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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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COVID-19 cases rise to 433; active cases 402

NEW DELHI, MAR 23 (PTI):

The death toll due to the novel coronavirus pandemic rose to nine on Monday after West Bengal and Himachal Pradesh reported a casualty each, while the number of confirmed cases soared to 468, the Union health ministry said.

The number of active COVID-19 cases are 424 now and 35 people have been cured/discharged/migrated, while nine have died, taking total number of confirmed cases to 468, including 40 foreign nationals, according to the ministry data.

Seven deaths were earlier reported from Gujarat, Bihar and Maharashtra, Karnataka, Delhi, Maharashtra and Punjab.

Gujarat, Bihar and Maharashtra reported a death each on Sunday, while four deaths were earlier reported from Karnataka, Delhi, Maharashtra and Punjab.

With four new cases, the number of COVID-19 cases in Maharashtra stand at 74, including three foreigners. In Kerala, 67 cases were reported, including seven foreign nationals, according to the ministry data.

Karnataka has 33 cases of coronavirus patients after seven more persons tested positive for the deadly virus. The number of cases in Telangana have risen to 32, including 10 foreigners.

Uttar Pradesh now has 31 positive cases, including a foreign national. Delhi and Gujarat have reported 29 cases each, while Rajasthan has 28 positive cases, including two foreign nationals.

In Haryana, there are 26 cases, including 14

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Sikkim in complete lockdown from 25 March

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 23 MAR:**

The State Government today announced a complete lock down starting 25 March with restrictions on movement of both intra and interstate vehicles as well as shutting down of all private establishments.

The lock down will come into force at 6AM on 25 March and continue till 31 March or till further notice.

The order states that all shops, hotels, restaurants, private offices, commercial establishments, factories, workshops and godowns will remain shut.

However, law enforcement agencies and the army as well as those involved in supplying essential commodities will be exempt

from this order.

The following services will remain open:

- health services and their transportation
- electricity, water and sanitation services of urban local bodies and conservancy services.
- fire, civil defence and emergency services.
- telecom, internet and postal services.
- banks and ATMs.
- shops for PDS, groceries, vegetables, fruits, meat, fish, bread and milk, and medicines and the services for storage and transportation of required items. These shops will remain

open from 9 a.m to 8 p.m.

- petrol pumps, LPG cylinders, oil agencies and Sikkim Milk Union and its outlets and their godowns and transportation
- private clinics, pharmaceutical manufacturing, medical equipments manufacturing and their transportation
- commissioned power generation projects and their transportation
- print, electronic and social media and their transportation
- manufacturing units engaged in production of essential commodities not specified above with the

permission of the government.

- any other production and manufacturing units requiring continuous process may continue after obtaining prior approval of the government

VEHICULAR MOVEMENT

From Rangpo checkpoint, only law enforcement, emergency services/ cases and supply of essential commodities [food grains, ration, medicines, milk, etc] will be allowed through.

Those working in industries, hotels, construction projects will not be allowed to leave the state after 25 March till the lock-down is in force.

Given that there will still be

situation in which private citizens need to travel, government, private and taxi vehicles will be allowed to leave Sikkim only after showing necessary permits issued by a BDO or SDM.

Within the state, there will be a complete ban on movement of vehicles from 6 a.m on 25 March and, additionally, the odd-even rule will apply till 25 March.

The State Government has also notified quarantine rules and now, everyone returning to Sikkim from abroad will be required to stay under strict home quarantine or facility quarantine for a period decided by local health authorities.

Those refusing to cooperate will be penalised under section 188 and 270 of IPC.

SDF launches awareness campaign against COVID-19

PARTY TO DISTRIBUTE HAND SANITIZERS, FACE MASKS AND AWARENESS PAMPHLETS



SAGAR CHHETRI

GANGTOK, 23 MAR:

Sikkim Democratic Front today launched an awareness campaign against COVID-19 with the release of awareness pamphlets, hand sanitizers and face masks the party has acquired for free distribution to the people of Sikkim.

The state-wide campaign was flagged off by SDF president, Pawan

Chamling, from SDF Bha-

wan on Monday morning.

He appealed to party leaders, workers and panchayats to work together in creating wider awareness about Novel Coronavirus to save Sikkim from the virus.

It is informed that the party will be distributing one lakh each of hand sanitizers, face masks and awareness pamphlets to the people of Sikkim.

On the occasion, Mr Chamling stressed that prevention was the best option to keep Sikkim safe from COVID-19 and that this could be achieved by reaching the right message and information to the people.

“Through this campaign, the party wants to give the right message on coronavirus and its prevention to the people of Sikkim. We will distrib-

ute awareness pamphlets in Nepali and English and hand sanitizers and face masks to the people across the State,” he said.

He said that the people of the State have to collaborate and support all initiatives to protect Sikkim from coronavirus and mentioned that the party will also help in screening through thermal scanners and other medical equipment.

Amendment placed to grant autonomy to Sikkim State Univ

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 23 MARCH:

The State government with a view to grant autonomy status to Sikkim State University, tabled a fresh amendment bill to the Act today.

Education Minister Kunga Nima Lepcha, in the statement of objects and reasons accompanying the amendment, explains this was being done to allow the Sikkim State University to function as an autonomous institute of Higher Education.

Amendments have been proposed to Section 6A and to make changes in Clause (6) and (27), insertion of Sub-Clause 8 in the clause 8 of the Schedule of the Sikkim State University Act, 2003 thereby allowing the University to function independently.

The amendment authorizes the Executive Committee to constitute a Selection Committee to make recommendations to the Executive Council for appointment of teachers.

Sub-clause 2 further authorizes the

Vice-Chancellor, as chairperson of the Selection Committee along with Dean of the School of Studies, Head of Department concerned, two experts nominated by Vice Chancellor and one expert nominated by Chancellor as members.

The amendment also proposes that the Chancellor of the University be divested powers to remove the Vice-Chancellor from the office on grounds of incapacity, misconduct or violation of statutory provisions, provided no such order is made by the Chancellor unless the Vice Chancellor has been given reasonable opportunity of showing cause against the action proposed to be taken against him.

However, the Chancellor shall have statutory powers at any time before making any order and can place the Vice Chancellor under suspension, pending enquiry.

The amendment will put to vote on Tuesday.

Returning scholarship students to undergo compulsory quarantine at SICUN facility

GANGTOK, 23 MAR [IPR]:

The Education Department, recognizing that adequate precautions have been necessitated because of the Novel Coronavirus situation, has decided that all students studying under the Chief Minister's Meritorious Scholarship Scheme and Dr Ambedkar Scholarship Scheme, who were returning to Sikkim today must be sent to Sikkim Cooperative Union (SICUN) hostel at Assam-Lingzey for quarantine

Arrangements for bus service from Bagdogra

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5.94 lakh screened for nCov in Sikkim

GANGTOK, MAR 23 (PTI):

A total of 5.94 lakh people entering Sikkim have been screened amid the coronavirus outbreak, the health department said on Monday.

Of the total number of people who were screened at five inter-state border checkpoints till March 21, coronavirus-like symptoms were found in four of them, it said in a release.

“Swab and blood samples of three of the four persons were sent for tests. They have tested negative for coronavirus,” it said.

Of the people screened, 135 have been put under observation and 13 of them have completed the 28-day observation period, the release said.

Three quarantine centres have been set up at Majitar, Rangpo and Karfekar, it said.

The Health Department has also set up isolation wards at four hospitals, the release said.

Meanwhile, Chief Secretary SC Gupta reviewed the preparedness of various

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Budget Session of Sikkim Legislative Assembly Commences

GANGTOK, 23 MAR [IPR]: The Second Session of Tenth Assembly (Budget Session 2020-21) of Sikkim Legislative Assembly commenced from today.

Speaker of Sikkim Legislative Assembly, LB Das welcomed the Governor, Ganga Prasad and all the Members of the House to the Budget Session.

Governor of Sikkim in his address to the House said that the proposed Budget for financial year 2020-21 for the State of Sikkim would encompass all the priority sectors of development and will be in line with the inclusive development model of the Union Government. He stressed on the need to focus on consolidation of existing schemes and programmes, before starting new initiatives, and emphasized on the need to strengthen the revenue generation mod-



el of the State. The Governor touched upon some of the priority sectors of the State Government such as Health, Education, and Agriculture.

The Governor concluded his address with an appeal to utilize the budget for the overall development of the people of Sikkim. He said

that the budget should address the aspirations of all section of the population.

Speaker thanked the Governor for his address to the House. Thereafter, the Speaker made an announcement in the House. He announced that with the due consent from Members, the

time period of this Budget Session is to be reduced to two days only on account of outbreak of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). He said that many countries in the world have suspended, reduced, postponed or cancelled their legislative sessions following this global pandemic.

Some of the countries have even issued Stay-at-Home orders to their citizens for weeks. Delhi is learnt to have reduced its budget session to one day i.e. today only. Chhattisgarh Assembly has adjourned its session. The Prime Minister of India via video message to the nation has urged



the citizens to isolate oneself from social gatherings. He has stressed on the importance of following self-imposed norms of Social Distancing. Requesting citizens to patiently abide by the norm, to isolate oneself and come out of the house only if imperative, while trying to work from

home and avoid unnecessary travel. The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Govt of India also has issued Advisory on social distancing in view of spread of this virus. The World Health Organization has also issued Advisory for tackling this contagion.

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Meeting of the State Task Force for COVID-19 prevention

GANGTOK, 23 MAR [IPR]: Chief Secretary SC Gupta chaired a meeting of the State Task Force for COVID-19 prevention here at Tashiling Secretariat today.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretaries, Nodal Officer for COVID-19, Joint Secretary, Government of India, Puneet Kansal, Principal Secretaries, Secretaries and Officers of line departments. The meeting was also attended by the District Collector of all four districts through video conferencing.

The Chief Secretary thanked people of Sikkim for supporting the cause of Sunday's Janata Cur-



few. The Chief Secretary requested Law Secretary to immediately for implementation of Epidemic Disease Act, 1897 in the State of Sikkim.

The Food and Civil Supplies Department was asked to ensure that there is no spike in prices

of essential commodities in the market. Further, the Department was asked to explore whether they can provide two-month PDS supply in advance to the beneficiaries.

The District Collectors were directed to enforce requirement of

compulsory quarantining of those returning from countries notified by the Health Ministry.

The meeting decided to convert 8th and 9th floors of the Sir Thutob Namgyal Memorial Hospital, Sochakgang into a designated facility for treating confirmed cases of COVID-19.

In view of the fact that the Pharmaceutical companies are engaged in

Manufacture of essential medicines, it was decided that they should be allowed to function normally even during the lockdown period. However, the ban on entry of new workers should remain. These units shall ensure all medical safety precautions.

SC invokes its plenary power to extend limitation period of appeals

NEW DELHI, MAR 23 (PTI): The Supreme Court Monday invoked its plenary powers under Article 142 of the Constitution to extend limitation period of appeals from high courts or tribunals on account of coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

A bench of Chief Justice SA Bobde and Justices L N Rao and Surya Kant said the Court has taken suo motu cognizance of the situation arising out of the challenge faced by the country because of Covid-19 virus.

As a result, difficulties may be faced by litigants across the country in filing their petitions/applications/ suits/ appeals/ all other proceedings within the period of limitation prescribed under the general law of

limitation or under Special Laws (both Central and/or State), it said.

The top court said that to obviate such difficulties, "it is hereby ordered that a period of limitation in all such proceedings, irrespective of the limitation prescribed under the general law or Special Laws whether condonable or not shall stand extended w.e.f. 15th March 2020 till further order/s to be passed by this Court in present proceedings".

It said: "We are exercising this power under Article 142 read with Article 141 of the Constitution of India and declare that this order is a binding order within the meaning of Article 141 on all Courts/Tribunals and authorities."

Budget Session...

The Speaker added that we should have adjourned the Session sine die but it is a known fact that the government cannot function without passing the budget, as it is mandatory as per the Constitution of India. We would also not be able to fight and resolve this epidemic without passing the Appropriation Bill, as the whole system we work under would cripple, he added.

Further, the Speaker informed that as a precautionary measure, the Sikkim Legislative Assembly Secretariat has restricted visitors thereby not issuing gallery passes to unessential visitors in line with directives issued by Lok Sabha. There would be no lunch breaks and tea breaks too, to use the available time for necessary business of the House to its optimum.

The Speaker then asked the Members for their consent on the matter, to which a majority of the Members responded, and therefore the Speaker invoked his residuary powers under Rule 334 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Sikkim Legislative Assembly to curtail the time period for all businesses to two days. The Speaker announced that the time period for debates and discussions would be reduced, and all starred questions would be converted to unstarred questions.

Thereafter, Chief Minister, also the Leader of the House, PS Tamang moved the motion of thanks on Governor's address. The Motion of Thanks was seconded by Minister, Kunga Nima Lepcha.

The discussion and voting on the Governor's address would be taken up tomorrow, the 24 Mar, 2020.

During the Financial Business, the Chief Minister, also the Minister-in-Charge of Finance Department, Government of Sikkim, presented the Second Supplementary Demands for Grants relating to the Financial Year 2019-20.

The Second batch of Supplementary Demands for Grants for 2019-20 includes 9 (nine) grants, with gross additional expenditure of Rs. 21600 lakh comprising of Rs. 700 lakh on Revenue Account and Rs. 20900 lakh on Capital Account. Of this, the proposals involving net cash outgo aggregates to Rs. 21600 lakh, funded from the one time additional dispensation to the State by Government of India.

Thereafter, the Chief Minister, also the Minister-in-Charge of Finance Department, Government of Sikkim, presented the Annual General Budget for the financial year 2020-21, comprising of the Estimates of Receipts, Annual Financial Statement, Demands for Grants and Explanatory Memorandum to the Annual Budget 2020-21.

Explaining the budgetary profile for the financial year 2020-21, the Chief Minister informed that the proposed Annual General Budget for the State of Sikkim will amount to Rs. 9100 Crores (Rupees Nine Thousand One Hundred Crores), comprising of Rs. 7343.60 as Revenue Expenditure, and Rs. 1756.40 as Capital Expenditure.

The discussion and voting on the General Budget will be taken up tomorrow, the 24 Mar, 2020.

While presenting the Annual General Budget for the Financial Year 2020-21, the Chief Minister called for fulfilling the State's goals based on sustainable development policies for the benefit of the people of Sikkim. He called for

furthering peace and tranquillity to ensure that the State grows to become an example of innovation and progress. He termed the budget a 'full-fledged budget', as the last budget presented was midway the financial year 2019-20 because of the due completion of the electoral process and formation of a new Government led by Sikkim Krantikari Morcha party in May 2019.

Earlier, during the Legislative Business, the following Bills were placed in the House by the concerned Minister-in-Charge:

1. The Sikkim Protection of Interests of Depositors (In Financial Establishments) Amendment Bill, Bill No.2 of 2020 was introduced by Chief Minister, PS Tamang who is also the Minister-in-Charge of Finance Department.

The state Government has deemed it necessary to amend Sections 2, 3, 14, 17 and 18 of the Sikkim Protection of Interests of Depositors (In Financial Establishments) Act, 9003 for:

a. Making the definitions more specific and clearer, leaving no room for ambiguity. Defining entity which was earlier left out;

b. Creating a mechanism on information sharing with regard to the reports of the financial establishments with the regulators of the Country and the State;

c. Re-appointing the Competent Authority and appointing the Co-competent Authority and financial empowering them with suo-motto powers to deal with the defaulting establishment for recovery of dues to the depositors,

d. Appointing the Co-administrator to manage the attached properties of the defaulting financial establishment. This amendment aims to strengthen the Sikkim Protection of Interests of Depositors (In Financial Establishments) Act, 2009 making it all the more effective and well-structured.

2. Similarly, the Sikkim Legislative Assembly Members (Removal of Disqualifications) Amendment Bill, Bill No.1 of 2020 was introduced by Minister-in-Charge of Law and Parliamentary Affairs Department, Kunga Nima Lepcha. Whereas, certain offices were not included in the earlier amendment of Sikkim Legislative Assembly Members (Removal of Disqualifications) Act, 1978 so as not to disqualify the holders for being chosen. It had therefore, become expedient under the circumstances to have promulgated an Ordinance namely, Sikkim Legislative Assembly Members (Removal of Disqualifications) Amendment Ordinance. 2020 by the Governor of Sikkim on 13 Jan, 2020. This Bill now seeks to replace the said (Ordinance by an Act of the Legislature as required under Article 213 (2) (a) of the Constitution of India. Therefore, the Bill has been framed with the above objects in view.

3) Similarly, the Sikkim Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (Amendment) Bill, Bill No 5 of 2020 was introduced by PS Tamang Chief Minister also the Minister-In-Charge of Finance Department. The State Government felt it expedient to amend the Sikkim Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act, 2010 in view of the decision of Government of India to allow additional borrowing to the State as a one time dispensation in the current year 2019-20 to offset fiscal hardship due to shortfall in actual receipt of Share of Central Taxes. With this object

in view, the Bill has been framed.

4) Likewise, the Sikkim Panchayat (Amendment) Bill, Bill No. 7 of 2020 was introduced by Minister-in-Charge of Rural Development Department, Sonam Lama. Whereas, the State Government has deemed it expedient to amend sections 18, 29, 66 and 129 of the Sikkim Panchayat Act, 1993. And whereas, section 129 was omitted by the Sikkim Panchayat (Amendment) Act, 1997 vide Act No 5 of 1997 dated 13 May 1997, which the State Government has deemed expedient to restore. And whereas, section 129 of the said Act provides that "no person shall contest the election to any Panchayat with the support, direct or indirect, of any political party". With these objectives in view, the Bill has been framed.

5) Likewise, the Sikkim Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Bill, Bill No. 6 of 2020 was introduced by Chief Minister, PS Tamang also the Minister-in-Charge of Finance Department. It has been proposed for amendment by way of bringing the Sikkim Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2020 for amending certain provisions of the Act; thereby making the functioning of the said Act more effective, meaningful and ensuring easier compliance by the taxpayer. This amendment Bill is additionally intended to streamline functioning of the provision of the Act based on the recommendation of Goods & Services Tax (GST) Council and the Ministry of Finance, Government of India.

6) Likewise, the Sikkim State University (Amendment) Bill, Bill No. 8 of 2020 was introduced by Minister, Kunga Nima Lepcha, also the Minister-in-Charge of Education Department. Whereas the State Government has deemed it expedient to grant an autonomous status to Sikkim State University in order to allow the University to function in a smooth manner. And in order to allow Sikkim State University to function as an autonomous Institute of Higher Education, the State Government deems it necessary to insert section 6A and to make the changes in clause (6) and (27), insertion of Sub-clause 8 in clause 8 of the Schedule of the Sikkim State University Act 2003, thereby allowing the University to function independently. With this object in view, the Bill has been framed.

7) Lastly, the Vinayaka Missions Sikkim University (Amendment) Bill, Bill No. 9 of 2020 was also introduced by Minister, Kunga Nima Lepcha also the Minister-in-Charge Education Department. Whereas initially under the Vinayaka Missions Sikkim University Act, 2008, the Governance and management of the Vinayaka Missions Sikkim University was under the "Sponsor" the Thirumuruga Kirupananda Variyar Thavathiru Sundara Swamigal Medical Education and Charitable Trust Salem, Tamil Nadu. By virtue of amendment carried out in the year 2018 in the main Act, the words "Thirumuruga Kirupananda Variyar Thavathiru Sundara Swamigal Medical Educational and Charitable Trust Salem, Tamil Nadu" has been replaced by the words "Jeen Universal Foundation, Delhi". This has resulted shifting of Governance and Management of the Vinayaka Missions Sikkim University to Jeen Universal Foundation, New Delhi, a new Sponsor in the terms of Section 48 of the Vinayaka Missions Sikkim University, Act 2008. Now, therefore the State Gov-

ernment has declared it expedient to change the name of the Vinayaka Missions Sikkim University as Sikkim Professional University, in view of transfer of Governance and Management as requested by the new Sponsor, Jeen Universal Foundation, Delhi. With this object in view, the Bill has been framed.

Thereafter, MLA, Aditya Golay, also the Chairman of Public Accounts Committee for the financial year 2019-20, presented the following Reports of the Public Accounts Committee on the floor of the House:

i. 116th Report on Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year ended 31st Mar, 2012.

ii. 117th Report on Action Taken on the Recommendation of the Public Accounts Committee by the State Government Departments as contained in its 108th Report.

iii. 118th Report on Action Taken on the Separate Audit Report on the Accounts of State Trading Corporation of Sikkim contained in its 105th Report for the year ended 31 Mar, 2009-2011.

The Assembly then took up the Election and Nomination of Assembly Committees for the Financial Year 2020-21.

1. Committee on Public Accounts – MLAs, Aditya Golay, Tashi Thendup Bhutia and YT Lepcha were elected as Members of the Committee on Public Accounts. The Speaker nominated MLA, Aditya Golay as the Chairman of the Committee.

2. Committee on Estimates – MLAs, Tashi Thendup Bhutia, Aditya Golay and Farwanti Tamang were elected as Members of the Committee on Estimates. The Speaker nominated MLA, Tashi Thendup Bhutia as the Chairman of the Committee.

Likewise, the Speaker made the following nominations for various Committees for Financial Year 2020-21:

1. Committee on Government Assurances – MLAs, Sonam Tshering Venchungpa,, Bishnu Kumar Sharma, and Sunita Gajmer were nominated as Members of the Committee.

MLA, Sonam Tshering Venchungpa was nominated as the Chairman of the Committee.

2. Committee on Rules – MLAs, Sonam Tshering Venchungpa and Pintso Namgyal Lepcha were nominated as Members of the Committee.

The Speaker is the Ex-officio Chairman of the Committee on Rules.

3. Committee on Library – MLAs, Sonam Tshering Venchungpa and Em Prasad Sharma were nominated as Members of the Committee.

Deputy Speaker of Sikkim Legislative Assembly is the Ex-officio Chairman of the Committee on Library.

4. Committee on House – MLAs, GT Dhungel, Em Prasad Sharma and Raj Kumari Thapa were nominated as Members of the Committee. MLA, GT Dhungel was nominated as the Chairman of the Committee.

5. Committee on Privilege – MLAs, Bishnu Kumar Sharma, Tashi Thendup Bhutia and Pintso Namgyal Lepcha were nominated as Members of the Committee. MLA, Bishnu Kumar Sharma was nominated as the Chairman of the Committee.

The Speaker then nominated MLAs, Sonam Tshering Venchungpa, GT Dhungel and Aditya Golay as the Panel of Chairmen for the financial year 2020-21.

The House was then adjourned till tomorrow, the 24 Mar, 2020.

COVID-19...

foreigners, while Punjab has 21 cases.

Ladakh has 13 cases, while Tamil Nadu has nine cases, including two foreigners. West Bengal reported seven cases, while Madhya Pradesh has six cases so far.

Chandigarh and Andhra Pradesh have six and seven cases, respectively. Jammu and Kashmir reported four cases.

Uttarakhand have reported three cases. Bihar, Odisha and Himachal Pradesh have reported two cases each, while Puducherry and Chhattisgarh reported a case each.

Returning...

airport have also been made for the returning students and parents appealed to cooperate with this preventive measure.

The Department has assured that arrangements for meals, lodging and medical attention have been made available at SICUN.

Meanwhile, the Department has appealed that the many Sikkimese students pursuing undergraduate and postgraduate courses in other States stay back wherever they are as travelling can cause infection.

"We are in touch with their institutions and are requesting the management there for accommodation facilities to be made to them.

We are going through a troubled time, and patience and cooperation from every corner of the society will certainly help us contain the spread of this disease," the Department states.

5.94 lakh...

departments to deal with the novel coronavirus outbreak.

Gupta, chairing a meeting of the state task force, directed the law department to implement the Epidemic Disease Act, 1897 in Sikkim in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak.

He asked the Food and Civil Supplies Department to ensure that there was no rise in prices of essential commodities and asked it to explore possibilities whether it could give PDS supply of two months in advance to the beneficiaries.

Gupta asked the district collectors to mandatorily quarantine people returning from coronavirus-hit countries.

The chief secretary said that two floors of the Sir Thutob Namgyal Memorial Hospital, Sochakgang be converted into a dedicated facility for treating COVID-19 patients.

He said that pharmaceutical firms may function normally but asked them not to bring in new workers.

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KUTSHE SHEGU

49th days Kutshe Shegu (Anthyesti Kriya) of Late Chewang Dorjee Bhutia (Chewang Sardar), who left for heavenly abode on 01/02/2019 falls on 20/03/2020.

All the relatives, friends and family members are requested to join us for offering prayers for the departed soul at our residence Naya Bazar, west Sikkim.

We also express our heartfelt gratitude to those who stood by us in the time of bereavement.

**Mrs. Tshering Choden (Wife)
Chopel P. Bhutia(Son)
Mrs. Sonam Paden Bhutia (Daughter)
Ugen Palzor Bhutia(Son)
Sonam Dorjee Bhutia (son)
and family members.
Contact:740723003/9734142243.**



~ 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 Road-side just below housing colony is for sale. It is just a one minute walking distance from Namchi bazaar taxi stand. Interested party may contact 9593373387 and 9434406761

LAND FOR SALE

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

Home quarantine stamped-people to be arrested if found in public places in Bengaluru

BENGALURU, MAR 23 (PTI): Amid rising coronavirus cases, Bengaluru city Police Commissioner Bhaskar Rao said on Monday those subjected to home quarantine stamping would be arrested if they were found to visit public places.

"5000 Home quarantine stamping was carried to ensure they remain home in public interest", he tweeted.

"I have received calls some of those stamped are moving in BMTC (Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation) buses and sitting in restaurants. Please call 100, these people will be picked up,



arrested and sent to government quarantine," Rao said. According to offi-

cials, the stamped people should remain quarantined at home, the default

period being 14 days.

Six new COVID-19 cases were confirmed

in Karnataka on Sunday, taking the total number of infections to the respiratory disease to 26 -- the highest number of positive cases in a single day in the State.

The Karnataka government has announced shutdown of all commercial activities barring essential services in nine districts, where COVID-19 cases have been reported, till March 31.

They are: Bengaluru city, Bengaluru Rural, Mangaluru, Mysuru, Kalaburagi, Dharwad, Chik-kaballapura, Kodagu and Belagavi, Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai said.

RBI to infuse Rs 1 lakh crore through term repo auction

MUMBAI, MAR 23 (PTI): In a bid to provide additional liquidity to the system hit by the coronavirus outbreak, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday decided to inject Rs 1 lakh crore and assured such move further also if required.

The first tranche of term repo worth Rs 50,000 crore was conducted on Monday, while the second tranche of the same amount will be conducted on Tuesday.

As a pre-emptive measure to meet any frictional liquidity requirements on account of dislocations due to the coronavirus outbreak, the RBI has decided to conduct the fine-tuning variable rate repo auctions for Rs 1 lakh crore, the central bank said in a statement.

The RBI's move is aimed at providing cheaper money to banks

at the repo rate, thus improving liquidity in the banking system.

"The Reserve Bank is monitoring the evolving financial market conditions. The Reserve Bank will calibrate its operations to meet any need for additional liquidity support, if warranted, to ensure normal functioning of markets, promote staff welfare and preserve financial stability," it said.

As a special case, standalone primary dealers will be allowed to participate in these auctions along with other eligible participants.

Banks would be required to place their requests for the amount sought under long-term repo operation (LTRO) during the window timing at the prevailing policy repo rate. Bids below or above policy rate will be rejected.

Kerala govt to keep beverage outlets open, bars shut

Thiruvananthapuram, Mar 23 (PTI): The Left government on Monday decided to allow outlets of the state-run beverages corporation to sell liquor, while shutting down bars across the state in the wake of the spread of COVID-19.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan announced the decision after a COVID-19 review meeting here.

"Beverage outlets will remain open, We have had some bad experiences when the government stopped the sale of liquor. It will create many social issues," Vijayan told reporters.

Coming down against the decision, Opposition leader Ramesh Chennithala said this shows the government's adamant attitude against shutting down all liquor outlets which would push the state further into a dan-

gerous situation.

It was only after the realising that the situation was worsening, the government decided to indefinitely shut down the bars in the state, Chennithala said.

In many districts, people were seen queuing up before beverages outlets in large numbers, this would only help in spreading the coronavirus.

At Thiruvananthapuram, a man employed in a beverages outlet was under observation, he said.

At Vatakara in Kozhikode, there was a huge crowd in front of a beverages outlet and police had to wave lathis to chase them away.

Chennithala also criticised Chief minister for pointing at Punjab, where the beverages outlets had not been shut as they had brought it under the essential list.

Nearly 500 evacuees from Iran asymptomatic: Army

JAIPUR, MAR 23 (PTI): Nearly 500 Indians, who were evacuated from Iran in batches and quarantined at three Army facilities in Jaisalmer, are presently asymptomatic, a defence spokesperson said on Monday.

The staff at the Army wellness facilities is working over time to ensure that the centres remain clean, he said.

In addition to sanitation of the entire prem-

ises, daily motivational lectures are conducted by the Army medical authorities to make people understand the importance of the mandatory quarantine to combat the spread of COVID-19, the spokesperson said.

He said the people are enjoying their time by playing games, watching television, praying and utilising the available resources in the wellness facilities.

Coming home and staying there in COVID-19 times

NEW DELHI, MAR 23 (PTI): Sweeping, swabbing, cooking, washing and more me time than ever imagined. With large parts of the country shutting down to ward against COVID-19, it is back to the basics and recalibrating life for millions of people, a mere inconvenience for some and a huge challenge for the elderly.

The unprecedented lockdown of cities and towns on Monday disrupted lives all over, for those dependent on domestic helps and finding it difficult to access daily necessities as much as for those denied their daily chats over coffee at their workplaces and addicted to their exercise regimens.

With the threat of coronavirus growing by the day, people began the process of de-socialising and learning how to live in isolation, without even the regular good morning' with the milkman and the newspaper vendor. And maybe, just maybe, a quick chat six feet apart with the friend and neighbour.

The experience was different for different folks, particularly the urban middle classes, but it all fell in the spectrum of adjusting to the new reality of coping with a pandemic that has affected over 340,000 people globally and claimed more than 15,000 lives. India has reported 415 cases and seven fatalities.

In Dipankar Mukherjee's family, the daily domestic chores have been distributed. While the 64-year-old and his 55-year-old wife Sukla are taking turns to do the dishes, the onus of keeping the house clean is on their 22-year-old daughter Bipasha.

Our colony has been under lockdown. The entire area was fumigated. The maids have been asked to not come. Vegetable and fruit vendors have also been told to not enter the locality, the resident of Gurgaon's Maruti Vihar colony told PTI.

Dipankar said he has stocked enough food to last a week, but it is difficult to not go out for his daily morning walks and he is still coming to terms

with the disruption of his social life.

I am diabetic and have been advised to walk regularly to keep my blood sugar levels in check. I haven't stepped out since the government asked people over 60 to remain indoors. I have started taking walks on my terrace, but my evening meetings with my friends have completely stopped. That is quite frustrating, he said.

Eighty districts, including Delhi and Mumbai, are under lockdown and train and Metro services have been suspended till March 31 to contain the spread of the disease.

And just about every corner of India is hit.

A cancer patient in his 70s came to Delhi from Kolkata for treatment in January but finds himself virtually stranded in the national capital with no idea of how and when he will get back home. With the Delhi government placing curbs on the movement of people, his family and friends living in Noida and Gurgaon can't meet him at the hospital either.

The problems are many and varied.

Sangita Samantha, a working mother, said it is difficult to balance taking care of her toddler daughter and work.

"My husband and I have demanding jobs. We kept our child at a daycare centre, but they closed down and it is difficult to work at home with a baby around, especially if the help is not there," the Gurgaon-based 34-year-old said.

Many neighbourhoods are joining hands to help the elderly living away from their children or those on their own.

In some gated communities and other localities, where outsiders have been barred, lists of senior citizens are being prepared so milk and other deliveries are collected from the main gate and delivered to them. And while domestic helps have also been stopped from coming in, discussions are under way on how to make exceptions to help those who can't

help themselves.

The younger generation has its own concerns.

Waled Aadnan (28) and Sayan Kundu (30), who share an apartment in south Delhi's Neeti Bagh are managing without their cleaning help.

We have decided to share the cleaning job between the two of us, said Waled, a risk analyst in a Gurgaon-based firm.

I have newfound respect for my maid, added Sayan, a World Bank employee.

Like most people, they too stocked up on some essential groceries, and are relying on online delivery apps.

What is bothering Waled the most, however, is the limited access to the outside world.

I have to figure out a new fitness regime while staying completely inside the house, he said.

The shutting down of automobile repair shops is leading to problems as well.

A city-based journalist left his car with a workshop in Noida following a minor accident, but is wondering how to get it back.

First they were not working because of the Janta curfew, and then the government announced the three-day lockdown in Noida and in Delhi till March 31. Now I don't know how long the workshop will be closed. And I can't get my car back because the borders are sealed, he said.

As fear and apprehension spread, people said the inconvenience of a lockdown is temporary and worth it.

There is inconvenience, but right now the priority is the safety of our and our loved ones' lives, said Dipankar.

After seeing what happened to Italy where the lockdown was not taken so seriously, I think it is all worth it. Of course, couple that with paid leaves and empathy for those who work for us, Sayan agreed.

To ensure the lockdown is maintained, the centre has warned of legal action a fine of Rs 1,000 or six months jail against those flouting the rules.

Nitish announces package over coronavirus lockdown



PATNA, MAR 23 (PTI): In view of the lockdown enforced in urban areas of the state over coronavirus pandemic, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Monday announced a "package" under which one month ration will be given for free to all the card holders.

Three months advance pension will be given immediately to all the beneficiaries of schemes like Mukhya Mantri Vridhjan Pension, those given to differently abled persons, widows and old age over pensioners, Kumar said.

The amount will be directly transferred in their bank accounts, the chief minister said in an official statement.

He also announced that Rs 1,000 per family will be given to all the ration card holding families

of urban local bodies and panchayat of block headquarters witnessing lockdown due to COVID-19 outbreak.

The amount will be transferred to their accounts through Direct Benefit Transfer, he said after a review meeting on coronavirus here.

The meeting was attended by Deputy CM Sushil Kumar Modi, health minister Mangal Paandey, water resources minister Sanjay Kumar Jha, Chief Secretary Deepak Kumar and a host of other senior officials of the state government.

The state government had on Sunday enforced lockdown in all district headquarters, sub-divisional headquarters, block headquarters and urban local bodies of the state till March 31, 2020 in order to check break

the transmission chain of coronavirus. The government has kept essential services like grocery shop, milk, vegetable, medicines etc. out of the order.

The CM further said that scholarship to students (girls and boy) of class I to 12 will be transferred in their accounts by March 31, 2020.

All the doctors and health staff will be given one month of basic salary as incentive, Kumar said.

Kumar appealed to the people of the state to follow advisory issued by the state government on coronavirus pandemic.

The government will be able to tackle the situation only with the help of the people, the CM said.

Bihar reported first death from coronavirus on Sunday while a woman tested positive for COVID-19 the same day.


KUTSE SHEGU

(WITH A DIFFERENCE)

The 49th Day death ceremony (Kutse Shegu) of our beloved mother, Pasang Lhamu Ethenpa (Pasang Guruma of PN Girls School, Gangtok) who left for her heavenly abode on 13 Feb, 2020 falls on Wednesday the 01 Apr, 2020. Owing to Coronavirus, COVID-19 pandemic vis-à-vis appeal of Chief Minister, PS Goley for social distancing followed by precautionary advisory notifications issued by Govt. of Sikkim and DC (East), Gangtok, the puja at Ethenpa Villa, Lower Tadong, Gangtok will be solemnised ONLY with the religious rituals. Being responsible citizens of the society and with heavy heart, we felt, it would be wiser to prevent the gathering of all our friends & well wishers taking into consideration everyone's health & safety. Instead, we humbly request all our friends and well wishers who had planned to visit us on that day to kindly pray for the departed soul from the sanctity of their respective home/office. Instead, we would like to invite all our well wishers to visit us in the First Death Anniversary (LOMCHEY) of our beloved "MUMMY" sometime early next year, details of which will be publicised widely. At a moment of this global crisis of Corona Virus endangering human life, we appeal you all to kindly help us to help you.

We fully know that this action of ours will be disapproved by some section of our respected people but being a social animal, we equally feel, we do have some social responsibility towards our Sikkimese society at large. Ethenpa family will be forever grateful for your understanding.





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.

<p>Symptoms of nCoV</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fever ● Difficulty in breathing ● Dry Cough ● Severe acute respiratory syndrome ● Pneumonia - like symptoms 	<p>Precautions to Prevent nCoV</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wash your hands often with soap. ● Use an alcohol based hand sanitizer ● Observe good personal hygiene. ● Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands. ● Avoid contact with people with possible symptoms. ● Avoid contact with animals and consumption of undercooked meats. ● Avoid travel to nCoV affected places. ● Wear a mask if you have respiratory syndrome. and cover your mouth while coughing or sneezing.
<p>Treatment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Treatment is symptomatic and supportive, based on the patient's clinical condition. ● No vaccinations available as of now. ● Visit Doctor in case symptoms detected 	<p>If you seek help, you may call :</p> <p>-Toll free no. 104</p> <p>District surveillance Officer</p> <p>EAST : 7029372100</p> <p>WEST : 9593297809</p> <p>NORTH : 9641957468</p> <p>SOUTH : 7407691463</p> <p>New STNM</p> <p>AMS : 9434711402</p>

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

Population Figures

Census Numbers Hold Many Stories

The population totals of Census 2011 were released some years ago, and now it's almost already time for a fresh round of the decadal headcount of the country. In that sense, the 2011 numbers are slightly dated, but still, the bits and pieces hold many stories. When the first set of Census numbers are released, they always generate much interest, sometimes even gasps over how the state is growing, or not as was the case with 2011. In the current census figures, Sikkim's falling fertility rate has hogged the limelight, convincing the State government to scrap the financial incentives it offered public servants for keeping their families "small". But there are so many more stories that the numbers tell. Statistics are not always boring, provided someone dug out the human stories behind them. This should be a study that more people undertake in Sikkim.

Sikkim's population as of March 2011 has been counted at 6,07,688 people, recording a 12.36% growth since 2001. Since 1911, when the first proper Census operation was undertaken in Sikkim, only three decades, the last being 1941-51, have population growths been lower than this. The first Census of Sikkim was conducted in 1891 by the Political Officer. A decade later, in 1901, the West Bengal Census authorities of British India were deputed to carry out the task and it was probably only in 1911 that the Directorate of Census Operations brought the detailed methodology by which India does a head-count of all its people. In the decade of 1901-11, Sikkim's population grew by 48.98%, the second-largest population spurt here since such counting was undertaken. In the next decade, 1911-21, the population fell by 7.05%, the only time it has done so. Population growth in Sikkim has shown marked variations, growing by little over 34% in the decade of 1931-41 and then almost grinding to replacement fertility-rate figure of 10.67% in 1931-41, creeping only slightly higher to 13.34% in 1941-51 and reaching 17.76% in 1951-61. It started rising from thereon, recording a nearly 30% population growth in 1961-71 and then hitting the record of 50.77% in 1971-81, dropping to nearly half this growth rate to 28.47% in 1981-91, rising five percentage points to 33.07% in 1991-2001 and then scaling back to its mid-Twentieth Century average of 12.36% growth in 2001-11.

Census findings are important indicators of socioeconomic conditions of the areas they cover. Populations obviously grow beyond the traditional average either due to influx or improvements in health services, both of which are indicative of the quality of life and opportunities. Of course, in the recent past, our country has been working towards containing its population through family planning schemes launched on mission-mode, but the population figures of the past slightly more than a century are untouched by such efforts and should attract closer academic scrutiny. From the pattern of these figures, one could understand the history of Sikkim from the point of view of the lay people, who, although they have lived through Sikkim and its transitions, rarely find mention in the few records of even contemporary events. The nearly 50% growth in population between 1901 to 1911 should make for interesting analysis, coming as it does in a decade when the palace and the Political Office were in direct confrontation and also the time when British India was most interested in Sikkim, using it as the route to open Tibet. The change in how the State was administered must have obviously created new opportunities triggering new arrivals. What can also not be ignored is that if this 1911 exercise was also the first head-count Census and would hence have accounted for population segments not covered in the previous two Census operations carried out the Political Officer who had relied on feedback from the landlords, who could have had their own reasons to under-report the actual number of people in areas under their jurisdiction.

The fall in population in 1911-21 should be even more fascinating for anyone interested in the people's history of Sikkim. The population fell by 7.05% due to the Influenza pandemic (Spanish Flu) which spread through the world in the wake of World War-I. Sikkim did not fight the Great War, but an epidemic which was born from it claimed too many lives here as well. The pandemic broke out in 1918 and is believed to have killed 50 million people across the world. One still does not know how many died of it in Sikkim. The numbers must have been huge because healthcare services were too rudimentary here to have been able to deal with an alien sickness. Most of these deaths would have taken place in the two years between the outbreak and when the Census was carried out. This 7% fall in population immediately after a 50% growth must have scarred an entire generation. It deserves to be researched because it could explain many things about how Sikkim lived in those times. As an aside, there are also references to how the Younghusband Mission of 1904-05 brought the Foot & Mouth disease to Sikkim. Agriculture and animal husbandry were the only occupations in Sikkim at that time. Isn't it important to research into how Sikkim resuscitated itself from that calamity?

These exercises are important for Sikkim to understand its past better and may be even understand issues which attract passionate opinions in a different light.

This virus is ravaging rich countries. What happens when it hits the poor ones?

NESRINE MALIK
theGuardian

Though Africa has fewer coronavirus cases and a slower rate of infection than the UK, many countries in the continent have passed dramatically more extreme measures to prevent its spread than Britain has. In my birth country of Sudan, after only one case and one death was registered, all schools and universities were shut down. Several other nations, such as Egypt, have taken the ultimate precaution and closed their airports.

There is no denial here, no mixed messaging, and no unfounded promise of how soon we will send the virus packing.

The tough and timely action is borne less out of political maturity than it is bitter experience, and an awareness that already overburdened public healthcare systems cannot sustain an onslaught. The ebola epidemic of 2014 is still fresh in the mind in sub-Saharan African countries; it was an experience that showed prevention and containment are the only hope of fending off thousands of deaths.

If we are concerned about the failure to contain the virus in western Europe and the US, multiples of that horror await in the developing world. With few means of medical intervention, and several other risk factors such as malnutrition, high population densities, communal living and lack of access to water and washing facilities, the rates of mortality could dwarf what has been seen so far in the west. And economically, the virus risks ushering in an ice age. There are no war chests, no stimulus packages, no insurance payouts.

There is little data about the impact in Africa

of previous pandemics such as the 1918-19 Spanish flu (except from South Africa where, because of troop movements, 6% of the population perished). But we do have the experience of economically similar south Asian countries to go by. It is estimated that up to 30% of the entire fatal toll of the Spanish flu came from a single country, India. And in Africa it appears that the countries that suffered the highest casualties were those most exposed to global flows of people and capital – the ports or thoroughfares for troops on the move, and for sea and land labour.

There is something painfully predictable about how coronavirus was introduced to the continent. Well-off travellers to the rest of the world returned from holidays and business trips carrying the virus, as did infected tourists. In Egypt, the first cases of Covid-19 appear to be linked to one cruise ship, where locals who served the tourists contracted the disease.

The spread of the virus on the continent sits in the crosscurrents of travel and financial flows that expose African countries to the sharp end of globalisation – one where the flow of people is encouraged into the continent for business and tourism, and severely restricted out of the continent even for the wealthy and well connected.

It is the recurring theme of how the pandemic has played out so far. The poor, the uninsured, the disenfranchised, the information-poor and the less mobile are sitting ducks. Many western economies, including the US and the UK, have slowly pushed these people to the margins, while restricting employment benefits such as holiday pay, sick leave, and private insurance to an increasingly exclusive class. One of the reasons the British and US gov-

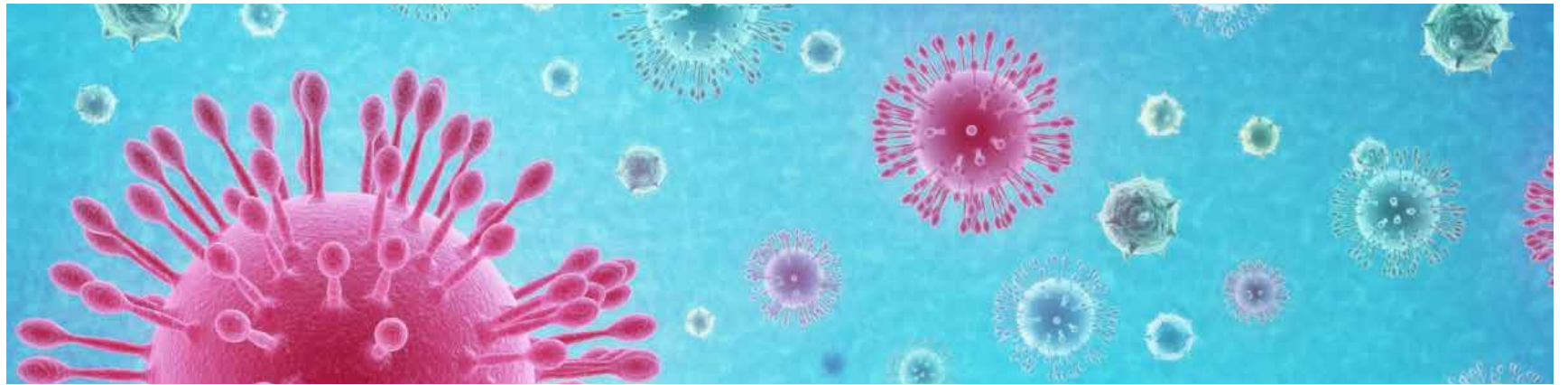
ernments have been so slow to provide free testing, medical care and bailouts for those who've lost work is that these inequalities are now hardwired into the system. They cannot be undone overnight even when lives depend on it.

The global economy is set up in much the same way, with winners who hoard the spoils, and losers who scratch around for the leftovers. If wealthy single countries cannot scramble to save their own people, there is no hope for any effort to extend help to countries with a fraction of the resources.

But here is the tragic catch for those who think that this structural imbalance is not our problem. In this instance, national and international inequalities cannot persist without everyone losing. The realisation is just beginning to dawn upon lawmakers that the rich cannot be barricaded against the poor, no matter how high the barriers to the fortress are. Limiting the spread of the virus entails ensuring that everyone in the pool, be it local or global, is given the ability to test, self-isolate if need be, and receive treatment.

Yes, to some extent this is a utopian aspiration. But it is also essentially pragmatic. We cannot extol the virtues of small government and global societies without grasping that the risk to the majority cannot be halted from spreading: viruses do not distinguish between classes and nationalities.

Just as work and public life cannot be shuttered for ever, borders cannot be closed indefinitely. African countries are moving fast against coronavirus, well aware that they are on their own. But barring a miracle, or a pandemic Marshall plan by wealthier countries, if the virus explodes in poorer countries, the cataclysm will engulf everyone.



We can't let the coronavirus lead to a 9/11-style erosion of civil liberties

SAMUEL MILLER MCDONALD
theGuardian

As a millennial, much of my adulthood has been punctuated by severe national emergencies. The first my generation experienced was the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001. We all watched in horror as the months-long media spectacle replayed footage of the towers swallowing airplanes and crumbling into fire and dust. The moment of national solidarity and everyday heroism was brief.

The government quickly responded by attempting to achieve two things: one, expanding executive power, and two, transferring public wealth into private corporations. The Bush administration achieved the first by passing the Patriot Act, which built the foundation for what is probably the world's most expansive surveillance state, but also by setting legal precedents that violated basic constitutional rights and by creating the Department for Homeland Security, with its aggressive constituent agencies like Immigration and Customs Enforcement (Ice) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP). The second goal was achieved with the "war on terror", which involved unilateral occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq, and subsequent military forays into many African countries. In Iraq, private security, logistics and reconstruction contractors swallowed up \$138bn alone. Since 2001, \$5.9tn in taxpayer dollars have gone toward wars (not to mention resulted in hundreds of thousands of deaths and a foreign policy blackhole that till haunts the Middle East). Neither of these goals addressed the root cause of the crisis, and arguably exacerbated the conditions that led to 9/11.

The second national emergency my generation experienced was the 2008 housing bubble collapse and subsequent recession: the most severe economic meltdown since the Great Depression. Again the federal government, this time under Barack Obama's administration, sought to exploit the crisis to move vast wealth

from the public treasury into private bank accounts. A staggering \$14tn was transferred from taxpayers to private hands, including Wall Street executives who used that money to continue giving themselves seven-figure bonuses. One of the largest recipients of bailout money, Citigroup, paid out \$5.3bn to employees in bonuses. While the federal government debatably halted a further stock market collapse, they certainly did not address the root cause of the crisis. A mere 11 years later and we are again standing on the edge of a major economic crisis.

Ecological devastation, meanwhile, is the quiet crisis amplifier that has persisted through both of these national emergencies and cast a shadow over the whole of my generation. Its latest iteration is the Covid-19 pandemic, whose origins lay in habitat destruction and biodiversity loss.

Once again, the federal government appears poised to exploit this emergency to expand executive power and move wealth from the public treasury into private bank accounts. As the Nation recently reported, an internal CBP directive empowers the agency to indefinitely monitor and detain anyone suspected of carrying the virus. Meanwhile, the Trump administration has begun a bailout for the oil industry, which could exceed \$2.6bn in tax dollars going to oil industry control, and is toying with the idea of an airline industry bailout, which could exceed \$50bn.

The authoritarian lockdowns in China and Italy may soon arrive to the anglophone world. Seeing self-avowed leftists and liberals praising such draconian reactions is frightening. Anyone who cares about democracy and civil liberty should not welcome such responses. As we witnessed with the authoritarian reactions to 9/11, emergency violations of civil liberties are not easily rolled back, and often aggregate over time. In the wake of 9/11, Congress passed the National Defense Authorization Act, which gave sweeping powers to

the executive branch. In 2012, Obama signed an expanded version into law, which gave the president the power to "hold individuals, including US citizens, in military detention indefinitely", which means for life. We must reject such authoritarian measures wholly, no matter who says they're "necessary".

The fact is, neither expanding executive power nor redistributing wealth upward will save lives or address the root cause of the crisis. In fact, both the oil and airline industries are accelerating the ecological devastation at the heart of this pandemic. As ecological collapse continues to unfold, more and more emergencies like this will occur with greater frequency and intensity. Now is the time to break out of the recurring pattern in which national responses not only fail to solve the problem, but even exacerbate the original cause, while transferring wealth from taxpayers to already-wealthy, well-connected executives. Instead, now is the time to implement a set of standards for what constitutes a response that puts the common good at the center.

In the case of this virus, there are plenty of good ideas already being discussed that would do exactly that. Instead of moving public wealth into private corporations, the government should be doing the opposite.

The first step to containing this virus is handing out cash to every American to fund their ability to self-isolate without having to go to work. A basic income of, at minimum, subsistence rate would achieve this. The New York congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez has called for implementing an emergency universal basic income, while presidential candidate Bernie Sanders suggested delivering a monthly \$2,000 check to every household to deal with lost income.

Providing universal healthcare, both during the virus flareup and after, would also go a long way to containing its spread and reducing its seasonal intensity; the for-profit system is probably exacerbating the

spread of the virus. Subsidizing or even nationalizing essential goods and services like utilities, pharmaceuticals and distribution of basic necessities could also help contain the virus and reduce its negative long-term impacts, and ensure that those services remain available to all. The Trump administration has (surprisingly) ordered the Department of Housing and Urban Development to halt evictions and foreclosures temporarily. Taking that further and reforming or eliminating them, even past the worst of the pandemic, could help soften conditions leading to virus spreading in the future.

Interim support for local services, like small businesses and charities, would also help keep local infrastructure intact beyond the most intense phases of social isolation. Dismantling the prison industrial complex and deeply reforming the justice system would help as well. The US has the highest incarceration rate and absolute prison population in the world. Abolishing the institution would go a long way toward reducing the impact of highly infectious viruses, given that prisons are "the perfect incubators" for coronaviruses. Finally, bypassing intellectual property laws with regard to vaccine development, and preventing anyone from limiting access for private profit, would also be important, both now and beyond the pandemic.

Of course the best thing we can do is halt the twin ecological and climate crises that are now driving so many existential emergencies like the Covid-19 pandemic. But, in the meantime of attending to that herculean task, the least we can be doing is agreeing on a set of responses that reject authoritarian exercises of executive power and the further enrichment of the already wealthy at the expense of the public. Instead, we should be responding to such national crises by saving lives and fortifying the common good. Through a series of compounding national emergencies, a benevolent response would be the first my generation has ever witnessed.

SC asks states, UTs to consider releasing prisoners to decongest jails

NEW DELHI, MAR 23 (PTI): The Supreme Court Monday directed all states and Union Territories to constitute high-level committees to consider releasing on parole or interim bail prisoners and undertrials for offences entailing up to 7-year jail term to decongest prisons in the wake of coronavirus pandemic.

The top court said overcrowding of prisons is a matter of serious concern, particularly in the present context of coronavirus (COVID 19).

In regard to the provisions of Article 21 of the Constitution of India, it has become imperative to ensure that the spread of coronavirus within the prisons is controlled, the court said.

A bench of Chief Justice S A Bobde and Justices L N Rao and Surya Kant said the state or UT could consider the release of prisoners who have been convicted or are undertrial for offences for which prescribed punishment is up to 7 years or less, with or without fine and the prisoner has been convicted for a lesser number of years than the maximum.

"We direct that each State/Union Territory shall constitute a High Powered Committee comprising of (i) Chairman of the State Legal Services Committee, (ii) the Principal Secretary (Home/Prison) by whatever designation is known as, (iii) Director General of Prison(s), to determine which class of prisoners can be released on parole or an interim bail for such period as may be thought appropriate," it said.

The top court said it would be open for the



High Powered Committee to determine the category of prisoners who should be released depending upon the nature of offence, the number of years to which he or she has been sentenced or the severity of the offence with which he/she is charged with and is facing trial or any other relevant factor, which the Committee may consider appropriate.

It also directed that the Undertrial Review Committee set up by the court in another matter, shall meet every week and take such decision in consultation with the concerned authority.

It said that the High Powered Committee shall take into account the directions contained in its 2014 verdict of Arnes Kumar versus State of Bihar.

It asked the states and UTs who have not filed their responses to do so within three weeks from today and listed the matter after three weeks.

"Taking into consideration the possibility of outside transmission, we direct that the physical presence of all the

undertrial prisoners before the Courts must be stopped forthwith and recourse to video conferencing must be taken for all purposes," the bench said, adding that the transfer of prisoners from one prison to another for routine reasons must not be resorted except for decongestion to ensure social distancing and medical assistance to an ill prisoner.

It directed that there should not be any delay in shifting sick person to a Nodal Medical Institution in case of any possibility of infection is seen and prison specific readiness and response plans must be developed in consultation with medical experts.

It said that 'Interim guidance on Scaling-up COVID-19 Outbreak in Readiness and Response Operations in camps and camp like settings' -- jointly developed by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC), International Organisation for Migration (IOM), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and World Health

Organisation (WHO), published by Inter-Agency Standing Committee of United Nations on March 17, 2020 -- may be taken into consideration for similar circumstances.

"A monitoring team must be set up at the state level to ensure that the directives issued with regard to prison and remand homes are being complied with scrupulously," it said.

The top court added that looking into the possible threat of transmission and fatal consequences, it is necessary that prisons must ensure maximum possible distancing among the prisoners including under trials.

The top court also noted the steps taken by various states and UTs including shifting of over 11,000 prisoners to less congested prisons in Jharkhand.

"An overview of the responses reflects that considerable measures for protection of health and welfare of the prisoners to restrict the transmission of COVID-19 have been taken by the State Governments," the bench said. It said these

measures generally include creation of isolation wards, quarantine of new prisoners including prisoners of foreign nationality for a specific period, preliminary examination of prisoners for COVID-19, ensuring availability of medical assistance, entry points scanning of staff and other service providers, sanitisation and cleanliness exercise of prison campus and wards, supply of masks etc.

It said that significant measures have been taken by Bihar, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Tripura, Jharkhand, Goa, Kerala, Telangana and UTs of Jammu & Kashmir and Chandigarh who have advised the prison authorities that visitors may be allowed to interact with prisoners only through video calling or telephonic call.

On March 16, the top court had taken suo motu cognisance of overcrowding of prisons across the country and said it is difficult for jail inmates to maintain social distancing to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

Mamata requests Modi to stop all flights to West Bengal

KOLKATA, MARCH 23 (PTI): West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi requesting him to issue necessary instructions to stop all flights coming to the state as a precautionary measure to contain the spread of novel coronavirus.

In a letter to the prime minister, Banerjee noted that her government had suspended all inter-state public transport and reduced the number of intra-state buses due to

Coronavirus threat.

"I would request you to kindly make arrangements to issue necessary instructions to stop all flights coming to West Bengal with immediate effect so that the source of spreading infection is effectively contained and the lockdown in the state is implemented in true letter and spirit," Banerjee wrote.

West Bengal on Sunday announced a partial lockdown from 5 pm on Monday till March 27 midnight, in an attempt

to arrest the spread of the viral disease.

"The government of West Bengal has taken multiple proactive measures to prevent the spread of infection and for upgrading the health infrastructure in the state to address the crisis. We have announced massive critical safety regulation measures from 5 pm today," the chief minister wrote.

West Bengal has reported seven Covid-19 positive cases so far.

Manipur announces lockdown till March 31

IMPHAL, MAR 23 (PTI): Manipur was placed under a lockdown with immediate effect till March 31 in the wake of the novel coronavirus pandemic, state minister Thongam Biswajit Singh announced on Monday.

Essential services, however, have been exempted from the purview of the lockdown. The decision was taken at a meeting of the state cabinet, the industries minister said.

The cabinet also decided to set up isolation wards at the Regional

Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) and the Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Medical Sciences (JNIMS), Singh said.

The government has decided to distribute rice, meant for April under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), free of cost to support the needy during the lockdown. Beneficiaries of the Chief Minister Hakshelgi Tenggah health insurance scheme who do not possess the NFSA card will also be given free rice, he said.

Singh, the official

spokesperson of the government, said the spread of the deadly COVID-19 could be prevented only if guidelines issued by the experts were followed. He urged the people not to hide any signs and symptoms of the new coronavirus.

"Let us together fight COVID-19 and not allow our negligence to hinder our fight against it," the minister said. "Let us maintain proper hygiene, wash our hands regularly and maintain social distance to defeat COVID-19."

Medicine shops to remain open in Assam during lockdown

GUWAHATI, MAR 23 (PTI): All medicine shops and establishments in Assam will remain open and there will be no disruption in the supply of medicines, the Chemists and Druggists Association of Assam (CDAA) said on Monday.

The announcement was made after Health and Family Welfare Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced that Assam will be under lockdown from 6 pm on Tuesday till March 31 in the wake of the novel coronavirus pandemic.

The CDAA supports

social distancing but as medicines come under essential services, all shops/establishments will remain open to ensure that there is no disruption in the supply of medicines to the needy patients and avoid panic among people.

CDAA president N L Agarwala and Secretary Jitu Barman in a statement requested all stockists, dealers and retailers to make all necessary medicines available to people at reasonable prices.

We strictly oppose overcharging or hoarding

at this crucial moment in the interest of the nation and the All India Organisation of Chemists and Druggists has also issued directions in the same line, the CDAA statement said.

While addressing the media on the lockdown Sarma said essential services such as pharmacies, medical, water supply, banking, and petrol pumps would be exempted from the purview of the lockdown.

The state border will be sealed and no vehicles, barring those on essential duties, will be allowed, the minister added.

Chouhan 4th time lucky; to be sworn in Madhya Pradesh CM

BHOPAL, MAR 23 (PTI): BJP leader Shivraj Singh Chouhan will be sworn in Madhya Pradesh chief minister for the fourth time at 9 pm on Monday.

He was elected state BJP Legislature Party leader here in the evening. The legislature party members - wear-

ing masks due to coronavirus threat and sitting two chairs away from each other - unanimously elected Chouhan as their leader.

BJP's central observers Arun Singh and Vinay Sahasrabudhe joined the meeting via video conferencing from Delhi.

Elderly COVID stricken man dies in Bengal



KOLKATA, MARCH 23 (PTI): An elderly man infected with the coronavirus died in a Kolkata hospital on Monday, the first death recorded in West Bengal due to the contagion, hospital sources said.

The deceased was aged 57 years and was a resident of Dumdum in the North 24 Parganas district. He died at a private hospital.

He was in the hospital since February 16 and was on ventilator

support. He had no recent history of travelling abroad but had visited Bilaspur in Chhattisgarh his February.

"The man had acute respiratory distress syndrome. We had taken proper protective measures but he died this afternoon," a spokesperson for the hospital said.

His family members are under observation in an isolation ward at a state-run hospital, state government officials said.

Ladakh imposes lockdown till March 31

LEH, MAR 23 (PTI): The Union Territory of Ladakh has been placed on lockdown till March 31 to check the spread of coronavirus even as the reports of 16 fresh samples of suspected cases have tested negative, a senior government official said on Monday.

The lockdown came into effect across Ladakh at 8 pm on Sunday and will remain in force till 6 pm on March 31, officials said.

Ladakh has so far recorded a total of 13 positive coronavirus cases.

The District Development Commissioners of both Leh and Kargil districts have imposed Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), the Disaster Management Act and the Epidemic Diseases Act under which only essential services will be available to the people till March 31, Commissioner Secretary (Health) Rigzin Samphel told reporters here.

Seeking cooperation of the people, he said, "We will ensure that they do not face any problem during the shutdown period".

He said the reports of all 16 suspected cases -- 12 hailing from Kargil



and four from Leh -- were received from Delhi on Saturday and were negative. "The test report of a person, having a recent travel history to the United States and who reached Leh on Saturday in a very bad condition with suspected symptoms of COVID-19, is likely to reach by this (Monday) evening," he said.

Samphel said all the co-passengers of the person have been contacted and asked to remain under home-quarantine for 14 days and to ensure no physical contact with family members and others.

He said the Leh airport will operate as usual and there is no change in schedule of flights arriving from Delhi or Jammu.

The deputy commissioners of Leh and Kargil said in the lockdown order that there would be a "complete ban on assembly of three or more persons for any reason,

whatsoever, and complete shutdown of all shops and business establishments, educational institutions, markets and Anganwadi centres".

However, the essential services and supply chains to maintain the essential services were exempted from the purview of the shutdown, the officials said. They said there would be complete restrictions on the movement of inter-district and intra-district commercial transport and other modes of public transport, except for authorized transport plying for essential purposes.

They said the residents were asked to stay at home and come out only to procure essential commodities for consumption (one person per vehicle) in the immediate vicinity of their homes, while strictly following the norms of social distancing.

HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?

email us: news@summittimes.com

Eight essays put the spotlight on the journey coursed by hydel projects in Sikkim and the region, the cost exacted by this "development" and some of the stories it birthed, not all of which have been shared before. Also finding place in this collection is the arrival of Climate Change and its impact on Sikkim and how the State could negotiate with this new disruption.

Edited by TSHERING EDEN AND PEMA WANGCHUK

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ESSAYS ON TEESTA, HYDEL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN SIKKIM

IOC says Olympics postponement an option, cancellation ‘not on agenda’

LAUSSANE, MAR 23 (AFP): The International Olympic Committee said Sunday that postponing the 2020 Olympics is one of its options as the world grapples with the coronavirus pandemic, but that cancellation of the Tokyo showpiece was “not on the agenda”.

The IOC has faced strong pressure to push back the Games, scheduled from July 24 to August 9, from sporting federations and athletes worried about the health risk as the COVID-19 global death tally went past 13,000 on Sunday.

IOC president Thomas Bach said a decision on when the Games take place would be made “within the next four weeks”.

“Human lives take precedence over everything, including the staging of the Games,” Bach wrote in an open letter to athletes.

“We have, as indicated before, been thinking in different scenarios and are adapting them almost day by day.

“A final decision about the date of the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 now would still be premature,” he said.

Bach explained that the IOC was discussing its options with health authorities and stakeholders.

“We are confident that we will have finalised these discussions within the next four weeks.” He made clear that there would be Games in Tokyo at some point.

“Cancellation would not solve any problem and would help nobody,” Bach said.

“Therefore it is not on our agenda.”

- THUMBS DOWN-

The idea of holding



the Games on schedule has drawn a swelling chorus of objections.

On Sunday, nine-time Olympic track and field champion Carl Lewis, as well as the head of French athletics added their voices to the US and French swimming federations, the US and Spanish athletics federations, the Norwegian Olympic Committee and past and current athletes.

Sprinter and long jumper Lewis, who won gold at four different Olympics, told Houston television station KRIV that he backed calls for postponement.

“I just think it’s really difficult for an athlete to prepare, to train, to keep their motivation if there’s complete uncertainty. That’s the hardest thing,” he said.

“I think a more comfortable situation would be two years and put it in the Olympic year with the Winter Olympics (Beijing 2022) and then make it kind of a celebratory Olympic year.” World Athletics, the governing body of track and field, said they were “ready to work with the IOC and

all sport on an alternative date”. “World Athletics welcomes discussions with the IOC to postpone the Tokyo Olympic Games and wrote to the IOC earlier today to relay this feedback from its Area Presidents, Council and athletes,” it said in a statement.

On Saturday, World Athletics president Sebastian Coe told AFP that the sporting world was in “uncharted territory”.

“I don’t think we should have the Olympic Games at all costs, certainly not at the cost of athlete safety,” Coe said.

Britain’s Dina Asher-Smith, the world 200m champion, said she was frustrated by the IOC’s four-week window.

“So wait... does this mean that athletes face up to another FOUR weeks of finding ways to fit in training - whilst potentially putting ourselves, coaches, support staff and loved ones at risk just to find out they were going to be postponed anyway,” she tweeted.

US media reported on Sunday that American athletes had voted during a virtual town hall with

US Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) officials and given Tokyo the thumbs down.

Almost three-quarters of the 300 athletes who met online with USOPC supported delaying the Games, USA Today reported.

In all, 70 percent of the athletes supported a postponement with another 23 percent saying it would depend on the consequences, according to details supplied by a member of the USOPC Athletes Advisory Council.

- ‘REALLY SELFISH’ -
Almost a quarter wanted a decision no later than April 15, while 18 percent wanted an immediate decision.

“I feel the IOC is being really, really selfish in trying to push it,” US hammer thrower Gwen Berry said.

“And there’s no need to push it,” US swim and athletics trials to determine the nation’s two largest Olympic delegations are set for June.

“The right and responsible thing to do is to prioritise everyone’s health and safety and appropriately recognise

the toll this difficult situation has, and continues to take, on our athletes and their Olympic Games preparations,” said USA Track and Field chief Max Siegel. “For those reasons, USATF is respectfully requesting that the USOPC advocate to the IOC for the postponement of the 2020 Olympic Games.”

On Sunday, the USOPC, noting the “enormous ambiguity” faced by athletes attempting to prepare for Tokyo, called Bach’s pledge to decide on possible postponement in four weeks “progress”.

“Having spent countless hours communicating with IOC leadership and our peers around the world, we know the difficult obstacles ahead and we are all appreciative that the IOC has heard our concerns and needs, and is working to address them as quickly as possible.”

The head of the French athletics federation said postponement was inevitable.

“Everyone agrees that the Games cannot be held on the dates planned,” Andre Giraud said.

Australian athletes told to prepare for Olympic Games in 2021

SYDNEY, 23 MAR [AFP]: Tough and uncertain times are ahead for Australia’s Olympic athletes, who have been told to prepare for Tokyo 2020 to become Tokyo 2021 amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Australian Olympic Committee executive board held an emergency teleconference on Monday morning and unanimously agreed a team could not be assembled for the 2020 Olympics given the current situation at home and abroad.

The International Olympic Committee and Japanese government, under increasing pressure to take action, flagged that postponement was possible during the past 24 hours.

The IOC indicated its next step could take up to a month but that timeline could change as Australia, Canada and other nations make it clear they do not expect the Games to take place this year.

Australia will miss the summer Olympics for the first time if the opening ceremony is somehow staged on 24 July. The far more likely outcome is an unprecedented shift to a non-Olympic year but even that is yet to be locked in.

“It remains difficult [to postpone an Olympics]. Hence why their decision is they’ll

come back to us within a month,” an exhausted chief executive Matt Carroll said on Monday.

“Moving the world’s biggest sporting event, which involves so many sports, athletes, the world’s media, sponsors and the rest ... is not easy to do.” The IOC insists cancellation is not on its agenda.

Australian team chief de mission for Tokyo Ian Chesterman admitted recent “stress and uncertainty has been extremely challenging” for athletes. A different type of stress may now take hold for those who made financial and/or professional sacrifices in an effort to compete at the Games.

“It is very difficult for those amateur athletes. Because some of them could have part-time jobs they don’t have any more,” Carroll said. “International competitions has stopped now so they don’t have the prize money they would otherwise get.

“We’re engaging with the athletes on that to find out if there are any doing it tough and we’ll work with them.”

Carroll passed on a similar message to his counterparts at various Australian sports governing bodies, plus Sport Australia and the AIS, during a teleconference on Monday. “A lot of them

are very small organisations ... we’re working with them and the government to see how we can assist the sports,” he said.

The AOC last Thursday backed the IOC’s stance, outlining extreme isolation measures that could potentially be used in coming months to help athletes try to compete at Japan and avoid contracting the coronavirus.

The penny dropped on Monday amid Australia’s unprecedented ban on international travel, states closing their borders and a range of other extreme measures in place.

“Last Thursday was a different set of circumstances to standing here today,” Carroll said. “There has been dramatic change in our own country and across the world.

“We have athletes based overseas, training at central locations around Australia as teams and managing their own programs. With travel and other restrictions this becomes an untenable situation.”

Paralympics Australia released a statement, noting it “is wholly supportive of a postponement of the Paralympic Games in the best interests of public health, both here and abroad.”

“It is hard to see another option,” it said.

Postponing the Olympic Games: it’s complicated

TOKYO, MAR 23 (AFP): The Tokyo Olympics appears to be creeping towards a postponement, an unprecedented and costly exercise that involves ripping up years of planning. As International Olympic Committee president Thomas Bach told Germany’s SWR:

“Postponing the Olympic Games is not like moving a football game to next Saturday.” Here are just some of the challenges:

- COMPETITION SCHEDULING -
As specialist website Inside the Games put it, the Olympics “gravitate around... a four-year cycle. If you wake up and the sun is in a completely different place, there are going to be consequences”. Much depends on the length of any postponement but shoe-horning an Olympics into what is already a packed sporting calendar in 2021, for example, will be a logistical nightmare for both athletes, administrators and broadcasters.

One potential clash is the World Athletics Championships, currently scheduled for August 2021 in the United States -- a lucrative pay-day for athletes and TV networks.

Swimming is also scheduled to hold its World Championships in Japan from July 16 to August 1, 2021.

Adding to the crowded schedule is football’s European Championships, already postponed from 2020 to 2021.

Olympic legend Carl Lewis has put the case for holding the Summer Games in 2022 alongside that year’s Winter Games in Beijing, creating a “celebratory Olympic year”.

- VENUES -
There are 43 Olympic sites -- some temporary, some purpose-built, others repurposed for the Tokyo 2020 Games -- and all of them present difficulties in the event of a postponement.

The IOC highlighted this as one of the main concerns, warning: “A number of critical venues needed for the Games could potentially not be available anymore.”

For example, one of the main selling points of the brand new 68,000-seater Olympic Stadium was that it would hold “cultural and sporting events” after the Games were over. Any such event would now need to be moved if it clashes with a rescheduled Games.

And it’s not just sporting venues. Organisers have block-booked the enormous Tokyo Big Sight exhibition centre to host the thousands of interna-

tional journalists covering the Games. This is one of Asia’s premier venues for hosting large-scale conferences, and is booked many months in advance. Finding a suitable slot or persuading others to move could also be a challenge.

- ATHLETES’ VILLAGE -
A major question mark hangs over the athletes’ village, which occupies some prime real estate overlooking Tokyo Bay with a view of the city skyline and its famous Rainbow Bridge.

It will have 21 towers of between 14 and 18 floors with a total capacity of 18,000 beds during the Olympics and 8,000 for the Paralympics.

The plan was to renovate and convert the village into thousands of luxury condos, which are being sold off or put up for rent.

According to the website of the Harumi Flag developers, some 4,145 units were to be put up for sale. Viewings and sales of a first batch of 940 apartments began in summer 2019 and the vast majority have already been snapped up, according to Japanese media. Postponement would mean delaying the renovation process and huge uncertainty for those who have already signed contracts -- including whether force majeure clauses would be triggered.

- HOTELS -
Among the “many, many” challenges the IOC mentioned, it highlighted that “the situations with millions of nights already booked in hotels is extremely difficult to handle”.

In fact, one of the concerns before the coronavirus hit was a possible dearth of hotel rooms. One idea was to park a cruise ship offshore for emergency accommodation -- now surely a non-starter given the experience with cruise ships and the virus.

Hotel rooms have been block-booked in advance for many months. Many have paid a large deposit in advance and could face losing this, in addition to having to re-book quickly for a postponed date. The hotel industry would also face huge uncertainty if the Games are delayed, adding to the headache already posed by a catastrophic drop in tourism.

- ANY SILVER LININGS? -
A postponement by a few months to later in 2020 might solve what had previously been the biggest concern over the Tokyo Olympics: the sweltering heat of the Japanese summer.

Gambhir warns quarantine offenders

NEW DELHI, MAR 23 (PTI): Cricketer-turned politician Gautam Gambhir on Monday warned the offenders of the government’s quarantine guidelines set out to stop the spread of COVID-19 pandemic, saying they can choose to stay safe or go to jail.

The whole of India is heading towards a complete lockdown to tackle the coronavirus with majority of the people following the ‘Janata Curfew’ on Sunday by staying at home. However, there were some who took to the streets in big groups after the curfew period ended at 9pm.

“Khud bhee jayenge

aur parivaar ko bhee leke jayenge, quarantine or jail (either you go to quarantine with family or you go to jail,” wrote Gambhir on Twitter.

“Don’t be a threat to society. We are fighting for our existence, not for our livelihood. Follow the government’s lockdown guidelines,” he added.

With the global death toll passing 15,000, 19 Indian states have announced lockdown.

The Indian cricket board also advised citizens to stay at home.

“If you ever dreamed of playing for millions around the world, now is your chance,” the BCCI tweeted.

Azerbaijan GP becomes latest F1 race called off



WASHINGTON, MAR 23 (AP): The Azerbaijan Grand Prix has been postponed because of the coronavirus outbreak.

The latest postponement means there will be no Formula One races

until the middle of June at the earliest. The race at the Baku City Circuit was scheduled for June 7.

The first seven races of the Formula One season have either been postponed or cancelled.

Manjrekar says KL ‘right fit’ for number 5 slot in ODIs



MUMBAI, MAR 23 (PTI): Former India cricketer Sanjay Manjrekar says young batsman KL Rahul is most suitable for the number five position in the batting order in the ODIs but suggested that the team management must look for batsmen like Suresh Raina and Yuvraj Singh.

KL Rahul had batted in the middle-order in the home ODIs against Australia in January earlier this year with success. He later continued his fine form in the limited-overs series in New Zealand. Of late, the Karnataka player has also been keeping wickets in the 50-over games.

Manjrekar, who played 37 tests and 74 ODIs, was responding to questions from fans after he asked them “talk

cricket” with him on his twitter page.

He was asked whether India should stick with Rahul at number five in ODIs and does he find other batsmen other than Rahul to be in that position.

To which, Manjrekar, also a known commentator, tweeted, “For the moment he is the right fit. But we must keep looking for a Raina and Yuvi kind of batsman when Rahul eventually moves to the top.”

Yuvraj, who played 304 ODIs for India, scored 8,701 runs while Raina amassed 5,615 runs from 226 ODIs.

The former Mumbai batsman was also asked who he thinks was the right choice for number four and all-rounder’s spot in the T20 World

Cup to be held in Australia. Manjrekar picked Shreyas Iyer and Hardik Pandya respectively.

Finally, Manjrekar, a domestic bulwark, also felt that the issue with Mumbai was lack of exceptional leadership in Ranji trophy.

Mumbai, 41-time Ranji Champions, have been unable to perform well in the domestic championship in recent times, despite having good players.

Manjrekar was asked why Mumbai Ranji team was not producing good fast bowlers and their bowling was a concern, to which he tweeted, “Mumbai Ranji cricket’s issue is simple. Lack of exceptional leadership. And I don’t mean only the captain of the team here.

'Little upset with China' over coronavirus: Trump

BY LALIT K JHA
WASHINGTON, MAR 23 (PTI): US President Donald Trump has said he is "upset" with China over its late sharing of information on coronavirus.

"They should have told us about this," Trump told reporters at a press conference in the White House on Sunday.

"I'm a little upset with China. I'll be honest with you, because as much as I like (Chinese) President Xi (Jinping) and as much as I respect and admire the country," he said.

Trump said soon after he received information about the spread of the deadly viral infection in China, he wanted to send US medical team there. However, China did not allow.

Without specifying any timeline, Trump said he had spoken to President Xi "specifically" about sending US team to China, however, "he doesn't want this... this is not something that he wants".

The US president said it is "out of pride" that China didn't "want us to send people" and "they didn't really respond".

Reiterating that America's relationship with China is "very good", Trump said, "I wish they (had) told us three months sooner that this was a problem. We didn't know about it. They knew about it and they should (have) told us. We could have saved a lot of lives throughout the world."

Meanwhile, the US and Chinese officials continued with their war of words over coronavirus on Twitter.

"Since early January, the CCP has retaliated against its citizens and journalists in China for making information public, launched disinfection campaigns around the world, and limited the international community's access to valuable public health information," the National Security Council of the White House tweeted.

On March 20, Morgan Ortugas, spokesperson of the US State Department, tweeted, "By Jan. 3, Chinese authorities had already ordered #COVID19 virus samples destroyed, silenced Wuhan doctors, and censored public concerns online. @SpokespersonCHN is right: This is a timeline the world must absolutely scrutinize."

Responding to the tweet, Hua Chunying, spokesperson of the Chinese Foreign Ministry, said China has been updating the US on coronavirus and its response since January 3. On January 15, the US State Department notified Americans in China about the US Centre for Disease Control's warning against the coronavirus.

"And now blame China for Delay? Seriously," she said.

China, Hua tweeted, has treated COVID 19 as highly pathogenic virus according to the law on prevention and treatment of infectious diseases.

Global emergency efforts ratcheted up as pandemic deaths soar

Global emergency efforts to slow the coronavirus pandemic ratcheted up Monday with more nations and cities imposing extraordinary lockdowns, as the death toll soared towards 15,000.

From Germany banning gatherings of more than two people, New Zealand announcing a four-week lockdown and Hong Kong shutting its borders to all non-residents, the new round of containment efforts highlighted a deepening sense of panic around the world.

The Tokyo Olympics slated for July also looked increasingly likely to be postponed, with Canada announcing it would not send athletes to Japan then and Australia saying it was preparing for a one-year delay.

In the United States, President Donald Trump ordered thousands of emergency hospital beds to be set up at coronavirus hotspots as a trillion-dollar economic rescue package crashed in the Senate.

"We're at war, in a true sense we're at war," Trump said.

The death toll from the virus surged to more than 14,400, according to an AFP tally on Sunday, with Europe the epicentre.

Italy's world-worst toll from the pandemic approached 5,500 with another 651 deaths reported on Sunday, a day after it surpassed China with the highest number of fatalities.

European nations continued to choke people movement, with Greece on Monday morning to follow Italy, Spain and France in imposing



a nationwide lockdown. In Germany, Chancellor Angela Merkel on Sunday announced the ban on gatherings of more than two people. She did so while in quarantine herself because she had met an infected doctor.

Like in Europe and elsewhere around the globe, the lockdowns have decimated the tourism industry.

"That was heartbreaking. We have made a huge investment preparing for a successful tourism season," hotel owner Tamriko Sikharulidze told AFP in Tbilisi after Georgia declared a state of emergency over the weekend.

- Pope plea -

Police patrolled the deserted streets of Rome on the weekend, while checks were carried out on Italian beaches after local officials complained people were defying isolation orders by catching some time in the sun.

In his weekly prayer,

streamed online to avoid attracting crowds, the Pope urged all Italians to follow isolation measures "for the good of us all." Spain's prime minister said he would ask parliament to extend a 15-day state of emergency, which bars people from leaving home unless absolutely essential, until April 11.

Spain recorded close to 400 new fatalities Sunday, bringing the total to 1,720, suggesting the lockdown was failing to be effective. Opera star Placido Domingo said he had tested positive. Residents across France, where the death toll jumped to 674, remained shut in their homes.

A curfew was imposed in some regions and the mayor of Paris called for even more drastic confinement measures in a city under lockdown.

Britain inched towards similar measures as Prime Minister Boris Johnson warned the country was a couple of

weeks behind registering similar numbers to Italy.

- Great Depression fears -

In the United States, more than a third of Americans were under various forms of lockdown, including in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles, but the number of infections in the country has continued to climb.

Highlighting the desperation inside the world's biggest economy, the mayor of New York said his city was just 10 days away from running out of ventilators.

And a trillion-dollar Senate proposal to revive the US economy crashed Sunday after receiving zero support from Democrats, further traumatising investors who are watching stock markets implode worldwide.

Asian markets were hammered on Monday, and European stocks followed with a drop of four percent at the open, as they absorbed the

failed US stimulus effort and the barrage of other bad news from across the world. "This is the biggest economic shock our nation has faced in generations," Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said as he warned the pandemic could lead to a crisis akin to the 1930s Great Depression.

- Moral burden -

As the pandemic overwhelms hospitals, doctors are having to quickly prioritise patients based on their chances of survival, inflicting a huge moral burden.

"We go into medicine to heal people. Not to make choices about who can live," said Philippe Devos, an anaesthesiologist in Belgium.

The virus emerged in China late last year, after first being detected at a market that sold wild animals for human consumption in the central city of Wuhan. China has since sought to sow doubts over whether the virus began in

Wuhan, while portraying itself as a saviour in the global fight and a role model for quarantines. China on Monday reported no new local cases of the virus, but confirmed another 39 infections from overseas. However, Beijing's communist leaders have also been criticised at home and abroad for a perceived lack of transparency, particularly at the start of the outbreak.

Trump has been among those critics and angered China by branding it the "Chinese virus". On Sunday he complained again about a lack of information and transparency from Beijing.

"They should have told us about this," Trump said. "I'm a little upset with China. I'll be honest with you."

- Second wave -

There are fears across Asia of "imported" cases from Europe and other hotspots.

New Zealand has yet to be hit hard but on Monday Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern announced a four-week lockdown to prevent a Europe-style crisis.

"The worst-case scenario is simply intolerable," Ardern said. "It would represent the greatest loss of New Zealand lives in our history and I will not take that chance."

Hong Kong, which had largely avoided the virus in the first wave despite being so close to the Chinese mainland, announced a ban on all non-residents from entering.

Chief Executive Carrie Lam said restaurants and bars would also be banned from selling alcohol. "Sometimes when people drink more, there may be some intimate acts," she told reporters.

Travel hub UAE to halt flights as virus reaches Gaza

DUBAI, MAR 23 (AP): The United Arab Emirates, home to the world's busiest international airport, announced early on Monday that it was suspending all passenger and transit flights for two weeks to stymie the spread of the new coronavirus.

The announcement came a day after the first cases were reported in the Gaza Strip and Syria, where years of conflict have severely degraded the local health care infrastructure. The new cases also raised fears about other vulnerable areas, like war-torn Libya and Yemen.

Dubai's airport is a vital hub connecting Western nations with countries in Asia and Australia, and suspending transit flights there affects travelers around the world.

Saudi Arabia, meanwhile, announced that an evening curfew would go into effect starting Monday from 7 p.m. to 6 a.m. for three weeks.

Countries across the Middle East have ramped up restrictions on daily life in an effort to contain the global pandemic.

Most people only experience mild symptoms from the COVID-19 disease caused by the virus and recover within weeks. But it is highly contagious and causes severe illness in some patients, particularly the

elderly and those with weakened immune systems. People can carry and spread the virus without showing any symptoms.

More than 331,000 people have been infected worldwide, and more than 14,400 have died. Nearly 100,000 people have recovered.

There are around 26,800 cases of the virus confirmed in the Middle East, but more than 21,000 of those cases are in Iran and many others are linked to travelers from Iran, which has reported nearly 1,700 fatalities.

The UAE's emergency and crisis management body and its Civil Aviation Authority said in a statement that the decision to stop all commercial flights, including even transit flights, would take effect in 48 hours. The aviation authority said cargo and emergency evacuation flights would be exempt from the ban.

Saudi Arabia and at least seven other countries in the Middle East have already suspended all commercial flights to try and stop the spread of the virus. Also, several Mideast countries, including Iraq and Kuwait, have imposed evening curfews.

The UAE's Ministry of Interior announced overnight that people should only leave their homes

in their personal cars for work or necessities. It said further announcements would be made regarding rules for taxis and public transport, on which many foreign laborers and workers across the country rely. It warned that violators could face fines or imprisonment.

The UAE also announced that malls, shopping centers and restaurants will be closed for at least two weeks, though restaurants can still offer delivery service.

The decision affects some of world's biggest malls and indoor mall attractions in the emirates of Dubai and Abu Dhabi. Grocery stores, pharmacies and wholesale food suppliers are exempt from the ban.

Countries across the Gulf have already closed schools, gyms, parks, beaches and mosques to the public, including Islam's holiest sites in Mecca and Medina.

The cases in Gaza and Syria have raised particular concern, as both would be ill-equipped to detect or contain an outbreak. Authorities in Gaza say two people tested positive and were isolated after returning from Pakistan.

Syria said a 20-year-old woman tested positive after entering from another country, without providing further details. Gaza has been under

an Israeli and Egyptian blockade since the Islamic Hamas movement seized power from rival Palestinian forces in 2007. The coastal territory is home to more than 2 million people but it only has around 60 ventilators, and all but 15 are already in use, according to Abdelnasser Soboh, director of the World Health Organization's Gaza office.

The nine-year civil war in Syria has left millions of people internally displaced. Poverty is rampant and many medical facilities are barely functioning.

There are similar concerns about a catastrophe if the virus turns up in Libya or Yemen, which are both divided by civil wars that have ruined their healthcare systems. Afghanistan reported its first death on Sunday, a man in his 40s. The war-ravaged country has reported 34 confirmed cases.

Tech giants partner with US govt to provide resources for COVID-19 research

BY LALIT K JHA
WASHINGTON, MAR 23 (PTI): US-based global tech giants, including IBM, Amazon, Google and Microsoft, have partnered with the White House to "unleash the power of American supercomputing resources" for combating the novel coronavirus, President Donald Trump has said.

From volunteering to manufacturing masks and ventilators to ramping up production of essential medical supplies and general items, the country's private sector have joined America's war against coronavirus in a big way, Trump said on Sunday, while launch-

ing a new public-private consortium organised by the White House, the Department of Energy and tech company IBM.

"The outpouring from the private sector (in the fight against coronavirus) has been extraordinary," he said. The public-private consortium will "unleash the power of American supercomputing resources" to fight the deadly viral infection, the president said.

IBM, Amazon, Google, Microsoft, MIT, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Department of Energy's National Laboratories, the National Science Foundation and the NASA will be primarily computing re-

sources to help researchers discover new treatments and vaccines. "They'll be working along with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and all of the people that are working on this (COVID-19 research)," Trump said.

The NIH is the primary agency of the US government responsible for biomedical and public health research. Trump said US-based multinational conglomerate Honeywell will immediately expand its personal protective equipment manufacturing operations in Rhode Island to produce millions of additional N95 masks for the US government strategic national stockpile.

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OUT AND ABOUT! Actress, Olivia Wilde showed off her pearly whites while going for a walk in Los Angeles.

Coronavirus: Tom Hanks says he and Rita Wilson 'feel better'



MELBOURNE, MAR 23 (PTI): Hollywood star Tom Hanks on Monday said he and his wife, singer-songwriter Rita Wilson "feel better" two weeks after coronavirus symptoms began.

The 63-year-old Oscar winner, who along with Wilson are in self-isolation at a rented home in Australia, took to social media to give another health update.

"Two weeks after our first symptoms and we feel better," Hanks wrote on Twitter.

He also encouraged peo-

ple to practice social distancing, a guideline recommended by experts to prevent the further spread of COVID-19.

"Sheltering in place works like this: You don't give it to anyone - You don't get it from anyone. Common sense, no? Going to take awhile, but if we take care of each other, help where we can, and give up some comforts... this, too, shall pass. We can figure this out," the actor added.

Wilson, 63, on Sunday shared a video of her rapping to Naughty by Nature's "Hip

Hop Hooray." "Quarantine Stir Crazy. See it to believe it," she captioned on Instagram.

Recently, Hanks said he and Wilson don't have fever but feel the "blahs" since their discharge from an Australian hospital after testing positive for the virus.

The Hollywood couple checked out of a Gold Coast medical facility last Tuesday after spending a week in self-isolation.

The coronavirus pandemic has claimed over 14,000 lives across the world.

Bollywood criticises Janata Curfew celebrations on streets: it's worrisome, stupid

MUMBAI, MAR 23 (PTI): Several Bollywood stars including actor Sonam Kapoor, Richa Chadha, Nimrat Kaur have criticised the way people "celebrated" Janata curfew on streets on Sunday, defying social distancing as advised by the central government during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

Janata Curfew was an initiative by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, which was meant to give a shout-out to people who have been providing medical and other essential services to fight the COVID-19 outbreak.

The prime minister had urged people to come out to their doorsteps or balconies to express gratitude to those who have been providing essential services during this crisis.

However, soon social media was flooded with videos of people out on the streets, celebrating by banging plates, dancing, taking out rallies in huge numbers and even playing 'Corona Garba.'

Taking to Twitter, Nimrat criticised



the manner in which people handled the situation. "The attitude behind the circus that's unfolded in so many parts of the country over 'celebrating' the end of #Covid19 is the exact reason why we should be so worried for India. Praying, the price we pay for this utter embarrassment and horror isn't irreversible and drastic," "The Lunchbox" star said.

Sharing a video of children dancing on the streets, Richa tweeted, "Stupid level max. This is the opposite of a #Janatacurfew."

Re-tweeting a thread of several videos of people celebrating on the streets, Sonam said, "Sharing because it's tragically hilarious."

A day after Janata Curfew, the prime minister on Monday appealed to state governments to ensure that rules and regulations of the coronavirus lockdown are enforced as he noted that many people are not taking the measure seriously.

"Many people are still not taking the lockdown seriously. Please save yourself,

save your family, follow the instructions seriously. I request state governments to ensure rules and laws are followed," he said in a tweet in Hindi. Replying to PM's tweet, filmmaker Anubhav Sinha wrote, "Thank you sir. These people also need your scolding once."

Filmmaker Karan Johar also underlined the importance of social distancing, by tweeting, "Stay apart or fall apart! Your choice! #IndiaFightsCorona"

Actor Kritika Kamra tweeted that one must strictly stay at home as there is "nothing to celebrate".

"Let's make sure we don't spread this to the elderly, vulnerable and underprivileged. And eventually, I really hope we come out of this as better people. We need to do better as a society. And vote for upliftment, inclusivity, equality," she tweeted.

According to the Union Health Ministry, the total number of confirmed coronavirus cases in the country rose to 415 on Monday.

Harvey Weinstein tests positive for coronavirus: report



WASHINGTON, MAR 23 (AFP): Disgraced Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein has tested positive for the novel coronavirus, US media has reported.

Weinstein, 68, is in prison in northern New York state after being sentenced to 23 years in jail for rape and sexual assault.

The fallen film producer's diagnosis was first reported on Sunday evening by local paper the Niagara Gazette.

Weinstein's spokespeople have declined to comment to US media on the subject.

The New York state Department of Corrections did not respond when contacted by AFP for confirmation of the reports.

Weinstein was transferred Wednesday to a prison near Buffalo, 350 miles (560 kilometers) northwest of New York City.

Prior to his transfer, he stayed at Rikers Island prison and a Manhattan hospital, where he was treated for chest

pains. Crowded US prisons have the potential to become hotbeds for coronavirus infections. Last week, guards at Rikers and New York's Sing Sing prison tested positive for the virus, local media reported.

As of Sunday, the virus has killed 417 people in the US out of more than 33,000 cases, according to a tracker managed by Johns Hopkins University.

Weinstein was convicted in February of a criminal sexual act in the first degree and rape in the third degree, while being cleared of predatory sexual assault charges.

He was convicted of raping ex-actress Jessica Mann in 2013 and of forcibly performing oral sex on former production assistant Mimi Hiley in 2006.

Nearly 90 women, including Angelina Jolie and Salma Hayek, have leveled sexual misconduct allegations against Weinstein, the Oscar-winning producer of "Shakespeare in Love" and numerous other critical and box office hits.

Childish Gambino drops new album '3.15.20'

LOS ANGELES, MAR 23 (PTI): Singer-actor Donald Glover has released a brand new album under the name of his hip-hop act, Childish Gambino.

Titled '3.15.20', the new LP features Gambino's collaboration with the likes of Ariana Grande, 21 Savage and Ludwig Goransson, according to The Hollywood Reporter.

With the exception of the previously released single "Algorhythm" and "Time", for which Gambino collaborated with Grande, the rest of the album's 12 tracks don't have names. They are instead timestamped.

The album is now available to stream across all platforms. However, fans who want to listen to the whole album in one go can do that by heading to DonaldGloverPresents.com.

Glover's last Childish Gambino album was 2016's "Awaken, My Love!". In 2018, the singer had dropped the track "This Is America", which instantly became a hit.

On the acting front, he last voice featured in Disney's "The Lion King".

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ARIES: Your time away from the matrix is giving you a chance to reconnect with yourself on a deeper level. But who says meditation and mindfulness has to be incense sticks and mantras? Art is meditation too, depending on the state of mind with which you approach it. Visualise yourself as a clear channel of creativity.

Tip: Let Spirit weave magic through you.

TAURUS: The storm may or may not have passed but you have developed the means to deal with the given circumstances in an evolved manner. When in doubt, tap into your inner reservoir of patience and resilience. See how you can make the 'now' better. Turning to meditation and mindfulness is an excellent way to stay centred. Yes, the thoughts will come and go.

Tip: Meditation will help you stay centred despite the chaos.

GEMINI: Geminis in toxic relationships, three words: cut it out. If somebody is constantly depleting your resources and making you question your own abilities, it's called gaslighting. What would you tell a friend who is in the same circumstances as you? Some of you may feel haunted by the ghosts of your past. Keep in mind that there is a reason things didn't work out. Rekindling the flames will do more harm than good.

Tip: Be mindful of your consumption habits.

CANCER: Sometimes you just have to put your phone on flight mode and give the project at hand your undivided attention. There's no better time to push your limits and show the

world what you are truly capable of. Keeping the distractions at bay will be challenging, but not impossible. If you're working from home right now, it's best to have boundaries in place so others don't weigh you down with unrealistic expectations. Head over heart, Cancer. You are not putting anybody else down by choosing yourself.

Tip: The project at hand needs undivided attention.

LEO: Who says working from home is dull and uninspiring? Create a conducive environment for yourself by decluttering and rearranging your possessions in a way that they support your sacred purpose. Oh, and while you're at it keep the elixir of life (aka ginger, turmeric, lemon, and honey tea) handy!

Tip: Find new ways to stay motivated professionally.

VIRGO: You win some, you lose some, and that's the way life goes. The cards are reminding you that the problems you are facing are not as big as you are making them out to be. Try to look at the given situation from a different perspective. This will help you understand their side of the story. The drama will take backstage once you focus on bringing in peace and harmony. As for the sacrifice you're having to make, know that it is minuscule in comparison to what you will receive.

Tip: Your sacrifice is in alignment with the greater good.

LIBRA: This is a sacred time in the Libra headquarters, one that is facilitating your journey inwards. Listen to what Spirit is communicating to you via dreams, visions, signs, and sym-

bols. They hold the master key to the future you are about to write. The more silent you are, the clearer the messages will become to you. Consider practicing Vipassana meditation (or silence) for a few hours today. The transformative practice assists mind-body connection and helps you become an observer rather than actively engaging with the ebb and flow of your emotions.

Tip: Become aware of the divine downloads.

SCORPIO: It's easy to practice kindness when everything is picture-perfect. The real test: how you show up for others in times of distress. Scorpio, the Universe is giving you a gold star for the compassion you are displaying at the moment. Take things up a notch. Spend quality time with your family members (or soul crew depending on who you share space with).

Tip: Laugh and make merry.

SAGITTARIUS: Let's remove the first two letters from 'unlucky in love'. What the cards are urging you to do is turn to the virtual world for romance. Remember, the intention with which you approach the given medium will make all the difference here. Negativity will attract douchebags. Keeping your heart open to possibilities will, on the other hand, align you with kindred spirits. Love at first sight is overrated. Share your likes and dislikes. Start a conversation about the things that matter. It's all about building an authentic connection, right?

Tip: You're about to get lucky in love.

CAPRICORN: Date nights don't always have to be about

painting the town red or being snapped by the paparazzi at 'it' places. This week, you're finding the joy in small, simple rituals like reorganising your space, upcycling your possessions or doing laundry together. Two is always better than one, Capricorn! As such, spending quality time with the fam is going to be big on your agenda.

Tip: Spend quality time with the crew.

AQUARIUS: House arrest isn't particularly easy. Neither is sharing space with family. Statutory warning: you will get triggered, Aquarius, and as a result you could lose patience with your loved ones. At times like these, it's important to embrace the virtues of kindness and compassion. We're all in this together, remember! On the upside, something you have been manifesting is likely to take a tangible form. Remember to send out a prayer of gratitude to the mysterious forces above.

Tip: Practice kindness and compassion.

PISCES: It's easy to put terms and conditions on the people in our lives. But true love does not understand 'ifs' and 'buts'. In fact, it does not understand the language of reason at all. What you're being asked to practice today: unconditional love. Make a conscious effort to honour the light in everybody. Shower upon them the gift of acceptance. Trust that the most challenging relationships will transform under the spell of your love.

Tip: Learning to accept people as they are will bring balance and harmony into your world.