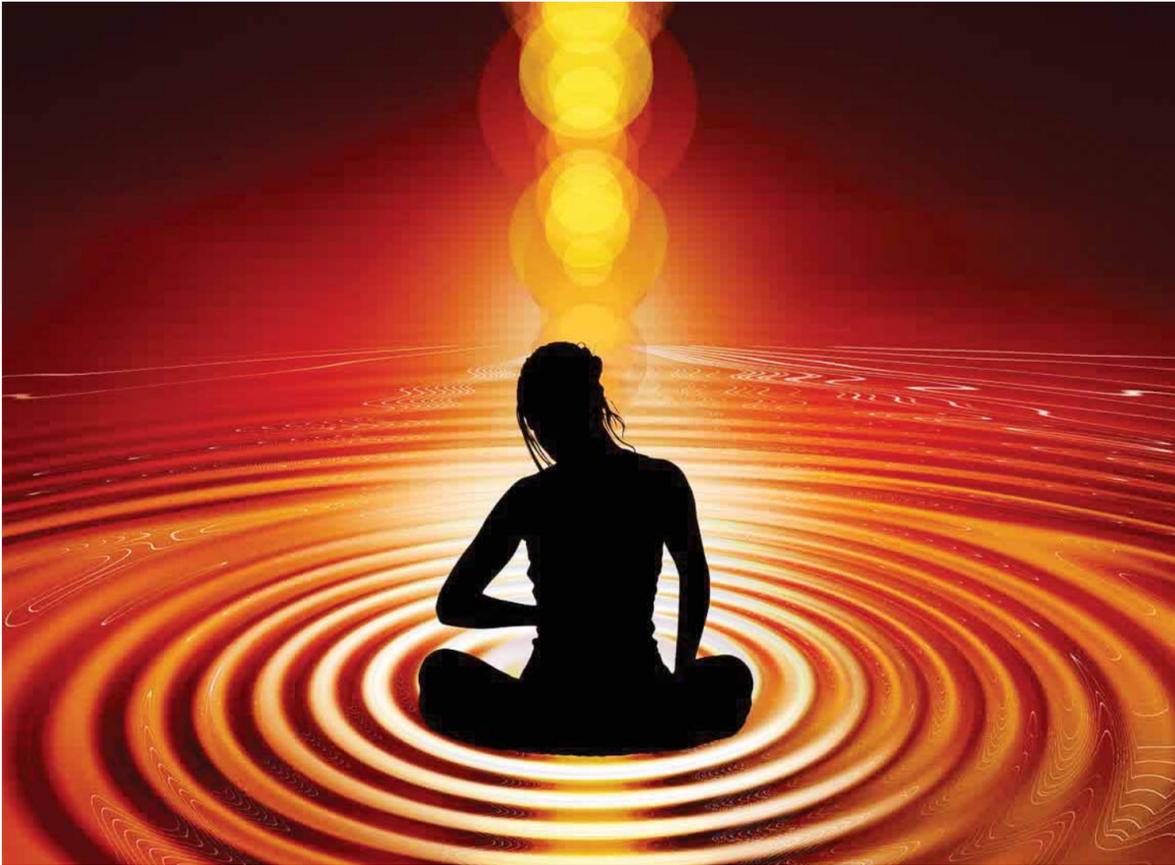
Spiritually advanced people know the art of changing the forms of traditions but maintaining the substance to have the same effect. The spiritual education which would happen at Guru's *ashram* in forests, now happens in an air-conditioned classrooms of our temples, with the help of various types of media, although the gist of the content remains same. In this way the external aspects may be modified as per the time, place and situations to accommodate more quantity of people, but the core principles remain same to maintain the quality of them.

In this way, spirituality can play a major role in filling the gaps between these ideologies to have a peaceful society.

The writer is a spiritual guru at International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)

BEYOND POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES

Despite their leanings, spiritually conscious people respect all others on a spiritual plane, irrespective of one's material position, writes RADHANATH SWAMI



In modern political world there has been a constant conflict between values of conservatism and liberalism, fascism or socialism. The values of right wing are to acknowledge social orders and hierarchies, protectionism of individual's, capital and property, security. The values of the left wing are egalitarianism — social equality among all strata of society, fairness, etc. Values of either of the wings are important but the question arises, how to make decisions which satisfy interests of the both of the parties.

Spirituality synthesises ideologies of both that is, the left and right wing. Spirituality acknowledges that on physical platforms there has to be hierarchy based on the natural order and individual preferences based on the psychophysical inclinations but on the spiritual platform, everyone is similar in nature beyond the physical boundaries of creed, caste, race, nationality or color. So, while dealing in this

world, one may acknowledge differences, and act as per assigned roles and responsibilities, and yet respect the others, understanding their spiritual nature.

Spiritually conscious people respect others on a deep spiritual plane which is irrespective of one's material position. The spiritual concept of Karma helps one to understand the reason for inequality seen in this world, still encouraging one to live a life with good karmas to have better opportunities for present and future and be not callous for the sufferings of other.

To give another example, left ideologists recommend higher taxes on the high net worth individuals for redistribution of wealth. But it risks of making people dependent on government and lazy. Spirituality aims to achieve same goal of equality by compassion and education. When individuals are educated about the equality of the living beings on the spiritual plat-

WHILE DEALING IN THIS WORLD, ONE MAY ACKNOWLEDGE THE OTHER'S DIFFERENCES, AND ACT AS PER ASSIGNED ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, AND YET, RESPECT THEM FOR THEIR SPIRITUAL NATURE

form, they can see oneness among all other differences.

For those who learn spiritual path, practicing compassion becomes necessary to go ahead on the chosen path. Sharing of ones gifts with others becomes a source of pleasure and way of furthering ones prospects in the spiritual line. In this way, spiritually conscious people willingly share what they possess to those who need through the medium of God, although, such charity is not meant for lazy ones who want to avoid their duties but for those who are weak links of society or those who are contributing to the world without personal financial gains.

Right wing ideology focuses on preservation of one's culture and heritage, specifically religiosity through government support, such conservative attitude sometimes results in violence or coercion against those who transgress the traditional norms and customs. Freedom of expression is seen as transgression by rightists when it

The formula of happiness

Breathe-Observe-Smartphone fasting — Just add these three principles to life and see the difference it makes to your inner world, says VENUGOPAL ACHARYA



There are some things that we have known since we were kids, and then there are others that we realise intuitively that guide us to what is good for us and what is not. Yet we never give it a serious try. And that could very well be the cause of our distress. Here are three known but least-tolerated life-changing principles to achieve happiness and contentment

B: BREATHE. JUST PAUSE

We all breathe but are we conscious of it? In my seminars, I often ask participants to place their hands on their stomach and feel it as they inhale and exhale. When you breathe in, does your stomach come out or go in? What happens when you exhale? The class is often divided with half the students claiming that their stomach goes in during a deep inhale and the other half is unsure. The point driven home is emphatic: we don't even know how to breathe, something which even animals do so naturally. Our disconnect with our self and nature is acute; we

could therefore first learn to breathe normally and consciously.

A simple technique is to inhale deeply to the count of four, hold the breath to the count of eight and then exhale slowly to the count of eight. Focus on the sound of your breath; listen carefully as you inhale and exhale. In no time, you'll catch your mind wandering. Gently bring the mind back to breathing and in 10 minutes you'll be recharged with fresh energy. A five-minute break a few times during the day or even a ten-minute breathing break could make your day more productive.

O: OBSERVE MORE, JUDGE LESS

Secondly, you could try simple 'observations' where you gently pull the mind back to the present and remove judgements. Once I was on a flight and saw a passenger stand up from his seat. He looked around, his face even twitching, and then with a sudden grin, he hurriedly sat down again. A few seconds later, he rose again and paced up and down

the aisle, murmuring to himself. He's definitely angry with his wife, I thought to myself. Then I instantly realised I'd made a judgement. After all, how could I say he was 'angry' or she, his 'wife'? Then I admonished myself for 'judging' the man and that again was a judgement! This time I gently said to my mind, "Please come back dear mind and observe without judgement."

When you observe without attaching labels, you release yourself from your disarrayed mind and enter a higher dimension of reality. This is a platform beyond your own prejudices. Often we err because we observe little and analyse a lot. Instead, if we observe more and judge less, it's likely we'll see the real picture and paradoxically, improve our judgement! Observation practices are like bright sunshine; they help us remove the fog of confusion and bring clarity.

S: SMARTPHONE FASTING

The overdose of social media and the virtual world could potentially throttle their individuality. An inordinate time on the electronic world tends to disconnect one from his or her feelings and needs.

A modern variant of traditional fasting is giving up your gadgets for some time in a week. In many monasteries, monks occasionally fast from cooked grains and rice. Besides the spiritual benefits, this gives rest to our digestive system. The body releases toxins and you feel an overall sense of wellness. Likewise in our internal world, a lot of clutter gets flushed out when we 'fast' from social/electronic media. We could for a change experience 'real' exchanges.

More than ever before, we need to now pause, disengage from the loudness of it all, and look at the vast expanse of the sky above our heads, rather than on our gadgets. Let's connect deeper to our own inner selves and catch the grace around us.

The writer is a motivational speaker and author of the book *Mind Your Mind: Three Principles for Happy Living*

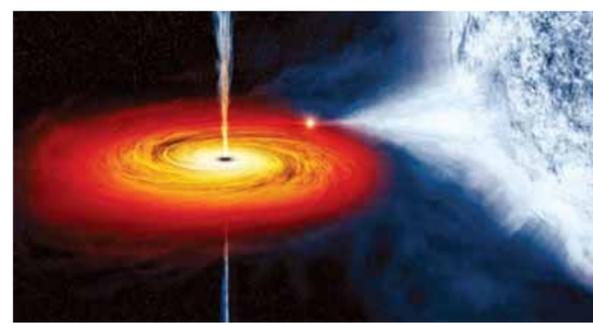
Tamoguna is lurking...

Born of ignorance, *tamoguna* (or darkness inducing properties) causes delusion to all living entities, says AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

The *Bhagavad Gita* explains *tamoguna*: "The mode of darkness, that is *tamoguna* is born of ignorance. It causes delusion to all living entities. It binds with carelessness, laziness and sleep. (14.8) Darkness signifies anger (intolerance), greed, idle talk, violence, being a parasite, hypocrisy, excessive physical efforts, quarrel, lamentation, illusion, depression, being pathetic, excessive sleep, false expectations, fear and laziness. (*Bhagavad Gita* 11.25-4)

When this mode is predominant, absence of illumination, lack of motivation towards duty, carelessness, delusion and foolishness all these arise. (14.13) Consciousness gets covered with foolishness and dullness. Given to lamentation and getting deluded, one sleeps excessively; indulges in false hopes; and displays violence towards others. Awareness gets limited and one is unable to concentrate. The mind gets affected and there is preponderance of ignorance and depression. One, who dies predominantly in this mode is hell-bound, and, ultimately, is born in lower species. Work is impelled by violence and envy, and the strength of wicked people increases.

How do we identify if someone is essentially in *tamoguna*? One will get angry readily; worships God seeking His help for causing harm to one's enemies; considers oneself a material body, not the soul that one is; takes shelter of a gambling den; performs acts without considering their consequences; is unable to tell right from wrong; eats food, which is unclean and which causes distress; is hardly conscious during sleep and has faith in irreligious activities. One's happiness is in delusion and being pathetic; knowledge is at the material level and spiritual knowledge



is alien to such a person.

We all have a percentage of this in us besides the mode of passion (*rajoguna*) and the mode of goodness (*sattoguna*). Together they constitute us, and they always try to overpower one another. (14.10)

Have you ever wondered as to why some people commit suicide? Because the *tamoguna* in them overpowers them. This *tamoguna*, when it is at its peak, completely possesses and make one do what goes entirely against even our basic instinct of survival. How does it become so powerful inside of us? Because we associate with it its various forms. Beginning with the mind, we harbour sexual thoughts, angry feelings, greedy plans and hateful ideas, etc. One may feel that these are harmless. They are not; they reinforce *tamoguna* in us. And the punishment is from inside; one implodes. They cause fear, anxiety depression, etc. When such feelings peak, one harms the self helplessly, even to the extent of killing one's own self.

How should one deal with this vicious internal enemy? Try to avoid associating with it. The mind should be

controlled and no illicit or harmful thoughts should be encouraged. Nothing is harmless. Thoughts are also karmas and they cause *karmaphalas*. Similarly, we have to be careful in what we eat, see, hear, speak, etc. They all count. Eating meat and drinking alcohol reinforces *tamoguna*. Lust also enhances *tamoguna* in oneself. The same goes for hearing and speaking. Then the enhanced *tamoguna* acts from within. It causes fear, anxiety, depression, etc. Once it becomes highly potent, it can kill or force one to commit suicide.

I have realised the dangers associated with *tamoguna*, and have taken shelter of God. I pray regularly seeking God's help in controlling my mind and senses. Whenever my mind strays, I chant. Similarly, when I have to make choices in what I eat, see or hear, I seek God's guidance, and He obliges with the right intelligence. I am determined not to allow *tamoguna* inside me to cause havoc; I fully intend to tame it with my Lord's help.

Bishnoi is a spiritual writer and can be reached at spiritual@ajitbishnoi.com

Lessons to learn from deferral of Olympics

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) at last postponed the Tokyo Olympic 2020 for a year. Echoing the sentiments of the sporting community world over, its president Thomas Bach said, "These postponed Olympic Games will need compromises by all of the stakeholders." It's not only Japan, particularly the city of Tokyo, but also thousands of sportspersons and allied agencies who were supposed to be an integral part of this landmark event have all been hit by the deadly Covid-19.

The historic flame of the Olympic was handed over by Hellenic Olympic Committee president Spyros Capralos to Naoko Imoto (former Olympian swimmer), who represented the Tokyo Organizing Committee, on March 19. And the flame reached Japan through a special aircraft named "Tokyo 2020 Go". As a significant part of the Olympic Movement, the flame is quite often linked to the messages of hope and peace. The Tokyo 2020 torch relay concept known as "Hope Lights Our Way" was designed to unite the entire Japanese people with emotion. But then unfortunately, before the flame was to be started from Fukushima to the rest of Japan on March 26, the IOC took the historic decision to push the Games to the next year. Though it was nearly sure for an immediate cancellation of the Tokyo Games, yet the Japanese Government was hoping against all odds to organise it.

The opening ceremony for the Olympic Games was supposed to start on July 24 and the Paralympics were scheduled from August 25. Interestingly, Tokyo, one of the most populous cities in the world, was going to host the largest sporting event of the globe. By the end of the 2019, the organisers calculated the total cost of the Games around 1.33 trillion yen i.e. 1.12 billion Euros.

And this entire cost was incurred by three parties --- the City of Tokyo, the Japanese Olympic Organizing Committee and the Central Government of the country. But the experts say the real cost of organising this mega event would be ten times higher



A banner for the Olympic torch relay is removed at J Village where torch relay was scheduled to start, in Hirono, Fukushima Prefecture, on March 26

than what has been revealed in public so far.

The mascot of the Tokyo 2020 "Miraitowa" has a personality inspired by the Japanese proverb, "learn from the past and develop new ideas". It is taken from Japanese words, "mirai" meaning "future" and "towa" meaning "eternity". Thus this mascot represents the idea that this game will lead to a future of everlasting hope in the hearts of everyone around the world.

If we look at the history we observe that it was only the historical World Wars that led to the cancellation of the Olympics in the past. But the current trend is that other phenomena such as politics, terrorism and pandemics with global underpinnings have forced all of us to call of such sports extravaganzas. Since the opening of the

Modern Olympic Games in Athens (Greece) in 1896, the game has only been cancelled three times --- first during the World War I in 1916, second and third time during the World War II in 1940 and 1944. It must be noted here that until the advent of coronavirus pandemic, that has forced the IOC to postpone the Olympic, the game has weathered all other crises in the past. In 1916, the German Empire was to host the Olympic but with the outbreak of the First World War, it was simply cancelled.

Many of the nations who were to send participants to the games had eventually indulged into the war. In 1940, the Summer and Winter Olympics were to be held in Japan, but it forfeited its rights as it got involved in a war with China. Else Japan would have been the

first non-Western country to host the games. Again London was to host the Games in 1944 and because of the Second World War, it was summarily cancelled.

Though opinions vary, economic analysts simply come to one single point: As the Games has been postponed, the toughest task for the Japanese economy would be to wading through the prolonged pandemic in the days to come. Now, the rechristened Olympic 2021 will have to be planned entirely on the basis of a new global sports calendar.

And also Bach clarified that rescheduling is not restricted just to the summer months. All the options are on the table, before and including the summer of 2021. The IOC has given the responsibility to a task force called "Here We

Go" to find out all possibilities for organise this historic event held once in four years. The team's job is to interact with probably 33 sports federations and to look into the world sports calendar so as to plan the grand Olympic 2021.

But what now seems is that the IOC is working with the other sports organisations to arrange a July-August window to fix the dates for Tokyo Olympics 2021. This time could be better as the Tennis Grand Slams of Wimbledon and the US Open slated to end respectively in mid-July and in late August. John Coates, the chief of the Coordination Commission of the IOC is hopeful that within a month the final dates for Olympic 2021 may be locked.

It is also agreed that more or less the same arrangements

would be there for the Games in 2021 such as the planning the marathon in northern city of Sapporo instead of Tokyo to escape the heat. This would be finally boosting the lost morale of many investors and sponsors of various events as now they all could focus on channelising their resources.

Hope lies ahead for sure. The health experts, researchers and pharmaceutical enterprises all together are working hard to bring out an effective drug to stop the deadly Covid-19. At this juncture, the world community badly demands leadership and unity among the nations. Accusing one another for spreading the virus and movement of the migrants would not definitely provide us any solution. It's just a virus and a lethal one. Countering the same requires precaution first

and of course timely supply of drugs at an affordable price.

Taking hard decisions and then delivering better is a daunting task. What Bach looks forward is simply this only. Even he is eyeing on all options, and one of them could be planning the games just before the start of the Japanese summer season.

At this gloomy scenario, mixed feelings are being aired by sportspersons all around the world. This deferring may lead to an end of the active careers of our time. Because some of the greats, like Michel Phelps, who have been named as the most decorated athlete in Olympic history, is now talking about the "mental health" of the players across the world. To him the postponement is nothing but a "total bamboozle" so to say. Yes it's true. Many of them would be suffering from high levels of depression.

Certainly apart from ones who are purely garrulous, we must understand the depth and impact of the Covid-19. Postponing at this moment is not a gaffe; it is absolutely a wise decision.

Fighting this pandemic is like a countering a "Third World War", but without arms and ammunition. The last two World Wars had witnessed the pouring of large sums of money, muscle power and sophisticated weapons, including the most deadly atomic bombs. But then still we are all looking for an opportunity to fight, though not a real war, but of course a virtual one. Days of sabre-rattling have gone. A real and extremely poisonous threat in the form of Covid-19 has taken a toll on humanity for now.

Keeping the global preparedness in mind, we all must realise the fact that we need a robust strategy, particularly public health emergency to handle such epidemics. Life certainly comes first; thus creating kerfuffle around such crisis would only lead to more panic among the commoners. The global sports community must be really hopeful that this pandemic will teach all of us a strong lesson to usher into a Tokyo 2021 with renewed vigour and conviction.

(The writer is an expert on international affairs)

Keeping the global preparedness in mind, we all must realise the fact that we need a robust strategy, particularly public health emergency to handle pandemics like Covid-19. Life certainly comes first; therefore creating kerfuffle around such crisis is a folly. Rather, we must gather courage to fight the menace out and look forward to Tokyo 2021 with renewed vigour and conviction



MAKHAN SAIKIA

PERSPECTIVE

Misinformation militates against Covid-19 management

The Government should rope in social media giants to plan a mechanism that all searches about the pandemic reach the Government/WHO websites in order to stem the flow of canards



DUSHYANT SINGH

While there is a minor issue like a slight mismatch between the figures of Covid-19 cases in India reported by the Government of India and those by global bodies like Worldometer, the more serious and exigent matter is the coronavirus misinformation that is flooding social media.

We are dealing with an unprecedented pandemic and in such a catastrophic situation, we should rely only on authentic sources of information. All data and measures taken or suggested are regularly updated at WHO and the Government of India websites. Accordingly, on issues related to symptoms, treatment and other Covid-19 related management practices, public should pay heed to only that information available on the official resources i.e., Ministry of Health at the Central and State Governments or their appointed spokespersons.

Misinformation which is being spread in the public sphere through various social media channels, intentionally or inadvertently, about Covid-19 is going to hinder the management and treatment of the pandemic.

There have been reports on the social media about some people associated with the Government machinery endorsing unscientific treatments to deal with Covid-19. We need to learn from the experience of other countries so as to not repeat the same

mistakes. Nigeria had faced tremendous problems in managing the Ebola crisis due to misinformation campaign in 2014. Even now despite only 39 cases, the Nigerian Government has found it difficult to control misinformation related to Covid-19.

As per a Global Development Community Media (a well-known media platform associated with reputed world development agencies) report written by William Worley and Vidya Krishnan, the level of misinformation being spread about Covid-19 is the highest in India. It has highlighted a number of incidents of conflicting information coming out of official and non-official sources, besides the social media.

Some samples from their report are: 1) While, the Health Ministry, including the Public Health Foundation of India, is working closely with the World Health Organization to launch a coordinated response, another arm of the Government --- AYUSH Ministry --- has been at the centre of a large-scale misinformation campaign that undermines the Health Ministry's response. This needs to be corrected. 2) Second incident is that of a politician who was proposing raw cow urine (*gaumutra*) as a treatment of Covid-19, even while the scientists, including those in India, are battling to find a solution. Similarly if we scan the



In this photo taken March 24, 2020, a sign posted at The Reef Capitol Hill, a marijuana store in Seattle, outlines social distancing separation requirements intended to slow the spread of the new coronavirus

social media, especially YouTube, one can find solution being suggested by all and sundry, ranging from outright astrology to homemade remedies, without any scientific backing.

Information of some myths prevailing in the social media domain such as "longevity of coronavirus", "non-survivability of the virus in hot climate", "totkas", "possible alternate medicines to cure Covid-19", "holding the breath, to check if someone is affected by corona" and so on will only cause com-

plications and problems in management of affected cases. Towards this end, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's strong message of not taking any medicines without proper consultation with a qualified doctor hopefully will go a long way in curbing the misinformation campaign.

However, the PM's call has to be backed by a focused mechanism to eradicate the menace of misinformation campaign. How can we do it? Some of the measures suggested are as follows. 1)

Ministry of Health can set up a task force in consultation with Ministry of Information to scan the social media and put out the truth on regular basis in the form of press briefs or press bulletins using all available media networks for countering or clarifying such messages and information. It is not that the task force should respond to every fake and silly news. However, it must put out clarification on any incorrect and fake news item that is likely to cause harm to human lives and national economy. If we do

not curb the misinformation campaign in time, the 21-day lockdown may not be fully successful and as PM Modi had warned nation will have to pay a heavy price in terms of unprecedented loss of human lives and economic cost.

2) Second measure could be co-opting the technical giants like Facebook, WhatsApp, twitter and other technical firms to direct all searches related to Covid-19 lead either to Ministry of Health or Ministry Information or WHO sites only, so that peo-

ple are given correct information. As per the report mentioned above, some of the big technological companies are already helping the WHO in this regard. There is a need for Indian Government to also see the feasibility of doing the same in our context.

3) While the Government has launched an awareness campaign about Covid-19 through caller tunes and advertisements, there is need for a focused nationwide programme on important aspects dealing with the pandemic at a fixed time in the day with repeat broadcast by all TV and radio channels. This slot must capture the highlights of the day and important procedures to be followed in managing Covid-19.

The importance of curbing misinformation can be best understood by the statement made by WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. He had said recently that "Misinformation about Covid-19 is not limited to India. We're not just fighting an epidemic; we're fighting an infodemic." Therefore, in this period of infodemic, the safest advice is to stay indoors, wash hands regularly, maintain social distancing, and if in doubt seek early medical assistance and help Government help you in remaining safe.

(The writer is retired Lt General and former Chief of Staff Eastern Command)



YOUR WEEK AHEAD

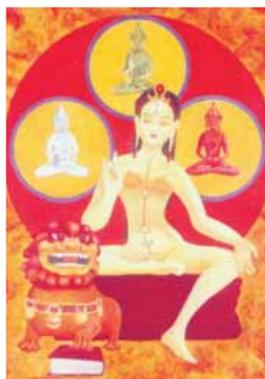
MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19

Your emotional well-being will decide the state of your health. Channelise your energy in the right direction and you will find yourself in the pink of health. In your professional life, you are fairly clear about your goals and what you have to do to achieve those goals. A stimulating time with heaps of opportunities puts your determination and ambition at a higher notch. Business dealings and negotiations are favoured, especially for long-term investments and real estate. This is the right time to make long term strategies and plan ahead. The card indicates a sharp focus on your intimate relationship. Be sensitive and passionate towards your partner. You may meet a new admirer, who shares the same mind-set.

Lucky number 21
Lucky colour Peach
Lucky day Tuesday



LEO July 23-Aug 22

You need to be careful while exercising this week, as you are prone to mild injury or sprain. At work, you will be very professional and follow the company policy to the letter. You are likely to make new friends and admirers. You will have a lot of work on your plate that you must take up. Dedication towards task is important, but oversteering yourself may prove counter-productive. Do not hesitate to seek help, if needed. It will ease pressure off your back. On the personal front, the week indicates love, harmony and friendship. This is a good time to relax and have fun with the loved ones. Your loving and friendly mood will make you popular. This is an excellent time for dating because your charm and beauty will attract genuine, honest love.

Lucky number 31
Lucky colour Red
Lucky day Wednesday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

Health is good this week. Continue with your daily exercise or yoga routine. If you have not yet started, then this is a good time. You will feel driven to succeed at something with a strong sense of purpose and initiative. You will face all challenges with great courage and fighting spirit. This week, you would be able to finish a lot of work in a short amount of time. It is a favourable time for business matters and negotiations. Financial situation is not good, avoid lavish spends. You will be more emotional and sensitive than usual. This is a great time to talk about relationship issues because you will be in touch with your true feelings. You will generally know how people are feeling and will be more sympathetic and nurturing than normal.

Lucky number 20
Lucky colour Sky Blue
Lucky day Friday



TAURUS April 20-May 20

Even though you enjoy good health this week, you need to be vigilant. Those with existing health problems are likely to find a way to recovery. Maintain a positive mind-set and things will surely come easily to you. In professional life, your talent will help you distance yourself from difficulties and you will feel optimistic about future. Work wise, you will gain the confidence that you have always dreamt of. New opportunities, in terms of a new venture or projects, are indicated. A few of you may decide to leave a job that no longer works for your betterment. It is a great time to interact with others. You are likely to have an open and honest communication with your partner. The discussions that you engage in now are likely to be of a serious nature.

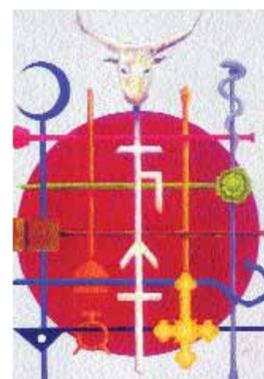
Lucky number 10
Lucky colour Camel brown
Lucky day Sunday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

Health is satisfactory this week. Those going through health problems, must fix the root cause. Seek proper consultation to find solution to your problems. Cards indicate a positive, new beginning at work. If you have had a difficult time in the recent past, then know that things are likely to get better very soon. New possibilities in this week will escalate your chances of making new discoveries and fetching new admirers. Some of you may expect a good news, possibly a promotion. In personal space, you will probably want to nurture and protect your partner. Most of all, you will want to cuddle and kiss them, to give them kindness, love and affection. Someone will call you out of the blue, or you will plan a reunion with a lover or an admirer.

Lucky number 13
Lucky colour Turquoise
Lucky day Friday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

Your health is in good state. This week you are in a greater psychic/intuitive phase. It is important that you trust your instincts and pay heed to signs. At work, your mind is likely to be very active. Make sure to communicate your thoughts to others. Fine tune your goals and make clear plans and strategy to reach your objectives. This is a good time to discuss these plans with others because you will get good feedback and support. There will times when you may become a victim of confusion that will lead to insecurity. But, the bad time shall pass. Expect a slight delay in your travel plans. Romance is blossoming this week. You are likely to take your relationship to the next level. Those who are single may have to wait for some more time.

Lucky number 30
Lucky colour Green
Lucky day Thursday



GEMINI May 21-June 20

Health is excellent this week. Despite your busy schedule, you will take time out to relax and rejuvenate. Those with pre-existing health issues, will find a way to their recovery. The card indicates that people around you will appreciate your efforts, and notice the quality of your work. Keep doing what you are doing, as you are on the right track. You will have a lot of luck in investments. Property dealings are likely to be resolved. This week will bring peace and harmony to your life. This is a great time to relax with the loved ones. Your loving mood will make you sexually attractive to your partner. Studies and exams should go well, especially in technical areas like the sciences, computers and mathematics.

Lucky number 12
Lucky colour White
Lucky day Monday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

After a bad phase, this week brings you a big relief in terms of positive health. You will be able to revive the inner child like energy and be active the entire week. Things are looking good on professional front. You will be able to fulfill your long term ambition. Whatever you put your mind to should lead to lasting results and achievements. People around will look up to you for a sound advice. You must have a profound vision and a vigilant analysis of all the plans and strategies which will enable you to move towards success. Socialising and love life will benefit from extra charisma and intellectual attractiveness. You may find yourself taking care of family matters such as insurances and wills. You can be confident about making commitments.

Lucky number 11
Lucky colour Pink
Lucky day Monday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

Health looks good. Those dealing with existing health issues are likely to recover. This week brings quick thinking, decisiveness and influential communication style. This makes it an apt time for debating, asking for favours and public speaking. You can expect positive reactions and valuable assistance. The forceful nature of your communication makes it a perfect time to defend yourself and your loved ones. Those in academics, this is a good time for studying and sitting for exams. This is also a good time for making important decisions, negotiations and business dealings. Your romance seems to be a little disturbed this week. Try to keep a two-way communication with your partner to avoid any misunderstandings.

Lucky number 14
Lucky colour Brown
Lucky day Wednesday



CANCER June 21-July 22

You are likely to face health issues this week. Therefore, you need to be careful. Those facing ailments may breathe easy as things will get a lot better. On the work front, your innovative spirit will help you expand your horizons and reach new goals. Later this week, you can expect an exciting news and stimulating conversations which will lead to a wise business deal. Some of you may face competition at work. Stay alert as someone may try to frame you for something serious. This is a good time to be with your partner, friends and family. You may forge new friendships or a significant new romance may begin. Your improved charm will fetch you popularity, so your dating should be successful.

Lucky number 22
Lucky colour Grey
Lucky day Friday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

This week your health will be good. Try not to get into ego conflicts and retreat to a safe place where you can develop your creative, spiritual and generous nature. You will be smart and optimistic at work and will accomplish all your incomplete tasks. You can expect some exciting opportunities coming later this week. Waiting task for some news on domestic front will make you feel frustrated. Love life looks satisfying. You will maintain a better harmony in your relationships and will have a greater ability to express your love and affection towards your partner. Travelling to far off destination to meet someone is on the cards. Those thinking for investments, think and discuss with your close people before taking any actions.

Lucky number 10
Lucky colour Silver
Lucky day Saturday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

You will enjoy good health this week. Continue with your meditation and yoga routine, as it will keep your mind fresh and connected to your inner soul. Those who are dealing with health issues, need to take things seriously and go for proper treatment. Your ability of quick thinking and determination will make this week an apt time to prepare long term plan on work front. Networking with some promising contacts will allow you to make a change. You will have a better mental energy and concentration, and this will help you to succeed in studies or researches. Do not worry about taking risks as this week luck will be in your favour. You can expect some exciting news in your love life. You are likely postpone your travel plans to another day.

Lucky number 28
Lucky colour Orange
Lucky day Tuesday

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ASTROTURF
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

Revive age-old hygiene traditions

The whole world is faced with a panic situation because of coronavirus scare. With over 175 countries in its grip, and the number of casualties heavily mounting, the pandemic is taking a toll on the physical and mental health of people and the state. The entire world is in a lockdown state and all of this is certainly going to take a toll on our economy, which was already hit hard.

Such situations serve as a reminder about the harsh realities of life, which most of us, caught up in the mundanities and routine, often forget. Ancient Indian learned masters, through allegories and similes, tried to raise our consciousness and make us aware that the world is a unified organism. One, that is set into an interdependent framework, where no individual has a reality independent of the entirety. The obvious implication is that resonance of the echoes at one end of the globe shall have far reaching consequences. That makes it imperative that aberration of even a few, knowingly or inadvertently, could threaten our very existence. So, no wonder, what began in China, has spread its wings all across the globe.

That calls for remaining conscious about our collective obligation even while pursuing one's individualistic aspirational urges.

The above concept seems to have gone out of the reckoning of most of the leaders of leading nations, not to say anything on individual beings. Otherwise, they would not be passionately trying to excite emotional chord of people to build up their vote bank, as has been evident in the recent years. The present crisis is a wake-up call for them. If, however, they join hands, quality of human life may improve substantially, not simply in terms of health but economy as well. Statistics available suggest that whenever world trade goes strong, each country's economy grows. But whenever world trade took a downturn in the past, world war happened.

The universe being a unified organism, would also mean that there remains connect and correspondence between the cosmic line up, continuously changing, and the live world on the earth. That offers us with the opportunity to foresee things expected to happen through prognosis of the changing dynamics of the planetary line up in the



cosmos. Most important markers in this respect, in so far as mundane matters are concerned, are major eclipses happening every year.

During eclipse, the Sun, which is supposed to be health manager of the Universe comes under cloud together with Moon which signifies masses. Whenever the Ascendant at time when the Sun and Moon are in exact conjunction, has close linkage with the death indicating 8th house denominator, points to the possibility of heavy mortality. Major eclipses during the years, 1915, 1918, 1920, 1957, 1968, and 2009 bear testimony to the above fact. No wonder pandemic overtook almost the whole world during those years when more than hundred thousand people died because of one form of virus or the other.

Another common factor noticed, except in 1920 was cluster of more than four planets on eclipse axis. But then, in 1920's chart, death indicating 8th lord Saturn was placed adverse to Rahu. The Sun and Moon were ill-disposed off to mischievous Neptune and Uranus, meaning massive death unusual way. Kindly recall my discussion on eclipse chart of December 26, 2019 in the opening issue of the year. There was a

cluster of seven planets — the Sun, Moon, Mercury, Jupiter, Ketu, Saturn, and Pluto on the eclipse axis. Out of them, Saturn and Pluto are death indicating planets, the latter being more lethal. If that would not be enough, even the 8th lord Mercury happened to occupy lunar constellation owned by another death indicating planet Ketu. What further worsened the situation was placement of Rahu in Mercury owned sign Gemini. Even otherwise, Gemini relates to lungs.

Be in mind: the world is premised on the concept of 'Unity in Diversity'. Accordingly, it's time now that we resolve to remember our collective obligations, remain alert, and revive our age-old tradition of maintaining cleanliness. Till recent past, in our villages, whenever somebody came from outside, they washed their hands and feet before entering the house. Even as on date, Muslims wash their hands, feet and face before they enter the Mosque to offer their prayer.

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