



**EMILIA CLARKE PROMISES VIRTUAL DINNER DATE IN EXCHANGE FOR COVID-19 DONATION**  
pg 08

## LOCKDOWN NATION

This is required, but so is more informed planning  
pg 4

**SALMAN KHAN'S NEPHEW ABDULLAH KHAN PASSES AWAY AT 38**

pg 08



# SummitTIMES

Vol 05 | Issue 85 | Gangtok | Wednesday | 01 April 2020

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

RNI No. SIKENG/2016/69420

## Akshay brought back as ADGP Law & Order

### SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 31 MAR:

Senior police officer, Akshay Sachdeva, is back as the Additional Director General of Police, Law & Order, after having spent the past few months on deputation as Chief Vigilance Officer-cum-Recovery Officer, State Bank of Sikkim.

In an office order issued by the Department of Personnel today, along with Mr Sachdeva, two other senior police officials have been transferred.

Additional SP, West Sikkim, VG Satish Pasumarthi has been posted as Commandant, Sikkim Police at Pangthang while Assistant Recovery Officer, SBS, KB Gurung has been posted as Additional SP, Police Headquarter, Gangtok.

At the Secretary level, PCE-cum-Secretary, Public Health Engineering Department, Rajen Sharma has been posted as PCE-cum-Secretary, Buildings & Housing Department.

Principal Chief Engineer [Civil], PHE Department, SK Karkidoli, has been posted as PCE-cum-Secretary, Water Resources Department.

While, Bindeswari Prasad, PCE [Civil], Roads and Bridges Department, has been posted as PCE-cum-Secretary, PHE Department.

## South and East DCs ask pharma workers to resume duty

### SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 31 MAR:

Following a slew of protests by workers of pharmaceutical companies in the State, District Collectors of South and East Districts have appealed to the workers and their employers to return to work.

The DC East issued an appeal on 30 March while DC South has issued an appeal today. Both urge pharma companies and their workers to continue to work since they are engaged in production of essential medicines and equipments. The DCs have said that the com-

panies are taking care of the hygiene of the employees as per instructions of the government.

The appeal further informs that the State Government has directed the companies to pay an incentive of Rs 300 per day to each worker who reports for work during the lockdown period.

"If the employees of the pharmaceutical companies do not join their work or if they are not permitted to join their work than appropriate action under the Disaster Management Act, 2000 shall be taken," the DCs have stated in the appeal.

# CM convenes video conference with CMOs, takes stock

**GANGTOK, 31 MAR [IPR]:** Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang [Golay] convened a video-conference with Chief Medical Officers and District Medical Superintendents of all four districts at Samman Bhawan today.

During the conference, the Chief Minister took detailed stock of healthcare, status, and preparedness about COVID-19 in all four districts including all health care centers.

He inquired after the basic facilities, including medical equipment, Personal Protective Equipment, medical supplies and manpower status of the District Hospitals, CHCs, PHCs and PHSCs.

He also asked the Chief Medical Officers and District

Medical Superintendent to maintain sufficient stock of medicines and directed them that common people at this hour of a pandemic should not face any difficulties in obtaining necessary healthcare facilities and services.

The medical teams listed out the difficulties faced by them in their respective areas.

The Chief Minister immediately instructed the Principal Secretary (Health) to resolve all necessary issues and provide immediate solutions.

The Chief Minister assured all possible help and cooperation from the government and asked them to be on duty diligently and work with dedication and determination.



He appreciated the efforts that are being put in by the front line workers of the Health Department and also appealed that we should all

work in tandem and with one goal that is to keep Sikkim away from Covid-19.

The video conferencing was attended by State Health

Minister Dr. M.K Sharma, Chief Secretary SC Gupta, Principal Secretary Health K. Shrinivasulu, and Secretary (Health) Dr PT Bhutia.

## Sikkim continues to remain COVID-free

### SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 31 MAR:

So far, 12 of the 23 samples sent from Sikkim to North Bengal Medical College have tested negative for COVID-19.

Health Secretary, Dr PT Bhutia today informed that till now 23 samples have been sent for testing and 10 had tested negative. Later in the evening, he informed that test results for two more came back negative.

Test results are now awaited for 11 remaining samples.

Thus far, in Sikkim 829 persons are in home quarantine and 25 persons have completed quarantine periods of 28 days.

There are 104 persons in five quarantine centers across the State, informed Dr Bhutia.



COFFEE BREAK: A coffee machine was donated to the Emergency and Trauma Center at the District Hospital, Singtam, for doctors, nurses, patients and visitors by president, Bihari Yuva Jagran Manch [Singtam], Dilip Prasad, accompanied by BYJM members Boblu Agarwal and Medical Store Officer, S Pandey. This was a gesture of gratitude towards the service rendered by the frontline medical personnel. [from YOGEN THATAL]

# SC directs Centre to prevent migration, set up portal within 24 hrs for real time info NOT POLICE, BUT VOLUNTEERS SHOULD ATTEND TO STRANDED MIGRANT WORKERS

**NEW DELHI, MAR 31 (PTI)**

The Supreme Court asked the Centre on Tuesday to prevent migration of people due to coronavirus and set up within 24 hours a portal for disseminating real time information on the pandemic to counter the panic being spread through fake news.

"Panic will destroy more lives than the virus", the top court said and asked the Centre to get trained counsellors and community leaders of all faiths to calm down the migrants, who are kept in shelter homes across the country.

It said these shelters should be run by volunteers and not the police, and there should be no use of force and intimidation.

It asked the Centre to prevent migration of people and take care of their needs of food, shelter, nourishment and medical aid.

The Centre told the apex court that the suggestion by a petitioner to sprinkle water and chemicals on migrants to sanitise them does not work scientifically and is not the

right way.

The top court, which refused to restrain high courts from taking up the issue of migrants, said they may monitor the issue more closely.

It, however, asked the Centre to tell government lawyers to inform high courts about the orders passed by the apex court.

A bench of Chief Justice S A Bobde and L Nageswara Rao, which took up two PILs on the issue of migration through video conference, asked the Centre to look into the letter petitions filed by Kerala MP from Kasaragod constituency Rajmohan Unnithan and one filed by an MP from West Bengal on the issues related to coronavirus.

The bench adjourned the hearing on the PILs to April 7, asking the Centre to ensure that duties of managing the shelter homes are entrusted to volunteers and not to the police and there should not be any use of force or intimidation.

Solicitor General Tushar

Mehta, appearing for Centre said that migration of people cannot be allowed at this juncture as this would enable the spread of coronavirus.

Referring to the last census, Mehta said there were about 4.14 crore persons who had migrated for work but backward migration is now happening due to coronavirus fears.

He said the entire country was required to be locked so that people don't mix and can't meet each other and adhere to social distancing.

"We are trying to ensure that no migration is permitted," he said, adding, "It would be risky for them and for the village populations. So far, rural India is unaffected by coronavirus but there is possibility of three out of 10 moving from cities to rural areas carrying the virus."

Mehta said advisory has been issued to the states regarding complete prohibition of inter-state migration and as per the central control room, around 6,63,000 persons have

been provided shelter so far.

He said that over 22,88,000 persons are being provided food as these are needy persons, migrants and daily wagers who have reached somewhere but have been stopped and kept in shelters.

The bench, initially observed "We will be passing an order that the portal for information will be set up in 24 hours. You will have to ensure that all those whose migration you have stopped are taken care of in terms of food, shelter, nourishment and medical aid. You will also follow up on those who you have identified as cases of COVID-19 and quarantined."

Mehta told the court that government would shortly implement a system where panic of migrant workers would be addressed and they would also be offered counselling.

"When will you set up the centres? Where are the counsellors coming from? Where will you get them from? Where will you send them?", the bench asked, adding, "This is

not a definite statement."

Mehta said trained counsellors of the district mental health programs would be sent to which the bench said, "There are 620 districts in India. How many counsellors do they have in total?"

"We want to impress upon you that the panic will destroy more lives than the virus. You need counsellors," the bench said, adding, "You can have 'Bhajan, Kirtan, Namaz' or whatever but you have to give strength to the people."

Mehta said the authorities would mobilise religious leaders to counsel the migrants in shelters so that they could stay calm and added, I am making a statement here that within 24 hours, we will mobilise trained counsellors and religious leaders."

The bench told Mehta that community leaders belonging to all faiths should be involved in the process so that panic could be prevented.

Mehta told the bench that a petition has been filed in the Kerala High Court regarding

migration and since the top court is seized of the issue, the other courts should not deal with it.

"In this kind of situation, we should not stop the high courts from hearing these matters. High Courts may be able to monitor closely," the bench said, and asked Mehta to instruct government lawyers to inform all the high courts about the orders passed by the top court in the matter.

The bench, while referring to two other petitions filed before it by Parliamentarians from Kerala and West Bengal on issues related to coronavirus, asked Mehta to look into them and said there may be some good suggestions.

Regarding the shelters where these migrant workers have been kept, the bench said that authorities should entrust duties of managing them to volunteers and not to police.

"You ensure that you bring volunteers. There should not be use of force or intimidation," the bench said.

**to book advertisements in SummitTimes, call 03592-208698 9734152541**





SOCIAL DISTANCING being practiced at Jorethang and Namthang bazaars, South Sikkim. [from IPR Deptt]

## MGNREGA wages hiked by Rs 13

**GANGTOK, 31 MAR (IPR):** The Chief Minister's Office has issued an advisory for the payment of additional wages of Rs 13 per day to MGNREGA workers from the 01 Apr onwards.

Similarly, the ex gratia payment of Rs 1,000, to be made in two installments of Rs 500

each, to holders of widow, old age and disability pensions was also announced by the Government of India.

Meanwhile, the State Government had announced in the recent budget session that a sum of Rs 500 will be provided by the State in addition to the amount

announced by the Central Government.

Female members of self-help groups will also be provided with an amount of Rs 1,500 in three equal installments starting 01 April. The self-help groups will also get loans of up to Rs 20 lakh without any collateral guarantees as an

encouragement for them to adopt higher-income generating activities.

The Chief Minister has thanked the Union Minister for Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Rural Development & Panchayat Raj, Narendra Singh Tomar for helping the people at the grassroots level in this hour of need.

## Centre wants SC to direct media not to publish COVID-19 info without ascertaining facts with govt

**NEW DELHI, MAR 31 (PTI):** The Centre sought a direction from the Supreme Court on Tuesday that no media outlet print, publish or telecast anything on coronavirus without first ascertaining facts from the mechanism provided by the government.

It said that in an unprecedented situation of this nature, any deliberate or unintended fake or inaccurate reporting either in electronic, print, social media or web portals has a serious and inevitable potential of causing panic in large sections of the society.

Considering the very nature of the infectious disease which the world is struggling to deal with, any panic reaction by any section of the society based upon such reporting would not only be harmful for such situation but would harm the entire nation," it said.

It is, therefore, in the largest interest of justice that when this court has taken cognizance, this court is pleased to issue

a direction that no electronic/print media/ web portal or social media shall print/ publish or telecast anything without first ascertaining the true factual position from the separate mechanism provided by the Central government, said the Centre's affidavit filed in the top court.

The government said that though an act of creating panic is a criminal offence under the Disaster Management Act, 2005, appropriate direction from the top court would protect the country from any potential and inevitable consequence resulting from a false alarm having the potential of creating panic in a section of the society.

The affidavit highlighted the steps taken including social distancing and lockdown to prevent the spread of Coronavirus and sought direction to all States and Union Territories to implement all directives issued by Union of India.

It is submitted that Ministry of Home Affairs has also taken many immediate, timely, effective and proactive actions almost on daily basis. The Home Minister is personally supervising the implementation of various directives/ advisories issued by the home ministry along with the cabinet secretary and the home secretary and senior officers in the control room which is operational for 24 hours, it said.

Dealing with the issue to prevent migration of workers, the Centre said that it has issued directions under the Disaster Management Act, 2005, and a 24X7 control room has been setup.

As per the details received by the Control room 21,064, relief camps have already been set up by state governments and Union Territories as per the directions of the Central government in which they are providing food, shelter and medical facilities as per the requirement of migrant workers. Around

6,66,291 persons have been provided shelter; 22,88,279 persons have been provided food, the affidavit said.

The Centre said it is, along with state governments and NGOs, religious organisations and companies, coordinating to deal with the situation of migration of workers and those en route workers are provided with all basic amenities "so that they do not penetrate into the rural area which so far has remain unaffected.

The Centre added that the present bare foot migration which has taken place consists of on a very rough estimate 5 to 6 lakhs persons across the country.

It is most important and crucial to point out at this juncture that this kind of migration by the migrant workers on their own in large numbers, defeats the very object of the preventive measures taken by the Central government, the affidavit said.

## SpiceJet to cut up to 30 pc salary of employees in March

**MUMBAI, MAR 31 (PTI):** Budget carrier SpiceJet has decided to cut up to 30 per cent salary of its employees in March with Chairman Ajay Singh opting for highest 30 per cent trimming in compensation, the airline said in an e-mail communication to the staff on Tuesday.

Moreover, the employees will also be treated as "on leave without pay" for the March 25-31 phase due to the suspension of air passenger services during the period, said the airline, which offered its aircraft and crew to the government for any "humanitarian mission" last week.

Significantly, the pay-cut announcement coincides with the termination of service contracts of over a dozen expat pilots with the airline, as per a source.

"These are extremely tough time and call for appropriate and exceptional measures to sale through the exceptional challenge. As tough as it seems, most Indian carriers have already announced a pay cut for their employees.

"Unfortunately SpiceJet is not too immune to the situation which has

unquestionably affected the airlines in the most severe form across the globe. Therefore in our bid to stay lean, and under absolutely unavoidable circumstances, we have been forced to take certain bold decisions, which will help the SpiceJet family surmount these difficult times," Human Resource department of the airline told employees in the e-mail.

SpiceJet management has decided to implement a pay cut between 10-30 per cent in March across our employee base. Our Chairman and Managing Director (Ajay Singh), in fact, has opted for the highest cut of 30 per cent in compensation, SpiceJet said.

It, however, spared employees in the lowest pay grades from any pay cut.

In an official statement later, the airline said it has implemented a 10-30 per cent pay cut for all its employees across top and mid-rung levels.

"The COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown have forced us to take some tough measures to ensure that no one at SpiceJet is re-

trenched. What we are facing is a global phenomenon and no airline in the world is immune to the impact, Singh said in the statement.

India's aviation industry, reeling under the impact of the global outbreak of COVID-19, is seeking help from the government to mitigate the financial impact of the pandemic, SpiceJet said.

Coronavirus driven lockdown has adversely impacted the industry, leading to significant economic headwinds. Several airline companies, both in India and abroad, have been forced to undertake severe measures in their attempt to survive amidst tough market conditions, it said in the statement.

"There are a over a dozen expat captains on the Bombardier Q400 (regional jets) fleet who have been served the termination notice," an airline source privy to development told PTI.

"SpiceJet has not sacked any pilot. We have served a one-month notice' to 13 expat Q400 captains, as per their official contract. They have also been paid a month's

## Panchayat booked for violating Sec 144

**SUMMIT TIMES GANGTOK, MARCH 31:**

Gram Panchayat member of Nimtar under Namcheybong GPU, Kishor Rai, has been booked under Section 188/34 of the Indian Penal Code along with Project Manager of Rongey Chu Hydroelec-

tric Project, Hom Bahadur, for violating provisions of Section 144 of the CrPC.

The Ward Panchayat is alleged to have assembled over 14-15 villagers for distribution of relief package in the residential quarter of Project Manager, Rongey Chu

HP, even though the lockdown was in force and such assembly not required or even advisable.

Reports suggest that this assembly was organized even though the Project Manager was under Home Quarantine and was under surveillance of the District

Task Force.

The Project Manager has been booked for facilitating the assembly. Both have been shifted to facility quarantine while those who visited the house have been put under home quarantine, informs DC East, Raj Yadav.

## Torrent Group commits Rs 100 Crores to fight COVID-19 pandemic

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 31 MAR:**

Pharma-giant Torrent Group today announced plans to contribute Rs 100 crores to strengthen the Union Government's efforts to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and its fall-out on the poorer sections of the society.

A press communiqué from Torrent in-

forms that Rs 50 crore will be donated to the PM-CARES Fund while Rs 50 crore will be spent under various initiatives such as providing essential medicines to various Govt. hospitals free of cost, contributions to State Government relief funds, contributions to NGOs doing grassroots work to address

the issues arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, provision of PPEs to healthcare workers and our own direct efforts to contain the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the vulnerable sections of society.

The release goes on to state that the pandemic has disrupted operations at the Torrent Group's as

well but that the management has decided to ensure that all its employees [including thousands of contract and construction workers working under our contractors] are paid full wages for the entire duration of the lockdown and the entire cost of the same is borne by the Torrent Group.

## Northeast Frontier Railway to convert 315 coaches into isolation wards

**GUWAHATI, MAR 31**

**(PTI):** The Northeast Frontier Railway on Tuesday said it will convert 315 coaches into isolation wards to supplement medical requirements for treating COVID-19 patients.

The converted coaches will be equipped with basic facilities needed for isolation as per medical guidelines, Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) Chief Public Relations Officer Subhanan Chanda said in a statement.

"NFR will be mod-

ifying 315 coaches for placement in various locations. If needed, more coaches can be modified," he added.

These coaches are going to be equipped with mosquito nets, charging points for mobiles and laptop, space for paramedics among others, Chanda said.

"These coaches will be prepared zone-wise. Placement of the coaches will be notified by Railway Board in due course as per need. One Isolation coach will have nine beds, one

bathroom and three toilets for use by patients," he added.

The Indian Railways is planning to modify 5,000 passenger coaches in the first phase to meet the requirement of any possible exigency for keeping novel coronavirus patients in isolation.

There are 125 hospitals under Indian Railways across India and more than 70 of them are being planned to be kept ready for any COVID-19 related contingency.

"Efforts are being made to designate dedicated Covid wards or floors in these hospitals. Approximately 6,500 hospital beds are being made ready to meet the possible needs of patients," Chanda informed.

The Indian Railways has already given permission to all zones to explore possibility of hiring doctors and paramedics, and also to re-employ retired railway doctors as a temporary measure to meet the increased requirement to manage COVID-19 pandemic.

## COVID-19 death toll rises to 29 in India, total no. of cases 1,071: Health Ministry

**NEW DELHI, MAR 30**

**(PTI):** The number of COVID-19 cases climbed to 1,071 in India on Monday, while the death toll rose to 29, according to the Union Health Ministry.

The number of active COVID-19 cases stood at 942, while 99 people were either cured or discharged and one had migrated, the ministry stated.

In its updated data at 10.30 am, it said two fresh deaths were reported from Maharashtra.

Thus, Maharashtra has reported the max-

imum number of eight COVID-19 deaths so far, followed by Gujarat (5), Karnataka (3), Madhya Pradesh (2), Delhi (2) and Jammu and Kashmir (2).

Kerala, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, West Bengal, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh have reported a death each.

The total number of 1,071 cases includes 49 foreigners.

The highest number of confirmed cases of the pandemic has been reported from Kerala

(194) so far, followed by Maharashtra at 193.

The number of cases has gone up to 80 in Karnataka, while Uttar Pradesh has reported 75 cases.

The number of cases has risen to 69 in Telangana, 58 in Gujarat and 57 in Rajasthan.

Delhi has reported 53 cases, while in Tamil Nadu, the number of positive cases is 50.

Punjab has reported 38 cases, while 33 COVID-19 cases have been detected each in Haryana and Madhya Pradesh.

There are 31 cases of the contagion in Jammu and Kashmir, followed by Andhra

Pradesh (19), West Bengal (19) and Ladakh (13).

Bihar has 11 cases, while nine cases have been reported from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Chandigarh has eight cases, while Chhattisgarh and Uttarakhand have reported seven cases each.

Goa has reported five coronavirus cases, while Himachal Pradesh and Odisha have reported three cases each. Puducherry, Mizoram and Manipur have reported a case each, the Health Ministry said.

## Goa's coronavirus testing lab develops snag on Day 1

**PANAJI, MAR 31 (PTI):**

The coronavirus testing lab set up at Goa Medical College and Hospital failed to take off on Tuesday after it developed a snag, said Chief Minister Pramod Sawant.

He said 55 samples had to be, therefore, sent to NIV, Pune for testing.

"I will not be able to tell you what exactly went wrong but we could not get tests started. The fault will be rectified and testing is likely to begin from tomorrow," the CM said.

Goa has five COVID-19 patients as on Tuesday.

Sawant also said stickers would be placed on the doors of houses

of people advised home quarantine, adding the move was not about discrimination but awareness.

Sawant said Rs 120 crore of the Rs 400 crore in the Goa Iron Ore Permanent Fund would be used to fight the novel coronavirus outbreak.

He said some 7000-8000 Goans working as seafarers are stuck in foreign countries.

"We will have to solve this issue along with Union Ministry of Home Affairs and the NRI Commissioner. We have to also think on how to quarantine them when they arrive," he said.

~ SummitTIMES ~  
**CLASSIFIEDS**

### GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

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

**Contact: 9800201335**

### LAND FOR SALE

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

### LAND FOR SALE

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



## Lingi Payong teacher and ICDS worker spread COVID-19 awareness

### SUMMIT REPORT

LINGI PAYONG, 31 MAR:

TS of Lingi Payong Secondary School, Goma Sharma and ICDS worker, Nimkit Lepcha of Lower Payong have been creating awareness on COVID-19 among the local public in their village Lower Payong under Lingmoo Paiyong Gram Panchayat.

Both of them have undertaken a door-to-door campaign to sensitize the villagers on the present global pandemic and distributing soaps and sanitizers to the villagers.

Also, they have been teaching villagers proper hand washing techniques and maintaining social



distancing.

Earlier, she had at-

tended an awareness programme organised by

the GPU and volunteered to work on awareness.

## Lall Bazaar goskhan ordered shut for a week to clean up

### SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 31 MAR:

The Department of Animal Husbandry has ordered the closure of the meat shops at Lall Bazaar here for a week after finding them being run in unhygienic conditions. Animal Husbandry Department and Gangtok Municipal Corporation officials today made a sur-

prise visit to the Goskhan and discovered that the facility was not following food safety standards.

The officials also warned the shop owners to keep their shops clean and not slaughter animals there. Slaughtering should be done only at the slaughter house situated at Rangpo.

Additional Director, Animal Husbandry, Madan Shankar, while

speaking about the inspection, said, "At this moment of Coronavirus crisis, we should maintain proper hygiene everywhere and hence the surprise inspection. We have ordered the shops to shut down for at least one week during which period they have to clean it thoroughly. After one week we will inspect things again."

## Over 10k suspected Covid-19 patients shifted to hospitals by GVKEM&RI

HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

(PTI): GVK Emergency

Management and Research Institute, which operates ambulances in 15 states and two Union Territories in the country on Tuesday said over 10,000 people with suspected COVID-19 symptoms were transferred through their med-equipped vehicles in all the operating states put together as on March 30.

From March 16, GVK

EMRI intensified the COVID-19 services and monitoring, an institute release said

"Nearly 800 ambulances are grouped under dedicated COVID-19 ambulance category at present.

Over 10,000 suspected COVID-19 patients were transferred by March 30 by GVK EMRI ambulances," a release from GVK EMRI said here.

Every state has

identified designated COVID-19 isolation centres and hospitals and the transfers are happening to those facilities only, it said, adding GVK EMRI was able to immediately align its resources to meet the growing demand of COVID-19 related emergency response services.

Inclusion of COVID-19 as a special type in the list of emergencies at Emergency Response

Centre and mobile application system to capture the data for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of emergency response services are among the initiatives implemented by GVK EMRI, it added.

Other initiatives include conducting COVID-19 orientation sessions to reinforce the importance of personal protection equipment (PPE), hygiene and social distancing.

## Flying squads to conduct door-to-door survey in Mumbai

MUMBAI, MAR 31 (PTI):

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Tuesday said flying squads have been set up in all 227 municipal wards of Mumbai for door-to-door survey as part of efforts to check the spread of coronavirus.

The step has been taken in view of the high density of population in Mumbai where there is more possibility of spread of the disease compared to other districts.

Thackeray held a meeting with municipal authorities and ward officials through video

conference on Monday evening.

In a release issued on Tuesday, he said the Worli Koliwada has been declared as the 'containment area' and residents have been prohibited from moving around.

"If more such areas are declared containment areas, health officials will have to work very hard to stop the virus spread. Mumbai is the country's financial capital and the spread of the viral infection has to be controlled. The flying squads need to be activated and survey should begin," he said.

He said each squad will consist of a vehicle, municipal officers and employees, police and revenue department officials and medical assistant.

"Their task will be to identify coronavirus patients, their contacts and check for symptoms like fever, cough, cold, pneumonia-like ailment and to take further steps for treatment," he said.

Thackeray also warned that if people venture out for non-essential purpose, then the decision of keeping essential commodities' shops open for 24

hours will have to be reversed.

He also asked the civic authorities to persuade private doctors to resume their practice, and said special care should be taken of senior citizens.

Thackeray said spraying of disinfectants is being done by urban local bodies and housing societies must refrain from asking anyone else to do that work.

"Disinfectants must not be sprayed without the permission of the urban local body as wrong formula can be more harmful to human beings and animals," he added.

Mizoram University, Pachhunga University College (PUC) and Central Agriculture University in Aizawl to commence COVID-19 test.

The minister said that the government is in close contact with Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) for setting up of the testing centre.

"Unless there is a big hurdle, I believe that Mizoram will have a COVID-19 testing centre very soon," he said.

Lalthangliana said that the state government has designated ZMC, which is also state referral hospital as COVID-19 operational hospital.

ZMC is located at Falkawn about 16 km

from Aizawl.

Meanwhile, state health secretary H. Lalengmawia said that efforts are on to upgrade TB laboratory at ZMC to be used as COVID-19 testing lab.

He said that the Centre has approved the laboratory to be used as COVID-19 testing lab.

The health secretary said that the government has been working hard to upgrade the laboratory by clubbing it with other machines from MZU and PUC.

More than 70 per cent of works has been completed and the laboratory is likely to become operational by Thursday, he added.

# Students feed strays



### SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 31 MAR:

Class X students from ICAR complex who recently appeared for

their board examinations came out with an initiative to feed the stray dogs in and around the Krishi Bhawan area including

SAHARA pet care centre today. They plan to do so every alternate day. Today, they fed around 12 dogs. As per them,

they were inspired by the Chief Minister, PS Tamang's address to the public aired recently through Social Media.

## 88 cities continue to record minimal air pollution with lockdown in place

NEW DELHI, MAR 31

(PTI): With a nationwide

lockdown in place in view of coronavirus, India continued to breathe easy as pollution level in 88 cities across the country remained minimal.

Out of the 103 cities where air quality was recorded, 23 registered 'good' air quality while 65 others recorded satisfactory air quality, according to the data from the Central Pollution Control Board.

An AQI between 0-50 is considered good, 51-100 satisfactory, 101-200 moderate, 201-300 poor, 301-400 very poor and 401-500 severe.

Air Quality Index is assessment of the air quality by taking into account different factors. The lower the AQI the better the air is considered to be.

The national capital witnessed a slight dip in air quality after the effect of rain subsided but it remained in the satisfactory category.

UP's Bulandshahr and Guwahati were the only two cities out of 103 that recorded poor air quality.

India is currently under the biggest lockdown with around 130 crore people asked to stay home in view of the coronavirus outbreak, which has claimed 29 lives and infected over 1000 people in the country.

The government has urged people to avoid unnecessary travelling, significantly reducing the traffic movement across the country.

Since the lockdown was imposed the air quality across the country has shown drastic improvement due to eradication of local pollutants generated due to construction activities and vehicular traffic among others.

According to the Centre-run System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Re-

search (SAFAR), the impact of the measures taken due to the coronavirus outbreak has resulted in a drop in PM2.5 (fine particulate pollutant) by 30 per cent in Delhi and by 15 per cent in Ahmedabad and Pune.

The level of Nitrogen Oxide (NOx) pollution, which can increase the risk of respiratory conditions, has also reduced. NOx pollution is mainly caused due to a high motor vehicle traffic. In Pune, NOx pollution has reduced by 43 per cent, in Mumbai, by 38 per cent and in Ahmedabad, by 50 per cent.

Gufran Beig, a scientist at SAFAR, said generally in March, pollution is in the "moderate" category (Air Quality Index

range: 100-200) while presently, it is in the "satisfactory" (AQI 50-100) or "good" (AQI 0-50) category.

Environmentalists said that though it is not the ideal way to bring down air pollution but at least it proves that such outcomes can be brought.

Jyoti Pande Lavakare, co-founder, Care for Air NGO, said the low AQI and the blue skies proved beyond doubt that a lot of the polluted air was "anthropomorphic, that is, man-made".


"Obviously, slowing down the economy to such a degree is not the ideal way to bring down air pollution, but at least it proves that it can be done. We can achieve the same outcome by doing this mindfully, using technology and

low-emission alternatives," she said.

Lavakare emphasised on the need to realise that air pollution weakens the lungs, so countries like India with higher pollution and lower nutrition levels will be more affected by COVID-19, and morbidity and deaths are likely to be higher.

Ravina Kohli, environmentalist and part of the #MyRightToBreathe campaign, said it was a "huge wake-up call" for governments obsessed with development at the cost of the environment.



"We, the people, are the problem. Our communication on solutions now also include how to reduce pollution at a personal level by being able to understand our behaviour and its consequences on our environment.



**What is Novel Coronavirus - nCoV?**

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

<b>Symptoms of nCoV</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fever</li> <li>● Difficulty in breathing</li> <li>● Dry Cough</li> <li>● Severe acute respiratory syndrome</li> <li>● Pneumonia - like symptoms</li> </ul>	<b>Precautions to Prevent nCoV</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Wash your hands often with soap.</li> <li>● Use an alcohol based hand sanitizer</li> <li>● Observe good personal hygiene.</li> <li>● Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.</li> <li>● Avoid contact with people with possible symptoms.</li> <li>● Avoid contact with animals and consumption of undercooked meats.</li> <li>● Avoid travel to nCoV affected places.</li> <li>● Wear a mask if you have respiratory syndrome. and cover your mouth while coughing or sneezing.</li> </ul>
<b>Treatment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Treatment is symptomatic and supportive, based on the patient's clinical condition.</li> <li>● No vaccinations available as of now.</li> <li>● Visit Doctor in case symptoms detected</li> </ul>	

If you seek help, you may call :

-Toll free no. 104

District surveillance Officer

EAST : 7028372100

WEST : 9593297809

NORTH : 9641957468

SOUTH : 7407691463

New STNM

AMS : 9434711402

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

## 43 samples test negative for COVID-19: Mizoram Minister

AIZAWL, MAR 31 (PTI):

Mizoram Health Minister Dr R Lalthangliana on Tuesday said 43 of the 44 samples sent from the state have tested negative for novel coronavirus.

He said Mizoram will soon have a virology laboratory to test COVID-19 samples.

The Health minister said izoram has not reported any new case of novel coronavirus since March 25 when the first case was detected of a pastor.

"So far, 44 samples have been tested, including that of relatives of the infected patient. 43 of them tested negative which is good news for the

state," he said.

According to the Health minister, the state has not reported community transmission till date.

The state government has sealed its border with neighbouring states and with Myanmar and Bangladesh to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

He said that a core committee has been formed on March 23 for setting up COVID-19 testing laboratory (Bio-safety Level-3) and massive efforts are on with the help of legislators and experts from Zoram Medical College (ZMC), Regional Institute of Paramedical and Nursing Sciences (RIPANS),



**LAND FOR SALE**  
**(URGENT SALE)**

BL land for sale. Road site 100ft by 50ft at Lower Syari. Enroute Ranipool to Deorali via Syari. 10 Minutes Drive from Ranipool. Serious Buyer may contact : **83720-77482/ 94341-36989/ 98320-82664**



## Lockdown Nation

*This is required, but so is more informed planning*

The nation is in a lockdown because Novel Coronavirus has proven to be an extremely contagious virus. It might not have been around long enough for us to understand it completely or find a cure, but the four months that it has been around have amply proven that it spread exponentially. The media-space is rife with stories of how quickly the number of infected people doubles and how quickly things can get out of hand if level-3 - community infection when even people with no travel history or direct contact with someone who has travelled from an infected region – is reached.

Given the desperate status of the public healthcare network in the country and the profiteering instincts of the private hospitals, delaying the spread of the virus was a necessary undertaking. What this “difficult” decision, however, exposed is the inadequacy of the system. The steel frame of the bureaucracy is still blundering through the crisis still caught-up in its hierarchies and red tape and the police refusing to learn any new nuances in how to handle an unprecedented situation. The address to the nation completely forgot that a million migrant workers spread across the country would be in panic and destitution, and while one understands that lockdown is necessary, the inconsistency and boorishness with which it continues to be enforced leaves on bewildered. The Centre and State Governments announce that migrant workers will be taken care of wherever they are even as they are packed into buses and trucks and ferried in nightmarish conditions to their home-states which quite obviously lack the infrastructure to either test or properly quarantine them. And then, the Central Government tells the Supreme Court that three in every 10 of these migrant workers returning home could be carrying the virus. Can the country afford the virus reaching the rural areas where social distancing is even more difficult and which lack even the most basic of healthcare services? And yet, this was allowed to happen even as neighbourhoods in other areas are threatened with lathicharges and imprisonment if they break the lockdown. Shouldn't accountability be demanded of the officers and political leaders who allowed this to happen because they could not plan things properly and with more empathy?

This confusion is worrying because what is clear is that a lockdown is necessary. And no, not because the virus would have miraculously gone away even if the harshest lockdown was imposed, but, because of the above cited reasons, it is up to the people themselves to keep the virus from spreading. COVID-19, as mentioned earlier, spread exponentially and, with limited testing capacity, this difference between those who are getting infected and those who are getting tested grows larger every day. As more and more people get infected and don't know of their “positive” status, they spread the virus to more and more people and the chain keeps growing. This is the chain that the lockdown is seeking to break. This is the only constrain possible on the virus at present because it denies nCoV a place to go and secludes it. Those who manifest symptoms can call in the doctors and receive treatment. Those who are asymptomatic, don't infect any more people than they might already have in circles they are intimate with on a daily basis any ways. The lockdown does not kill the virus, but puts a bubble wrap around it to contain it as best as the situation allows. What a lockdown achieves is that by isolating people, communities and areas, it disrupts the chain of people-to-people transmission the virus needs to sustain itself. If this chain is not “broken,” the gap between actual and reported cases will get larger and the virus would have spread too wide to be contained. In the absence of a cure and the status of our country's healthcare network, this would be disastrous.

Meanwhile, if a lockdown is relatively effective as in Sikkim's case, the limited testing facilities can be dedicated to those who are displaying symptoms. This has worked well in Sikkim where those with a combination of travel-history and symptoms are getting proper medical attention and quick tests. Thankfully, all of they have tested negative thus far. The story is rather grim elsewhere in the world and the country.

This section has argued often that while this might be a time of crisis, emergency even, it is not a law & order situation where the usual tools of enforcing law & order should be deployed. This is a medical and even a humanitarian crisis which needs convincing and collaborations, stronger communication and effective state support. The people need to be convinced that the best way to combat the virus is not by going into paranoid huddles suspecting every outsider or everyone outside of being a carrier but by behaving as if they themselves have contracted the virus and then conducting themselves in a way that they do not infect anyone else. And while we internalize this approach, also send up a prayer that the pause is being used by the authorities to prepare better for whatever the virus still has in store...

## State of Emergency: how different countries are invoking extra powers to stop the coronavirus

ALAN GREENE  
THECONVERSATION.COM

National constitutions and international human rights treaties often contain clauses that allow governments to temporarily suspend their obligations in a time of crisis. They can invoke special powers that would normally be considered infringements on liberty.

However, while many states have enacted what have been described as emergency laws in response to the coronavirus pandemic, not all of these countries have actually declared a state of emergency under law. That could have future implications for their citizens.

Many states are using emergency powers to impose “lockdowns”, for instance. This is not a technical legal term but the status seems to include measures like new powers of detention, closing non-essential businesses, limiting public gatherings and limiting people's movement, monitoring the streets to ensure they remain inside.

These measures have serious implications for the right to liberty, freedom of association, and freedom of movement. For example, powers to break up and limit gatherings are aimed at stopping people from spreading the virus, but they could also potentially be applied to breaking up trade unions, political parties and other organisations that are absolutely vital for democracy.

This is not a priority right now, but it could happen in the future. This is why citizens should be aware of which exceptional powers their governments have invoked and when they will relinquish them.

### DECLARING A STATE OF EMERGENCY

It's useful to use the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) as a benchmark for good practice because 47 states have signed up to the document. It therefore gives a good indication of what they agree is acceptable and what is not. Article 15 of the ECHR allows countries to declare a state of emergency “in times of war or other public emergency threatening the life of the nation”.

States can't just do whatever they like to respond to the crisis, however. Exceptional powers are only allowed “to the extent strictly required by the exigencies of the situation”. Some rules – such as the prohibition on torture – can never be abandoned.

So far, six ECHR nations have declared a state of emergency under Article 15 in response to the pandemic. They are Armenia, Estonia, Georgia, Latvia, Moldova and Romania.

Others, like Italy and Spain, have not used the ECHR mechanism but have declared states of emergency in accordance with their constitutional provisions. Italy's constitution, for example, only allows an emergency to be declared by the government, subject to review by its legislature.

It may be that these countries believe their constitutions provide better protections for rights than the ECHR and these higher protections need departing from. Or they may feel the need to circumvent the ordinary decision-making processes in their constitutions that prevent them from acting swiftly to respond to this emergency.

The UK, meanwhile, has introduced what politicians have described as “emergency powers” but has not declared a state of emergency. The government convinced parliament to pass lengthy legislation allowing extra powers in less than a week.

This shows that there is some confusion about whether a country should declare a state of emergency under the ECHR or whether it can simply go it alone. Some MEPs say derogating from the ECHR sends out the “wrong signal” about a state's commitment to human rights. This is because countries with poor human rights records (such as Turkey)



often declare states of emergency.

This may be the key reason why countries like Spain, Italy and the UK are taking a different route and relying solely on their constitutional provision.

### ACCOUNTABILITY

On the other hand, failing to declare a state of emergency via the ECHR may leave these nations less accountable to the international treaties they themselves signed.

Officially declaring a state of emergency allows exceptional powers in exceptional circumstances, which means the mechanism is also supposed to prevent such powers from being enacted in a time of “normalcy”. If a state of emergency is not declared, this “quarantining effect” of the special powers is lost. Instead, states can pretend that the exceptional measures they have invoked are perfectly compatible with the normal legal framework.

It will be some time before the European Court of Human Rights definitively rules on whether a state of emergency is needed to authorise the emergency pandemic powers under the ECHR. By then, the crisis will hopefully be over. However, emergency powers have a worrying tendency of becoming permanent.

It does not take much imagination to see how powers restricting public gatherings to control a pandemic could be used to other ends. We are already seeing worrying developments in some European states in response to the pandemic. Hungary is currently considering an emergency bill that would allow its president Victor Orban to rule by decree with no cut-off date.

In contrast, Spain's state of emergency expires after 30 days but it can be renewed for another 30 days. The UK government's extra powers must be renewed by parliament after six months and will expire in full after two years.

However, time-limits to emergency legislation have a poor reputation for actually working. This is best illustrated by the US Patriot Act enacted shortly after September 11 2001. Many of the most controversial provisions of this law are still in force today, despite the fact they were originally due to expire on December 31 2005.

Declaring a state of emergency under Article 15 of the ECHR and expressly acknowledging the unpalatable and temporary nature of these measures is best practice. It ensures that other states and international human rights organisations can monitor and even police how powers are being implemented.

Emergency powers were instrumental in ending the Roman Republic and in the rise of Adolf Hitler, so we should always be wary of them. Declaring a state of emergency has the useful effect of defining the boundaries of exceptional powers so that checks are in place.

[the writer is Senior Lecturer in Law, University of Birmingham]

State of Emergency: how different countries are invoking extra powers to stop the coronavirus

Alan Greene

theconversation.com

National constitutions and international human rights treaties often contain clauses that allow governments to temporarily suspend their obligations in a time of crisis. They can invoke special powers that would normally be considered infringements on liberty.

However, while many states have enacted what have been described as emergency laws in response to the coronavirus pandemic, not all of these countries have actually declared a state of emergency under law. That could have future implications for their citizens.

Many states are using emergency powers to impose “lockdowns”, for instance. This is not a technical legal term but the status seems to include measures like new powers of detention, closing non-essential businesses, limiting public gatherings and limiting people's movement, monitoring the streets to ensure they remain inside.

These measures have serious implications for the right to liberty, freedom of association, and freedom of movement. For example, powers to break up and limit gatherings are aimed at stopping people from spreading the virus, but they could also potentially be applied to breaking up trade unions, political parties and other organisations that are absolutely vital for democracy.

This is not a priority right now, but it could happen in the future. This is why citizens should be aware of which exceptional powers their governments have invoked and when they will relinquish them.

### DECLARING A STATE OF EMERGENCY

It's useful to use the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) as a benchmark for good practice because 47 states have signed up to the document. It therefore gives a good indication of what they agree is acceptable and what is not. Article 15 of the ECHR allows countries to declare a state of emergency “in times of war or other public emergency threatening the life of the nation”.

States can't just do whatever they like to respond to the crisis, however. Exceptional powers are only allowed “to the extent strictly required by the exigencies of the situation”. Some rules – such as the prohibition on torture – can never be abandoned.

So far, six ECHR nations have declared a state of emergency under Article 15 in response to the pandemic. They are Armenia, Estonia, Georgia, Latvia, Moldova and Romania.

Others, like Italy and Spain, have not used the ECHR mechanism but

have declared states of emergency in accordance with their constitutional provisions. Italy's constitution, for example, only allows an emergency to be declared by the government, subject to review by its legislature.

It may be that these countries believe their constitutions provide better protections for rights than the ECHR and these higher protections need departing from. Or they may feel the need to circumvent the ordinary decision-making processes in their constitutions that prevent them from acting swiftly to respond to this emergency.

The UK, meanwhile, has introduced what politicians have described as “emergency powers” but has not declared a state of emergency. The government convinced parliament to pass lengthy legislation allowing extra powers in less than a week.

This shows that there is some confusion about whether a country should declare a state of emergency under the ECHR or whether it can simply go it alone. Some MEPs say derogating from the ECHR sends out the “wrong signal” about a state's commitment to human rights. This is because countries with poor human rights records (such as Turkey) often declare states of emergency.

This may be the key reason why countries like Spain, Italy and the UK are taking a different route and relying solely on their constitutional provision.

### ACCOUNTABILITY

On the other hand, failing to declare a state of emergency via the ECHR may leave these nations less accountable to the international treaties they themselves signed.

Officially declaring a state of emergency allows exceptional powers in exceptional circumstances, which means the mechanism is also supposed to prevent such powers from being enacted in a time of “normalcy”. If a state of emergency is not declared, this “quarantining effect” of the special powers is lost. Instead, states can pretend that the exceptional measures they have invoked are perfectly compatible with the normal legal framework.

It will be some time before the European Court of Human Rights definitively rules on whether a state of emergency is needed to authorise the emergency pandemic powers under the ECHR. By then, the crisis will hopefully be over. However, emergency powers have a worrying tendency of becoming permanent.

It does not take much imagination to see how powers restricting public gatherings to control a pandemic could be used to other ends. We are already seeing worrying developments in some European states in response to the pandemic. Hungary is currently considering an emergency bill that would allow its president Victor Orban to rule by decree with no cut-off date.

In contrast, Spain's state of emergency expires after 30 days but it can be renewed for another 30 days. The UK government's extra powers must be renewed by parliament after six months and will expire in full after two years.

However, time-limits to emergency legislation have a poor reputation for actually working. This is best illustrated by the US Patriot Act enacted shortly after September 11 2001. Many of the most controversial provisions of this law are still in force today, despite the fact they were originally due to expire on December 31 2005.

Declaring a state of emergency under Article 15 of the ECHR and expressly acknowledging the unpalatable and temporary nature of these measures is best practice. It ensures that other states and international human rights organisations can monitor and even police how powers are being implemented.

Emergency powers were instrumental in ending the Roman Republic and in the rise of Adolf Hitler, so we should always be wary of them. Declaring a state of emergency has the useful effect of defining the boundaries of exceptional powers so that checks are in place.

[the writer is Senior Lecturer in Law, University of Birmingham]

Now you can whatsapp

Summit TIMES @

9832556698

9832080753



# Mamata blooms amid corona gloom



## PRADIPTA TAPADAR

**KOLKATA, MAR 31 (PTI):** She walks briskly into a crowded marketplace, admonishes people for the unnecessary hubbub, picks up a broken brick and draws a circle around her.

One more circle and then the other, and brusquely asks people how to exercise social distancing in the trying times coronavirus has brought in its wake.

Nobody takes umbrage at her curtness, and all quietly step into the circles in front of a departmental store in the bustling Posta Bazaar, many drawing their own circles and patiently waiting for their turn to buy essential supplies.

She nonchalantly wipes the dirt on her hand with her spotless white saree and nimbly walks through the multitude to board her car on way to inspect hospitals, sirens of the pilot car blaring.

For the last three weeks West Bengal

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has been following this routine apart from holding official meetings to review the situation and addressing press conferences, deftly concealing her sisterly concern under a stern countenance, as coronavirus continues to ravage the world.

West Bengal has had 26 afflictions so far of whom three died.

The BJP, which has emerged as the main challenger to Banerjees ruling TMC after the Lok Sabha polls, clinching 18 of the states 42 seats, has called it a publicity stunt, but Didi (elder sister) is unfazed, and is doing what she loves to do most-being among people, distributing food and giving a pep talk to doctors and paramedical staff.

Close watchers of Bengals political scene feel that Banerjees outreach in times of distress will indeed endear her to the masses.

TMC means Mamata Banerjee. Although all political parties have kept politics aside and are fighting unitedly against the pandemic, this is an opportunity for all state governments and the Centre to showcase their administrative skills with a humane touch. We think that our Didi is far ahead of others in this, a senior

TMC leader, who preferred not to be named, told PTI.

Mamata di is leading from the front, disregarding her personal safety. If we are able to successfully tide over the crisis with the administration playing a proactive role, then we should be in a much more advantageous position ahead of next assembly polls," he said.

West Bengal will have state assembly election next year after the TMCs unimpressive performance in the Lok Sabha poll when its tally plunged to 22 from 34 in the previous general elections.

A battered TMC hired the services of poll strategist Prashant Kishor to improve its electoral fortunes with a slew of mass outreach campaigns like Didi ke Bolo (tell Didi) and Banglar Gorbo Mamata (Bengals pride Mamata).

But there can be no better mass outreach than helping people in distress. It has much better and long-lasting impact and the state administration is just doing that, said another TMC leader.

The police has to be more humane. Obviously, law and order has to be maintained. But that doesnt mean there will be excesses, she said, in a subtle warning to the police when they

deal with people in distress.

She asked the men in uniform also to identify the elderly and sick people in their respective areas and ensure steps are taken to help them.

Often accused of Muslim appeasement, Banerjee was evenhanded while approaching religious leaders to stop large gatherings at places of worship. Religious leaders responded promptly and positively with temples, mosques and churches issuing instructions to the faithful to avoid congregations.

She came in for praise even by her political rivals who appreciated her for taking them along in the fight against the pandemic and seeking their suggestions.

The CPI(M), her arch rival, too praised her hard work in the fight against the pandemic.

CPI (M) state secretary Surya Kanta Mishra acknowledged that the state government was trying hard to stem the coronavirus tide and said his party stood with the government.

She is trying hard. Our best wishes are with her and we also stand by the government at this time of crisis.

Politics can take a back seat, Mishra said.

The BJP, however, is a divided house

with a section feeling that the chief ministers efforts were more for publicity than service and some others saying she was doing a good job.

Despite our political differences, we should give her the due. She is doing a great job and is leading from the front, said a senior BJP leader.

However, BJP state president Dilip Ghosh said Banerjee was more interested in publicity rather than working on the ground to fight the pandemic.

Every day we are coming across complaints of lack of proper medical protection kits and other equipment. Instead of seeking publicity she should concentrate on fighting the outbreak, he said.

However, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, the Union minister in charge of West Bengal during the 21-day nationwide lockdown, called her up last week and appreciated the steps taken by the state government to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Bouquets or brickbats, the rumbustious Didi is back on the streets of Kolkata, among the hungry and the homeless, as she stoops to conquer their hearts and encircle her enemies on the political chessboard.

## COVID-19 patient dies in Bengal, death count 3

### KOLKATA, MAR 31 (PTI):

**A 47-YEAR-OLD WOMAN INFECTED WITH THE CORONAVIRUS DIED AT A HOSPITAL IN WEST BENGAL'S HOWRAH DISTRICT, TAKING COVID-19 death toll in the state to three,**

a health department official said on Tuesday. The woman had recently visited Dooars in North Bengal but had no foreign travel history.

"The woman, a resident of Salkia in Howrah, died on Monday night before test results came. Her test results confirmed that she was infected with the coronavirus," the official said.

The woman was admitted to the Howrah Zilla Hospital on Sunday evening with fever and severe breathing problem.

The health department is considering quarantining the family members of the deceased and all those who came in contact with her, the

official said.

"We need to find out persons whom she had recently come in contact with. Swab tests of her family members will be conducted. The nurses and doctors who treated the woman will also be quarantined, he said.

The department will also enquire whether any family member of the deceased had recently returned from abroad or not.

The woman will be cremated as per the prescribed protocol set by the health department.

After the death of the woman, nurses and group D staff of the hospital on Tuesday staged a demonstration, alleging that the woman was initially admitted to the general ward for nearly three hours, and they had to attend to her without personal protective gears such as masks, gloves and jackets.

"The woman was admitted here on Sunday evening as a suspected coronavirus patient. Despite several requests to provide personal protective equipment (PPE), the authority did not pay heed to our demand. We had to attend to her without any protection," one of the nurses of the state-run facility said.

She alleged that the woman was initially admitted to the general ward here, and she was shifted to the CCU later that night, and was on ventilation support since then.

"The woman was also taken for X-ray. We have no isolation ward here in this hospital, the nurse said.

Meanwhile, four new cases of coronavirus have been reported in West Bengal, taking the count to 26, the health department official said.

Two men from the city- one from Salt Lake

and another from Tollygunge area- tested positive for COVID-19, and are undergoing treatment at two separate private hospitals here.

"Neither they have any history of travelling abroad, nor to any other state. We are trying to find out whether any of their family members had gone overseas or other states.

Family members of the two will also be quarantined," he said.

Another man, in his early 30s, who had recently returned from Maharashtra, was admitted to the Midnapore Medical College and Hospital and tested positive for the coronavirus.

The details of the fourth person, who tested positive for COVID-19, are yet to be ascertained, he said.

Meanwhile, the man, who had tested positive for COVID-19 after returning from the UK, the

first case in West Bengal, is likely to be discharged from the Beliaghata I D Hospital here on Tuesday.

He is son of a senior state government official.

The health department will also discharge the woman from Habra, who had tested positive for COVID-19 after returning from Scotland.

"The latest test results of the two were found negative. They will be advised a 14-day home quarantine," the official said.

The father of the Ballygunge-resident, who had returned from the UK and tested positive for coronavirus, will also be discharged on Tuesday after his swab test came out negative, the official added.

## Another COVID-19 case reported in Bihar, total count 16

### PATNA, MAR 31 (PTI):

A 35-year-old man with a travel history to Dubai tested positive for COVID-19 on Tuesday here, taking the tally of those afflicted in Bihar to 16, an official said.

Pradip Das, Director of ICMR Rajendra Memorial Research Institute, which is conducting the bulk of coronavirus tests in the state, said the latest case was that of a resident of Gopalganj district who had returned from Dubai before the lockdown came into force.

Meanwhile, a 45-year-old woman, who had tested positive on March 22 and had been admitted to AIIMS, Patna, was on Monday discharged after full recovery, hospital authorities said.

The woman, who resides in Anisabad locality of the city, had recently travelled to Nepal and had turned up at the hospital to get tested as a precautionary measure.

The hospital authorities said she remained stable during her stay at the facility, developed no symptoms and looked perfectly healthy, though a close watch would be kept on her for another week.

Her family members, including her son who had recently travelled to Italy but did not test positive, have been living at home in self-imposed quarantine.

According to the state

health department, close to 1,100 samples have been tested so far.

A 38-year-old man whose test results came on the same day as that of the woman, breathed his last before it was confirmed that he was infected with coronavirus. He had a history of travelling to Qatar and was admitted to AIIMS, Patna, because of renal failure.

Testing of samples is likely to pick up in the state with hordes of migrant workers having poured in from different parts of the country, notwithstanding assurances by the Nitish Kumar government that it would ensure they were looked after wherever they happened to be.

## Farmers destroy millions of flowers for lack of demand

### LAXMI DEVI

#### NEW DELHI, MAR 31

**(PTI):** Brightly coloured roses, chrysanthemums, lilies, marigold and other flowers that might normally have been destined for marriage decoration and temples -- are now being destroyed by growers in unprecedented manner as the rapidly spreading coronavirus brings demand to a standstill.

When people are seemingly keen to stockpile essential food items, flowers are the last thing on their mind.

Also, flower wholesale markets across the country are shut because of the 21-day lockdown announced to prevent the spread of coronavirus, affecting thousands of growers and traders associated with the floriculture business.

Currently, the government has given exemption from the lockdown rules for movement and distribution of only essential vegetables, fruits and other food items but not

flowers.

"In such a situation, there is no option but to destroy. The survival of the industry is going to be tough as flowers are not essential commodity," Bengaluru-based floriculturist Bollapally Srikanth told PTI.

Bollapally cultivates flowers like Rose, Gerbera, Carnation, Anthurium and Gypsophila in greenhouses in 35 acres land in Tubagere in Doddaballapura taluk, Bengaluru rural district. He employs about 250 labourers.

Srikanth, who distributes flowers across the country, has estimated about Rs 10 lakh per day loss due to the lockdown as he begins to dump millions of flowers in huge skips.

Sharing similar plight, another grower Prakash Chandra Shukla from Sidhi district, Madhya Pradesh said: "I have cultivated rose, marigold and dahlia in 3 acres to cater for festival demand of Ram Navami. Now I cannot sell it in the market

due to the lockdown. I am feeding it to livestock and making compost".

Shukla, who has incurred a loss of Rs 1 lakh from his flower crop, said some people may want to buy flowers for doing puja at home but it would be difficult to supply in the wake of restriction on movement and social distancing.

Arjun Singh, a grower from Rohtak, Haryana, said lily flowers grown in 6 acres are ready for sale but are now being destroyed in farm fields and some dumped in garbage as there are no takers for it in the current difficult times.

"What will the government do? Flowers are not priority now for most people who are more worried about basic food. But farmers like us will suffer," he said.

Ajay Barua, a wholesale distributor of flowers in the national capital, said: "There is no demand for flowers

anymore because of the coronavirus. Our business has come to a complete halt as five star hotels and event management companies have cancelled the orders".

Even unsold stock is rotting due to shutdown of both wholesale and retail markets, he added.

Meanwhile, Ghazipur Wholesale Flower Mandi Chairman Bijay Soni Sisodia said, "We are aware of the problems being faced by growers and traders. We are discussing with the Board members".

Even if restrictions are lifted on flower, it would be difficult to coordinate with traders getting supplies from different parts of the country during the current lockdown period, he said.

Traders bring flowers from major growing states like Karnataka, West Bengal and Rajasthan for sale in the Ghazipur mandi, one of the largest wholesale flower mandis in India.

https://www.facebook.com/SummitTimesSikkim/

**Watch our Nepali news broadcast every evening on Facebook at the Summit Times Daily Page.**

**Please like, Share, Comment and let us know how we can improve.**

**Thank You**

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

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

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

**For more Details Contact ; 6294745117,8768809862**

**Email ; chitishchetri7@gmail.com**



Misbah calls for uniform policy in dealing with corrupt cricketers

**KARACHI, MAR 31 (PTI):** Pakistan head coach and chief selector Misbah-ul-Haq on Tuesday demanded a clear policy for players who are found guilty of corruption at any level.

However, the former Test captain also didn't agree with the public comments made by Muhammad Hafeez, who feels tainted players should not be allowed back into the national team.

"It is my personal opinion that if you are playing as a player you shouldn't be giving such opinion as the ICC and PCB are the authority on these matters and they take decisions as per existing law," he said in a video interaction with the print media.

He advised Hafeez to avoid making comments because as a player one has to share the dressing room.

"It is good that the PCB CEO Wasim Khan has had a long talk with Hafeez on this issue and Hafeez has shared his ideas as well. I think he will now understand that it is totally up to organisation to take a decision on these issues."

Asked about Hafeez's suggestion that a clause should be put into the players contracts on the issue of what should happen if a player is found guilty of corruption, Misbah said that there should be a unanimous law for all players.

"But we have to take into count many things like a player's education and his understanding of his position and situation and his decision making ability. In most cases we have seen it has been about players failing to report any approaches to them."

Misbah players like in the recent Umar Akmal case tended to take things lightly and landed into trouble.

"My personal view is that if you want to put such a clause for players, it should be unanimous and should be decided once for all."

Misbah also indicated that Hafeez might not be in the team management's future plans in the ODI format.

"When we sit down to talk about ODI cricket we will have to see whether Hafeez would be playing in the 2023 World Cup because you have to start planning about a World Cup well in time.

# Lionel Messi says players will help staff at Barcelona but hits out at board again

**SID LOWE**  
**Madrid, 31 Mar [theGuardian]:** Lionel Messi has announced that Barcelona's first-team footballers will not only take a 70% pay cut for as long as the "state of alarm" continues in Spain but also make contributions to guarantee that staff at the club earn their full salary throughout the coronavirus crisis.

In a statement also released by Luis Suárez on Monday, Messi embraced the need for the players to be the ones to bear the brunt of the economic impact on the club but criticised the board for their handling of those measures and for what he sees as an attempt to turn public opinion against them. A statement from Barcelona soon after confirmed the measures.

Barcelona announced last week that they were going apply for an ERTE,

which allows companies to impose a temporary pay cut of up 70% on their employees during the crisis. That measure is applied unilaterally, as per Spanish labour laws, and was announced by Barcelona before an agreement with the players for a negotiated settlement had been reached.

The statement from the players, released on Messi's Instagram account, accepts that measure and confirms that the players will have their salary cut by the full 70%. On top of that, the first-team squad, whose collective annual salaries amount to €391m (£347m), have promised to protect the rest of the staff. Barcelona had announced that the ERTE would include pay cuts for "non-sporting" staff, although the details were not revealed.

"Beyond the reduction of 70% of our sala-



ries during the state of alarm, we are also going to make further contribution to ensure that the employees can continue to be paid 100% of their salaries for as long as this situation lasts," Messi's statement read.

Far from ending tension at the Camp Nou, the statement underlined the mistrust and the breakdown in the relationship between the boardroom and the dressing room.

Spain's football authorities are no closer to knowing whether com-

petition will resume this season or the full impact on the game. Barcelona were the first club to announce plans to request an ERTE, followed by Atlético Madrid, Espanyol and Alavés, and of the teams in the top division their situation is probably the most precarious. This is the latest in a long series of increasingly public conflicts between the players and the president, Josep Maria Bartomeu, as Barcelona's institutional and financial cri-

sis deepens.

That mistrust helps to explain why a negotiated settlement proved hard to reach, despite the players' initial willingness to reduce their salaries. That those negotiations were played out in the press, with players well aware of the relationships the club has with certain media, worsened the situation. Reports were seen by some of the players as deliberate leaks from the board, designed to point the finger of blame at

them for a crisis not of their making and forcing them into a corner. Messi was not prepared to let that pass.

"A lot has been written and said about the football first team at Barcelona, when it comes to the players' salaries during this state of alarm," the statement opened. "First of all, we would like to clarify that we have always been willing to apply a wage cut, because we understand perfectly that this is an exceptional situation and we are al-

ways the first to help the club when we have been asked to. Indeed, we have often done so on our own initiative in those moments in which we have considered it important or necessary.

"For that reason, we cannot help but be surprised by the fact that from within the club there are those trying to put us under the microscope or apply pressure for us to do something that we have always been clear that we would do," he added. "In fact, if an agreement has taken a few days to be reached it is simply because we were seeking a formula to help the club and also to help its employees in these very difficult times.

"If we did not speak publicly before, it was because our priority was to find real solutions that could truly help the club and also those who are going to be most affected by this situation."

## Pay cut a small thing, players are prepared to do their bit for game's survival: Paine

**MELBOURNE, MAR 31 (PTI):** Australian cricketers might have to accept a pay cut due to the COVID-19 pandemic, conceded Test captain Tim Paine but insisted that making financial sacrifices is a "small thing" in the current situation and they are prepared to "do their bit".

A pay cut for the top cricketers seems to be on the cards with Cricket Australia delaying annual contracts for both the men's and women's national teams. CA is preparing for the possibility of a severely-affected home summer due to the coronavirus outbreak.

"Certainly discussions will start happening in the next week or so," Paine was quoted as saying by 'ESPNcricinfo'.

"Certainly if things happen similar to what's happened to football and other sports, then we've certainly got to do our bit to make sure the game survives and remains really healthy for years to come.

"If it comes to that, I'm sure that's something that the players will look at. But there are bigger issues going on around the world at the moment than how much



our sportsmen are going to get paid. That'll be a small thing to us if that was to happen."

Australia could have overtaken India in the World Test Championship ahead of the Border-Gavaskar series if Paine's side would have managed a 2-0 series win over Bangladesh in June but with the coronavirus outbreak forcing a cricket shutdown, the tour is now unlikely to go ahead.

"You don't have to be Einstein to realise (the Bangladesh tour) is probably unlikely to go ahead, particularly in June. Whether it's cancelled or pushed back, we're not quite sure at the moment," Paine said.

"Some series have been cancelled and whether ones going forward are going to be continually cancelled or we're going to postpone them (is uncertain) but it's a couple

of Test matches and if at the end of the day we have to miss them, then so be it."

There is a lot of uncertainty over the rescheduling of the international calendar, especially with the World Test Championship final slated for June 2021.

Paine said they are eager to make the decision and might need to play five successive weeks to complete the World Test Championship.

"... maybe players are going to go through a period where we play five weeks' cricket (at a stretch) if we can to complete the Test championship. I think all players will be in favour of trying to finish that in any way we can.

"But again if it doesn't happen as I said there are bigger issues in the world and missing a few Test matches isn't going to hurt us," he said.

## Rohit Sharma chips in with Rs 80 lakh

**MUMBAI, MAR 31 (PTI):** Star India batsman Rohit Sharma has donated Rs 80 lakh to fight the rapidly-spreading COVID-19 pandemic, saying the onus is on the citizens to help the country get back on its feet.

Rohit, who is the vice-captain of the Indian ODI team, has donated Rs 45 lakh and Rs 25 lakh to the and CM's Relief Fund (Maharashtra) respectively.

He has given Rs 5 lakh to 'Zomato Feeding India', which is helping families affected by the ongoing national lockdown, and another Rs 5 lakh to help aid the welfare of stray dogs.

"We need our country back on feet & the onus is on us. I've done my bit to donate 45lakhs to #PM-CaresFunds, 25lakhs



to #CMReliefFund Maharashtra, 5lakhs to @FeedingIndia and 5lakhs to #WelfareOfStrayDogs. Let's get behind our leaders and support them @narendramodi @CMO-Maharashtra," tweeted the elegant right-handed batsman on Tuesday morning.

Rohit joined the list of top sportsmen comprising batting maestro Sachin Tendulkar, his skipper Virat Kohli, Suresh Raina, and his

Test teammate Ajinkya Rahane among others who have generously donated for the cause.

Maharashtra is one of the worst affected states in the pandemic with the positive cases in the state standing at 225 till Tuesday morning.

In India, according to the union health ministry, the death toll due to COVID-19 has increased to 32 while the cases have soared to 1,251 till Monday night.

# Coronavirus crisis forcing Hull KR's Mose Masoe to leave hospital early

**WAKEFIELD, 31 MAR [THEGUARDIAN]:** Hull KR's Mose Masoe has been told he will have to leave hospital in the next 72 hours and continue his rehabilitation from a career-ending spinal injury at home.

The rugby league team's co-captain will be discharged from Wakefield's Pinderfields hospital this week, with beds being freed up for coronavirus patients. Masoe has only recently started walking with the assistance of parallel bars, and says he is "not ready" to go home.

The 30-year-old prop has urged people to "stop being selfish" and stay at home, after becoming a victim of the ripple effect of the pandemic.

"They've got to clear out a lot of wards to get in the people who have coronavirus so a lot of us have to go home," Masoe told the Hull KR website. "I'm not really ready to go home at all.

"It will be nice to get home so I can spend some time with my kids but there's a lot of things



I can't do myself, like going to the toilet and things like that. I don't want to put a burden on my missus. We just got the news this morning so we're still in the dark."

Masoe says he has been told hospital staff are concerned about patients catching the virus. "When you get a spinal injury we're at a high risk. A lot of people forget our immune systems drop," he said.

"We need people to stay home so we can get back into the hospital to do rehab. People need to stop being selfish because we've felt the effects already.

It's the first time in the world you can save lives by just staying home

watching TV or playing PlayStation.

"That's my frustration with people who aren't listening. My wife is pregnant so they've all been staying home and she's only going out to get food. They've been doing the right thing and staying away. I haven't seen them for two weeks.

The former Samoa international suffered the injury in Rovers' pre-season game against Wakefield in January and was transferred to Pinderfields' spinal unit after four days in the intensive care unit at Leeds General Infirmary.

Masoe is unable to take any equipment home with him due to limited resources at the

hospital, but Hull KR and the RFL Benevolent Fund are hoping to help him out.

"I called my missus this morning and she's tried to get a stair-lift and the benevolent fund have pretty much said they'll sort that for me," he said. "I'm very lucky and grateful to have the support and that network but I feel real sorry for the other patients that don't have that. It'll be tough for them.

"I'm gutted to be going home because I wanted to keep my progression going. The next step was to go from parallel bars to a walking frame to crutches and then you can pretty much walk by yourself"

## IOC athletes commission says new Olympic dates give "much-needed certainty"

**LAUSANNE, MAR 31 (PTI):** The International Olympic Committee's athletes commission on Tuesday welcomed the announcement of new dates for the Olympics, saying the declaration has given those bound for Tokyo "much-needed certainty" after the mega-event's postponement to 2021.

In a statement, the IOC athletes commission, which also features India's lone individual Olympic gold-medallist Abhinav Bindra, lauded the announcement of new dates -- July 23 to August 8, 2021 -- within days of the event's postponement due to the global COVID-19 pandemic.

"We believe the confirmation of the new dates will give you



much-needed certainty and allow you to focus on your health and safety, as well as the health of the wider community," read a statement from the commission chaired by swimmer Kirsty Coventry, a two-time Olympic gold-winner.

"Additionally, having the Games in the summer period maximises the opportunity for all athletes, regardless of their country, to have the best pos-

sible preparation ahead of the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020," it added.

The commission also welcomed the IOC's announcement that those who have qualified for the Games before the qualifying schedule was thrown haywire by the pandemic, will remain Tokyo-bound.

The commission said it remains committed to advising athletes on "training and prepara-

tion, and mental and physical health; and anti-doping information and updates."

"We know so many of you are facing an incredibly challenging time, both with your personal and sporting lives.

"We believe that, when we all come together in 2021, it will be an extra-special celebration of sport and humanity uniting after such a difficult time for all," it said.

to book  
advertisements in  
Summit-  
Times  
call  
03592-  
208698  
9734152541  
9647102692  
advertise@  
summit-  
times.com



## Air Canada to temporarily lay off half its workforce



**Montreal, Mar 31 (AFP):** Air Canada announced Monday it would temporarily lay off nearly half of its employees and reduce activity by up to 90 percent in the second quarter due to the coronavirus.

The measures would affect 15,200 employees and about 1,300 managers from April 3, the airline said in a press release.

Last week, Air Canada -- the first Canadian airline to be hit hard by the pandemic -- announced the temporary layoff of more than 5,100 flight attendants, including 1,500 members of its low-cost subsidiary Air Canada Rouge.

"The unpredictable extent and duration of the COVID-19 pandemic requires a significant overall response," Air Canada president Calin Rovinescu said in the statement.

"To furlough such a large proportion of our employees is an extremely painful decision but one we are required to take given our dramatically smaller operations for the next while." The Montreal-based compa-

ny will reduce operations for the second quarter of 2020 by 85 to 90 percent compared to the same period the previous year.

A cost reduction program will be implemented to generate "at least 500 million" (320 million euros). Senior executives will give up a part of their salary, and the president and chief financial officer will give up their entire salary.

Air Canada has suspended most of its international flights, including to the United States, after the announcement of the temporary closure of the US-Canada border in an attempt to stop the spread of the coronavirus.

The number of airports in Canada it is now serving has been reduced from 62 to 40.

Air Canada employs 36,000 people around the world, according to the company website.

Canada's second-largest airline, Air Transat, which is being acquired by Air Canada, also announced it would lay off nearly 2,000 flight attendants, beginning in early April.

## US judge grants early release to Brazilian in FIFA corruption scandal

**NEW YORK, MAR 31 (AFP):** - A federal judge in New York on Monday granted the release from prison on humanitarian grounds of an 87-year-old former senior Brazilian football official tarnished by the FIFA corruption scandal.

Judge Pamela Chen authorized the release of Jose Maria Marin, a former Brazilian Football Confederation president, who was serving a four-year prison sentence for accepting millions of dollars in bribes as part of the global FIFA corruption scandal.

Marin was scheduled for release in early December 2020, according to the US Federal Bureau of Prisons.

But following a request from the Brazilian's lawyers Chen granted a "compassionate release," for reasons "including his advanced age, significantly deteriorating health, elevated risk of dire health consequences due to the current COVID-19

outbreak, status as a non-violent offender, and service of 80% of his original sentence," a court document seen by AFP read.

Marin was the first major football official found guilty and sent to prison in the United States as part of the "FIFA gate" scandal of kickbacks and bribes that smeared the reputation of the global sports organization.

He was being held in FCI Allenwood, a minimum security facility in the state of Pennsylvania.

In August of 2018, a New York jury found Marin guilty of accepting 6.6 million in bribes -- along with his deputy, Marco Polo del Nero -- in exchange for contracts to broadcast major tournaments.

Upon hearing his sentence Marin, who had already served 13 months behind bars, broke down in the courtroom and burst out crying.

"I could die in prison!" he wailed.

## US judge grants early release to Brazilian in FIFA corruption scandal

**NEW YORK, MAR 31 (AFP):** - A federal judge in New York on Monday granted the release from prison on humanitarian grounds of an 87-year-old former senior Brazilian football official tarnished by the FIFA corruption scandal.

Judge Pamela Chen authorized the release of Jose Maria Marin, a former Brazilian Football Confederation president, who was serving a four-year prison sentence for accepting millions of dollars in bribes as part of the global FIFA corruption scandal.

Marin was scheduled for release in early December 2020, according to the US Federal Bu-

reau of Prisons.

But following a request from the Brazilian's lawyers Chen granted a "compassionate release," for reasons "including his advanced age, significantly deteriorating health, elevated risk of dire health consequences due to the current COVID-19 outbreak, status as a non-violent offender, and service of 80% of his original sentence," a court document seen by AFP read.

Marin was the first major football official found guilty and sent to prison in the United States as part of the "FIFA gate" scandal of kickbacks and bribes

**BY M ZULQERNAIN**

**LAHORE, MAR 31 (PTI):** A Pakistani court has exempted ailing former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, who is in London for treatment, from personal appearance in a money laundering case.

Sharif, 70, has been in London since November last year.

The Lahore Accountability Court on Monday exempted Sharif from personal hearing in the Chaudhry Sugar Mills (CSM) case till the filing of a formal case.

Sharif in his petition had requested the court that he should be granted exemption as his doctors in London are not allowing him to travel.

The three time premier's daughter

Maryam Nawaz was also given exemption from personal appearance.

She has also filed a petition in the Lahore High Court seeking permission to go abroad for treatment, from personal appearance in a money laundering case. This case is pending in the court.

The National Accountability Bureau has accused Sharif along with two others of money laundering under the garb of sale/purchase of the sugar mills' shares.

According to Sharif's brother Shahbaz, the former premier will undergo a heart procedure this week. He said Sharif cannot return the country till he gets well.

The Imran Khan government has already declared Sharif an 'absconder' after refusing

to extend his four-week bail granted by court on medical grounds.

The Pakistan government says it is not satisfied Sharif's medical reports and he should return to the country forthwith.

The Lahore High Court in October last year granted bail to Sharif on medical grounds for four weeks, allowing the Punjab government to extend it further in the light of his medical reports.

The Islamabad High Court had also granted bail to Sharif in the Al Aziz Mills corruption case, in which the former prime minister was serving a seven-year jail term, clearing his way to



travel abroad for medical treatment.

According to Sharif's

physician, he is suffering from complex multi-vessel coronary artery dis-

ease and substantial ischemic and threatened myocardium for which he is due to undergo surgery.

According to a media report, Sharif's physician David Lawrence said that the his heart surgery will have to wait until the prevailing uncertainty of Covid-19 settles down, hinting at his extended duration of stay abroad.

According to the doctor, Sharif "at his age, with significant disease burden, falls in the category of patients who if exposed can develop serious Covid-19 symptoms with adverse effects."

The doctor further said that Sharif has been advised to stay in close proximity of advanced health facilities in London.

# Italy mourns its virus dead at end of fateful month

**ROME, MAR 31 (AFP):** Italy marked a minute of silence and flew flags at half mast on Tuesday to mourn the 11,591 people who have died from the coronavirus pandemic that has drastically altered life in the Mediterranean country.

The nation of 60 million people has recorded nearly a third of all fatalities caused by the disease around the world.

The day of mourning marks a month in which Italy saw more deaths from a single disaster than at any time since World War II.

It was first detected in Italy near the northern city of Milan in late February.

The virus "is an in-

jury that hurt the whole country", Rome mayor Virginia Raggi said after observing a minute's silence at noon.

"Together, we will get through this," she said at a ceremony held outside Rome's city hall.

Vatican City also flew its yellow-and-white flags at half mast in solidarity with the rest of Italy.

The Italian government imposed an unprecedented lockdown three weeks ago to help stem the spread of a virus that has now officially infected more than 100,000 people in the country.

The financial cost of the forced shutdown of almost all businesses threatens to send



Italy's economy -- the European Union's third largest last year -- into its deepest recession in decades.

The government decided to extend the

shutdown Monday until at least mid-April.

Stores and restaurants are not expected to start opening until at least May and no official is willing to predict when

life might return to the way it was just a month ago.

"The sacrifice we make when we are asked to stay at home is necessary to save all of us," the

Rome mayor said.

"We must do it for all those who lost their lives and all those who put their lives at risk by working for us all -- the doctors the nurses, the people who work in supermarkets."

But the head of the infectious diseases department at Milan's Luigi Sacco Hospital that managed to isolate the Italian strain said he was looking at the future with some hope.

"We have the impression that (the pandemic) is weakening," Massimo Galli told Italian radio.

Italy reported 812 deaths on Monday. Its single day record was 969 on Friday -- the highest daily toll recorded anywhere in the world.

# Ukraine parliament adopts 'historic' land reform bill

**KIEV, MAR 31 (AFP):** Ukraine's parliament on Tuesday lifted a long-standing ban on the sale of farmland, a crucial and controversial piece of legislation needed to unlock support from the International Monetary Fund.

In the early hours of Tuesday, 259 lawmakers -- sporting masks and gloves to guard against coronavirus infection -- backed the bill as President Volodymyr Zelensky applauded them and flashed a victory sign.

The president has to sign off on the bill for it to become law.

On Monday Zelensky

had urged MPs to lift the ban, warning that the ex-Soviet country could default due to the economic shocks of the coronavirus pandemic.

"It is vital to support our economy today," he told lawmakers before the vote.

The bill has sparked huge controversy and multiple protests in one of Europe's poorest countries.

While the land reform has been welcomed by investors, critics fear that opening up the land market will lead to a takeover by foreign owners or giant holdings of land which,

since the Soviet era, have only been available for rent.

"This is undeniably a historic event," Andriy Yermak, chief of Zelensky's staff, said on Facebook.

According to the latest version of the legislation, Ukrainians will be

able to buy or sell farmland from July 2021.

The government initially planned to allow foreigners to buy farmland from 2024, but Zelensky, under pressure from opponents, has promised a referendum on the issue.

The former Soviet

republic, whose stalling economy has been propped up by Western aid for years, is home to one-third of the world's fertile black soil rich in nutrients.

To receive an 8 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund Ukraine also has to pass

a banking reform bill.

The key piece of legislation, already adopted in a first reading on Monday, is seen by many as aimed at preventing Igor Kolomoisky, Ukraine's top tycoon with ties to Zelensky, from regaining control of Privatbank, the country's largest lender.

## HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?

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

Sikkim SCAN | CapitalTIMES | Neighbourhood WATCH | Sports & Specials | ElseWhere | EICETERA

*It's easy to relax... When you can trust the News.*

**To book ad-space, contact SummitTIMES at**

**GANGTOK:**  
For circulation details Contact: +91-9749897695, +91-9647102692  
& for Advertisement booking at +91-9933427905 or at office no 03592 208498. Mail us at [advertise@summittimes.com](mailto:advertise@summittimes.com)

**SILIGURI:**  
Mr. Mani Rai, M/s. Space Ads, B.R. Ambedkar Building, Room No.7, 1st floor, Opp. Bonga Hotel, Hill Cart Road, Siliguri - 735003. Ph. +91-9832318644/ 9800682989/915035100 or mail at [manirai\\_siliguri@yahoo.co.in](mailto:manirai_siliguri@yahoo.co.in)

**KOLKATA OFFICE:**  
Irrahad Ali/ Inteezyar, Synapse, 6, Modan Street, Mezzine - 2, 2nd floor, Kolkata - 700072. Ph. 033-22124348/ fax 033-22124337/ mob. +91-9830547774/ +91-9831083973. E-mail: [contact.synapse@gmail.com](mailto:contact.synapse@gmail.com) / [irahad\\_ali123@gmail.com](mailto:irahad_ali123@gmail.com)

**Phone:**  
03592-208698  
+91-9832556698  
+91-9832080753

**www.summittimes.com**  
[news@summittimes.com](mailto:news@summittimes.com)  
[summittimes@gmail.com](mailto:summittimes@gmail.com)  
[advertise@summittimes.com](mailto:advertise@summittimes.com)

**Address:**  
Santa Bhawan Complex, Church Road  
Near Diesel Power House (DPH)  
Gangtok, East Sikkim, 737101

**VIDEO NEWS SECTION**





**SOCIALLY DISTANT SELFIE!** Actress, Kate Hudson took a selfie with a friend while practicing social distancing in Los An-

## Emilia Clarke promises virtual dinner date in exchange for COVID-19 donation

**LONDON, MAR 31 (PTI):** "Game of Thrones" star Emilia Clarke has offered a dinner date to people donating money to SameYou, her charity that supports those recovering from brain injuries and strokes, in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. The new initiative by the foundation aims to help the National Health Service, the publicly funded healthcare system of the UK, free up beds for coronavirus patients by helping people recover from brain injuries at home.

In a video shared on Instagram on Monday, Clarke said 12 donors will be randomly selected from around the world for a virtual dinner with her.

"We'll cook it together and eat it together. And we will discuss lots of things isolation and fear and also funny videos. And, you know, the fact that I can't really cook. So it's going to be fun," the 33-year-old said in the clip.

Clarke has set the donation amount to 250,000 pounds.

The drive is in partnership with



the Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital in Massachusetts and the University College London Hospital.

"We are creating a virtual rehabilitation clinic so brain injury survivors have somewhere to go and somewhere to feel safe and somewhere to not feel so alone and isolated, which I think is a good thing. We need to do all we can to release as many

beds as possible to free up our hard-working NHS," Clarke said.

The actor founded SameYou after revealing that she had suffered from two brain aneurysms in the early days of "Game of Thrones".

Over the weekend, "X-Men" star James McAvoy donated 275,000 pounds to the NHS to combat the coronavirus pandemic.

## Tenor Placido Domingo feels 'fine' after coronavirus

**Mexico City, Mar 31 (AP):** Tenor Placido Domingo said Monday he is resting at home after catching the new coronavirus. Domingo said in a statement that he is "at home and I feel fine." The 79-year-old was reportedly hospitalized in Mexico after publicly acknowledging on March 22 that he had tested positive for COVID-19 and said he was going into isolation.

Domingo, who has longstanding ties to Mexico, had suffered from a fever and a cough.

Domingo wrote on Monday that from the very first symptom I was, as usual, under medical supervision, given my age and my comorbidity.

My thoughts right now are with those who suffer and with all those who are generously working to save lives, he said. I thank everyone for your affection and once again I recommend everyone to stay safe at home. See you soon.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or

moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia and death.

The opera singer's illness comes after his own glittering career had recently been stained by sexual misconduct revelations.

Last year, multiple women accused Domingo of harassment and abusing his power while he held management positions at Los Angeles Opera and Washington National Opera in stories published by The Associated Press.

After first denying any wrongdoing, Domingo issued an apology last month when the American Guild of Musical Artists and LA Opera found the sexual harassment allegations against him to be credible.

He has since had a number of performances canceled. He also resigned as the director of the LA Opera.

## Not worried about stereotypes, just want to work in Bollywood: Sajjad Delafrooz

**JUSTIN RAO**

**MUMBAI, MAR 31 (PTI):** Iranian actor Sajjad Delafrooz says his love for Bollywood precedes his love for acting, which is why he is not bothered about being stereotyped as long as he gets good work.

Sajjad was first noticed in Akshay Kumar starrer "Baby" with his role of a doctor. His next two outings featured him as a baddie -- a terrorist in "Tiger Zinda Hai" and a criminal mastermind for Neeraj Pandey's latest web-series "Special Ops".

Co-directed by Shivam Nair, the series revolves around a manhunt for a fictitious terrorist mastermind responsible for carrying out multiple terror attacks.

"Stereotyping happens with a lot of actors. I'm not worried about that. My main focus now is to work, do a good job and do every role differently. You can see a different person on "Tiger Zinda Hai" and 'Special Ops'. My main aim is to be and work in Bollywood. The stereotyping doesn't bother me," Sajjad told PTI.

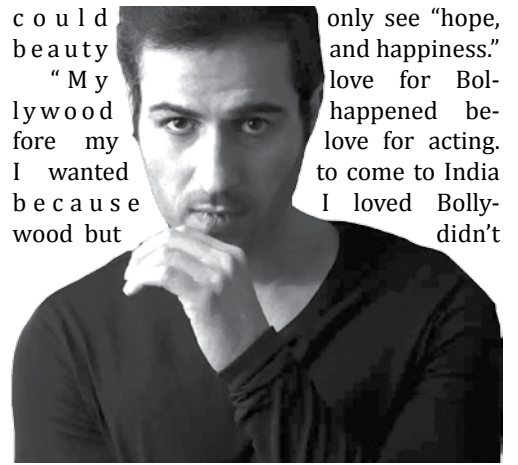
The 36-year-old actor said he is amazed by the response to the Hotstar Special and gives credit to Pandey for the character.

"The response is unexpected. Neeraj Pandey was one of the biggest reasons I wanted to be a part of the show as I wanted to work with him again. It's a great feeling to now be appreciated for your performance. All the credit goes to Neeraj. I just had to listen to his brief and deliver the way he wanted. I trusted him completely as an actor," he said.

Born in Iran, Sajjad grew up in Sharjah, UAE in an Indian community where he was first introduced to Hindi films and music.

Though films and songs were considered a taboo in the conservative society, as a child, Sajjad never saw anything bad in them and

could beauty  
"My  
lywood  
fore my  
I wanted  
because  
wood but



only see "hope, and happiness." love for Bollywood happened because I loved Bollywood didn't

know I wanted to be an actor... The love grew in me with time. I had to lie and plan to go to cinema halls to watch films of Shah Rukh Khan and others."

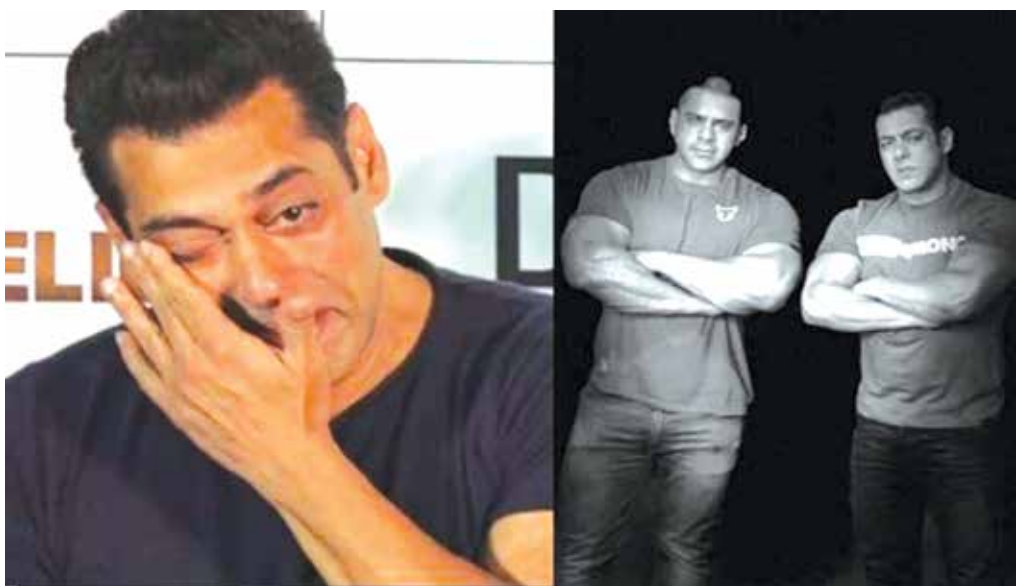
Unable to bear the monotony of his PR manager job, Sajjad quit in 2011 and packed his bags to head to Bollywood.

"It took me seven years to find my place here. It's a big market, it's not easy and it's challenging. I'm still fighting for it but I'm happy after seven years of failing and picking myself up, I've finally found my way to Bollywood."

The actor, who has worked in films in several languages, including Farsi, Turkish and Arabic, said he is aware that some of the roles that he is offered can be limiting but he doesn't want to leave any stone unturned.

"I remember when I had started out, people said, how can you act, you're a model'. I've been working on my Hindi for the past two years, I know it's a matter of time before I get better roles. If I work hard, I can definitely achieve it," he added.

## Salman Khan's nephew Abdullah Khan passes away at 38



**MUMBAI, MAR 31 (PTI):** Bollywood superstar Salman Khan's nephew and body builder Abdullah Khan passed away at a hospital here, a source close to the family said. He was 38.

Abdullah died on Monday at city-based Lilavati Hospital, the insider added. Reportedly, the cause of death is lung infection.

Asked to confirm the reports, the source told PTI, "It seems so but final reports are not out yet."

Salman took to Twitter to remember his nephew.

The "Dabangg 3" actor shared a picture of him posing with Abdullah and captioned it as, "Will always love you..."

Actor Rahul Dev offered his condolences and tweeted, Sincere condolences and prayers.. Strength to family.

Sharing a photo of Abdullah, actor Daisy Shah, wrote, "Will always love you my bestie...#RestInPeace."

Singer-actor Iulia Vantur also posted a picture of Abdullah and wrote, "As you said 'we fall, we break, we fail but then we rise, we heal, we overcome'. @aaba81 u left too soon. #realstrong #rip (sic)"

Salman and his family are at their Panvel farmhouse amid countrywide lockdown in the wake of coronavirus pandemic.

Recently, the actor pledged to offer financial help to 25,000 daily wage cine workers, who are in dire need of assistance.

Visit Us at : [www.summittimes.com](http://www.summittimes.com)

### ARIES:

Having \*this\* much proximity to others can be both a good and a bad thing, depending on how you choose to look at it. For everything you love about them, there are about 100 things that you cannot tolerate. But living with you is no party either, Aries! So be kind. Be compassionate. Understand where the other is coming from, appreciate what they're doing for you, and give thanks often. Remember, nobody is obliged to alter their personality to meet your expectations.

### TAURUS:

It's easy to start playing the blame game. I mean you're under lockdown, your job situation is causing you so much stress, and that to-do list seems to be growing by the minute! It will become increasingly easy to snap and lose your cool with other people as the days go by. But is that the best way to deal with your circumstances? Taurus, put your adult pants on, realise that we're all in this together, and that unless you practice kindness and accept where you are right now, you will not be able to get through this.

### GEMINI:

Things could have been a lot worse, but you're safe, you're indoors, you have a source of sustenance, and are surrounded by at least a few people you love. Give thanks, Gemini. Send out a prayer of gratitude into the Universe. Know that raising your vibrations will make you a magnet for the good stuff. What you could be struggling with, however, is finding moments of Zen where it's just you and yourself. How about a ritualistic bath followed by a tête-à-tête with your spirit guides? Don't worry, the world will not go on hold if you disappear for a hot second.

### CANCER:

Cancer, you're making the most of your house arrest—cook-

ing, cleaning, working out \*and\* meeting your deadlines like a queen. Not that we'd expect anything less from you! What's making this period away from the matrix oh-so-special is that it is giving you clarity on who your real people are and the connections you want to consciously cultivate over the next few weeks. Things to do this evening: get on to HouseParty and host a games night for your crew. It's going to be a BYOS affair: bring your own sanitiser, duh!

### LEO:

Confidence has always been your superpower, Leo. Then what's making you doubt your abilities now? The cards are urging you to dig into your reserves and remind yourself of your strength and the mountains that you have moved in the past. It may seem like the world is on lockdown, but this is just temporary. We will all find a sense of normalcy soon. In other words, you will be given the platform to showcase your talents and share your gifts with the world. So continue to put in the work even though nobody is watching right now.

### VIRGO:

Staying indoors is no problem at all! You're secretly a caveman anyway. What this period away from the matrix is awakening you to is the fact that you are blessed with a soul crew that's holding space for you despite the turbulence they may be facing in their own lives. Celebrate and nurture these connections, Virgo. Make a conscious effort to reach out, especially when you feel like you're melting into the black hole. We need each other's support more than ever before.

### LIBRA:

Sometimes we get so caught up in fulfilling our dreams that we

forget to notice when they come to fruition. Take a moment, Libra. Be grateful for the blessings. This life is no accident. You have consciously cultivated the garden you are surrounded in with love and care, and have been supported by your spirit team every step of the way. Let the harvest inspire you to keep putting in the work and create the abundance you desire. Remember, the challenges presented to you at this moment cannot be overcome by using the same tricks. Be creative. Approach everything before you with a beginner's mind.

### SCORPIO:

A Wayne Dyer quote to help you tap into your inner wisdom: "A higher concept of yourself involves taking on new truths and shedding old views of what you can achieve. This is the only way you can achieve your desires." Scorpio, you're in the midst of a massive transformation, one that is making you realise you're not the person you used to be. Give yourself the freedom to explore and try on a new pair of jeans. There is no better time than the now to move closer to your true self. Not everybody will understand this metamorphosis. Let go of the need to please everybody. Those who truly love you will acknowledge the self-work and take pride in seeing you glow.

### SAGITTARIUS:

This period of reflection is challenging you to turn inwards and face your inner demons. Sagittarius, know you tried your best, and that is enough. Practicing forgiveness is the only way to free yourself. Instead of thinking of life as a school, think of it as a playground, a place where you're encouraged to have fun, trip and fall, and make plenty of mistakes. As Tryon Edwards once said, "The error of the past is the wisdom and success of the future."

### CAPRICORN:

You may find yourself going back and forth on a lot of decisions. Where is this feeling of uncertainty coming from? Are you blocking out your own voice in order to listen to that of others? Could you be feeling disconnected from your inner wisdom? Set some time aside to tune in, Capricorn. Meditation is a good way to facilitate the journey inwards. Observe the thoughts and feelings that arise when you are in your Zen place. You could even journal the first thought that comes to you. Remember, your guides are always communicating with you from beyond the veil.

### AQUARIUS:

A major part of the growth and evolution process is acknowledging that you are no longer the person that you used to be. Change is the only constant, right? Your time away from the world is helping you uncover newer truths about yourself and the cosmos. Continue to shed the layers that feel inauthentic. You are making space for a brand new narrative, starting now. Remember, every time your inner world goes through a shift, it brings about a change in your outer reality. You will find that some relationships are just not how they used to be, while others are becoming rock solid.

### PISCES:

Want to hear a cliché, Pisces? Everything you seek is on the other side of fear. Organise a Ted Talk for your demons. Strip them off the power to influence your decisions. This is the only way to move closer to the big goals you have set for yourself. The world may be on lockdown, but that shouldn't stop you from putting in the work and making your dreams a reality. Trust that the Universe will reward your commitment by clearing the roadblocks that were once hindering your growth.