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# SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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## Sikkim will follow Centre's guidelines on lockdown provisions: CM

**'FURTHER DECISIONS ON COVID-19 CHALLENGES AT CABINET MEETING ON 15 APRIL'**

Summit Report

Gangtok, 11 Apr:

Sikkim will stand with the rest of the States in following the guidelines and decisions of the central government on COVID-19 lockdown and post-lockdown measures, Chief Minister PS Tamang [Golay] informed in a Facebook posted this evening.

This was included in his update to the people on the video-conference meeting the CM participated in convened by the Prime Minister and joined by CMs of all States.

The meeting arrived at the consensus that the nationwide lockdown should continue for another two weeks.

As per the original schedule, the 21-day lockdown was to end on 14 April.

Although no such consultation was held with the states before the present lockdown was announced, through the duration of the lockdown, this is now the third video-conference the PM has called with the CMs.

Lack of coordination and planning was

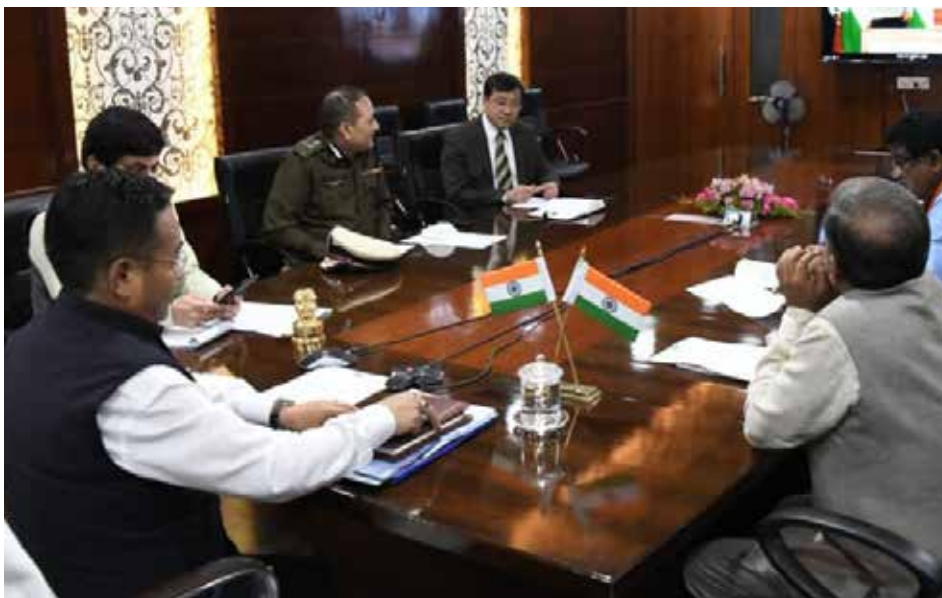
apparent since day-one and it has been a series of course-corrections and new rules and relaxations since. Meanwhile, the virus continues to infect more people. A PTI tally of numbers reported by various states as on 7 PM showed a total of 7,049 having been affected by the virus nationwide so far with at least 236 deaths. More than 650 have been cured and discharged.

The PM did however observe today that the combined efforts of the Centre and the states has helped reduce the impact of COVID-19.

The spread of the virus has been varied in India with some states seeing bigger jumps in cases despite the shutdown. Millions of migrant workers have been left jobless with the poorest suffering most.

The Home Ministry, separately, has sought views of state governments on the 21-day lockdown, scheduled to end on April 14, including whether more categories of people and services need to be exempted, officials said on Friday.

The CM, meanwhile, has urged all



citizens to be calm and composed during this period.

"We will be holding a cabinet on Tuesday, 15th April 2020 for taking further decision on the challenges being faced because of the COVID 19," he adds in

his Facebook post.

He has further informed the people that all the 56 COVID-19 tests conducted in the State have returned negative thus far keeping Sikkim COVID-free thus far.

He adds that till this afternoon, 950

students from Sikkim stranded outside the State have been provided with financial assistance of Rs 5,000 each.

"Similarly, patients who are obtaining medical treatment outside Sikkim are also provided with financial assistance by the government," he adds.

He has thanked the people for their support and cooperation to the lockdown and makes special mention of the line departments which have been working tirelessly.

"I am pleased to acknowledge the efforts of Transport Department providing all goods including fuel required for the security forces in the international border. I also express my gratitude towards the Denzong Co-operative for providing food and other essential items to the security forces in the high altitude areas of our international border," he writes.

While congratulating the people for having kept Sikkim COVID-free, he reminds that everyone needs to remain vigilant and careful and "not let any sort of complacency to creep in."

## Death toll due to COVID-19 rises to 239; cases climb to 7,447

**NEW DELHI, APR 11 (PTI):** The death toll due to the novel coronavirus rose to 239 and the number of cases to 7,447 in the country on Saturday, according to the Union Health Ministry

While the number of active COVID-19 cases is 6,565, as many as 642 people were cured and discharged and one had migrated, it said

As many as 33 new deaths have been reported since Friday evening, the ministry said

Seventeen deaths were reported from Madhya Pradesh, 13 from Maharashtra, two from Gujarat and one from Assam, it said Maharashtra has reported the most coronavirus deaths at 110, followed by Madhya Pradesh at 33, Gujarat at 19 and Delhi at 13.

Punjab registered 11 deaths while Tamil Nadu has reported eight fatalities and Telengana seven

Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka have reported six deaths each while West Bengal has registered five deaths each

Jammu and Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh have reported four deaths each while Haryana and

Rajasthan have recorded three deaths each

Two deaths have been reported from Kerala. Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Odisha, Jharkhand and Assam reported one fatality each, according to the health ministry data

The 7,447 figure includes 71 foreign nationals

The death toll on Friday evening was 206

However, a PTI tally of numbers reported by various states as on 9.30 pm on Friday showed a total of 7,510 people having been affected by the virus nationwide with at least 251 deaths

There has been a lag in the Union Health Ministry figures, compared to the number of cases announced by different states, which officials attribute to procedural delays in assigning the cases to individual states

According to the ministry's data updated in the morning, the highest number of confirmed cases in the country are from Maharashtra at 1574, followed by Tamil Nadu at 911 and Delhi at 903

The cases have gone up to 553 in Rajasthan, followed by 473 in Telengana and 435 in Madhya Pradesh and 431

in Uttar Pradesh

Kerala has reported 364 cases and Andhra Pradesh 363. Gujarat has 308 positive patients so far

Novel coronavirus cases have risen to 207 in Karnataka and Jammu and Kashmir each and 177 in Haryana

Punjab has 132 positive patients so far while West Bengal has 116 cases.

Bihar has reported 60 cases while Odisha has 48 coronavirus cases

Thirty-five people were infected with the virus in Uttarakhand while Assam has 29 patients, followed by Himachal Pradesh with 28 cases

Chandigarh and Chhattisgarh have 18 cases each while Ladakh has 15. Jharkhand has 14 positive patients so far while 11 cases have been reported from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Goa has reported seven COVID-19 infections, followed by Puducherry at five cases. Manipur has two while Tripura, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh have reported one case each

"State-wise distribution is subject to further verification and reconciliation," the ministry said on its website.

## Lockdown set to be extended as 1,000-plus new cases push India tally above 8,000

**NEW DELHI, APR 11 (PTI):** The nationwide lockdown to contain the deadly coronavirus looks set to be extended by two more weeks till April-end after a consensus emerged among states on Saturday for continuing the curbs amid the tally of confirmed infections crossing 8,000 with a record increase of over 1,000 cases within 24 hours.

While Prime Minister Narendra Modi asked state governments to take steps to curb the lockdown violations and ensure adherence to social distancing, he

also announced a shift in focus from 'Jaan hai to jahaan hai' (health is wealth) to 'Jaan bhi, jahaan bhi' (lives as well as livelihoods), which many saw as indications towards relaxations for certain economic activities, including for industrial and agriculture sector.

The next 3-4 weeks would be critical to determine the impact of steps taken till now to curb the virus spread, Modi told the chief ministers.

During their interaction, several chief ministers demanded

financial and fiscal relief from the Centre to fight the pandemic, while Modi suggested measures to incentivise direct marketing of farm produce to help farmers, among other steps to help the country remain healthy and to prosper too. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said the states have demanded Rs 10 lakh crore package.

Modi also said the crisis is an opportunity to become self-reliant and turn the nation into an economic powerhouse.

Maharashtra, which

became the third state to announce an extension in the lockdown after Odisha and Punjab even before an official extension to the nationwide lockdown, was much more clearer in announcing that areas identified as hotspots of the virus spread would see stricter curbs while restrictions would be relaxed in unaffected areas.

After attending Modi's interaction with chief ministers, Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa said the

second phase of the two-week lockdown would not be the same as the ongoing three-week one, which entered its 18th day and was originally scheduled to last until April 14.

"The Prime Minister said during the next fifteen days lockdown will be relaxed in graded manner... Agriculture and industrial sectors will be given relaxation. Government offices will be allowed to function with partial strength. He (Modi) will announce such measures soon," Yediyurappa said.

Turn Page 2

## West Sikkim bikers' club provides lunch to on-duty officials

**PRITAM LAMA  
GYALSHING, 11 APR:**

Khangchendzonga Motorcycle Club, a bikers' club of West Sikkim is providing lunch every day to Police personnel, GMC workers, labourers, health workers and Government employees who are on duty during this lockdown.

A team of the club visits every police Checkpost, hospital and Government office with lunch and tea for the employees on duty. A club member, Zikdal Bhutia from Pelling said that this is an initiative of the club to help the state government.

"We would like to thank the Yuksam business community for sponsoring and



donating rice and vegetables. Gyalshing business community also supports us with the essential commodities. We have started this initiative as all eateries are closed and so that

on-duty officials and employees have no place to buy lunch," added Mr Bhutia.

Another club member, Manoj Gurung from Yuksam informed that the initiative started from 08 April

and will continue till the lockdown is in place. The twelve-member team covers Legship police outpost (border between South district and west District), Gyalshing District Hospital, Gyalshing

GMC, Gyalshing District administration Centre, Pelling Police Outpost till Darap.

The club members have thanked the various organizations and individuals who have donated the essential commodities. The club also provides lunch to migrant labourers and others stranded in and around Gyalshing.

It is to be mentioned here that the Khangchendzonga Motorcycle Club has been working since a couple of years and volunteers help in times of natural calamities and crisis.

The club members have thanked the district administration for issuing permission to carry out their initiative.

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# I will definitely consider becoming AIFF president in future: Bhutia

**NEW DELHI, APR 11 (PTI):** Former India captain Bhaichung Bhutia has said that he will consider contesting for the post of All India Football Federation (AIFF) president in future.

Bhutia retired in 2011, after being Indian football's posterboy for more than a decade.

"That is definitely something to be considered in future," he said when asked if he wants to become the AIFF president one day, while answering

questions on Facebook.

"At the moment I am focussing on grassroot football with Baichung Bhutia Football School and United Sikkim club and also at district level (in Sikkim). In future, I will definitely consider it (the AIFF president's post)," said the legendary striker who was known as 'Sikkimese Sniper' for his goal-scoring abilities.

The current AIFF president Praful Patel has effectively been at the helm of affairs since 2008 when then chief Priyaranjan Das Munshi

fell sick.

He was elected as president in 2012 and again in 2016, and is unlikely to be eligible to fight for the top job this year under the Sports Code.

The 43-year-old Bhutia, who was the first Indian footballer to have played 100 international matches, picked India and FC Goa player Brandon Fernandes as the country's best midfielder at the moment.

"The most gifted striker right now is

obviously Sunil Chhetri, there is nobody else. He has been scoring goals and the record itself speaks a lot.

"The midfielder who has really impressed me this year is Brandon Fernandes of FC Goa. He has really done well for FC Goa. The way he had controlled the midfield for FC Goa (in ISL) and linked up with the upfront has been fantastic. He is also in the national team."

Bhutia also felt that young entrepreneurs from the northeast India

can contribute a lot for the development of football in the region.

"By sponsoring the clubs in this region, by supporting the local players and giving them some equipment in terms of football training shoes, balls and others in whatever capacity they can do..

"So entrepreneurs in northeast, especially young ones, can really do a lot because just like cricket is to other parts of the country, football is the sport in the northeast.



**POWER DEPT STAFF AT WORK**

Energy and Power Department staff of Namchi works diligently amidst the lockdown. [PHOTO COURTESY – IPR Dept]



Anganwadi workers of Singtam Rural Project East Sikkim under Social Justice & Welfare Department ensure timely distribution of ration to beneficiaries during lockdown. [PHOTO COURTESY – SANJAY AGARWAL]



## Social distancing at Nandugaon

Public following social distancing rule while receiving relief materials and essential commodities at Nandugaon Fair Price shop under Poklok-Kamrang Constituency today. (IPR)

## SPCC president takes part in video conference with Sonia Gandhi

### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 11 APR:**

Indian National Congress president, Sonia Gandhi took stock of the COVID-19 situation in different States via video conferencing which also saw the participation of president Sikkim Pradesh Congress Committee on Friday evening.

During the video conferencing, state presidents gave details of the situation in their respective states, informs a Sikkim Pradesh Congress Committee press release.

SPCC president, Bharat Basnet informed the national president that reports of all 48 samples sent by the State have tested negative and there is no confirmed COVID-19 case so far in Sikkim. He further



apprised the national president that Sikkim has been facing some problems in testing as it has to send samples for testing in North Bengal.

The release adds that

in the video conferencing, the national president has promised to extend all possible support to Sikkim in case of any emergency in the State and thanked all

health workers and people involved in the distribution of relief materials to the people. She also urged the party workers to help people in this time of crisis.

## Temi Tea Estate violating lockdown protocol, alleges SDF

### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 11 APR:**

Sikkim Democratic Front [SDF] spokesperson, JB Darnal today alleged that Temi Tea Estate is violating the lockdown protocol by continuing operations.

Addressing a press conference here today,

Mr Darnal said that a total of 405 workers including management staff are working at the estate violating the social distancing and other guidelines issued by the Centre and the State government. How are the authorities allowing this, he questioned.

Mr Darnal further alleged that workers are being compelled to work in pharmaceutical companies in the State and urged the State government to immediately take appropriate action in the interest of the workers of different companies.

While mentioning that health workers, village police, officials and staff of line departments, and media personnel are working on the frontlines risking their lives in this period, he urged the government to take initiative to provide life insurance for them.

### Lockdown set to be extended...

Separately, sources said all central ministers have been asked to resume office from Monday and put together plans for post-lockdown period to kick-start the economy. All ministries have also been directed that joint secretary and above rank officers will resume work in respective departments and one-third of the essential staff members in every ministry need to be present.

While government officials said guidelines for the second phase of lockdown would be announced in next few days, the Union Health Ministry said testing and treatment infrastructures were being augmented on a daily basis and asserted that the number of confirmed cases could have reached 8.2 lakh by April 15 in the absence of a lockdown and other containment measures.

In its evening update as on 5 PM, the Ministry put the number of confirmed cases so far across the country at 7,529 with 242 deaths. These results are from nearly 1.7 lakh tests conducted so far across the country. According to the Ministry, 1,035 new cases and 40 deaths were reported in 24 hours till Saturday afternoon.

However, a PTI tally of numbers reported by various states as on 6.30 PM showed at least 8,016 positive coronavirus cases and 261 deaths. More than 800 people have been cured and discharged so far.

Fresh cases were reported from various places, including in Maharashtra, Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

While Maharashtra saw its tally of confirmed cases rising to at least 1,666, Mumbai alone has more than 1,100 cases now. Tamil Nadu and Delhi have also seen their respective numbers cross the 1,000-mark, while Rajasthan has over 600 cases. The states with over 400 cases included Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh.

The death toll in Maharashtra alone has reached 110.

Announcing an extension to the lockdown till April 30 soon after attending Modi's interaction with chief ministers, Maharashtra's Uddhav Thackeray said that the lockdown can be relaxed in certain areas while in others it will become stricter. The state's Health Minister Rajesh Tope said the lockdown can be extended even beyond April if norms are flouted.

According to a statement from the Prime Minister's Office, Modi also suggested specific measures for agriculture and allied sector including modification of APMC (Agriculture Produce Market Committee) laws to facilitate sale of farm produce. He also referred to the newly launched 'Aarogya Setu' app -- which can tell an individual whether he or she has come in close vicinity of an infected person or area, as "an essential tool in our fight against COVID-19" which can subsequently act as an e-pass to facilitate travel from one place to another.

Modi, who himself was seen wearing a white mask during the video conference, also condemned attacks on health professionals and incidents of misbehaviour with students from North-East and Kashmir. He also said measures are being taken to ensure availability of protective gear and critical equipment for all front-line workers.

He assured the states that the country has adequate supplies of essential medicines and gave a stern message against black marketing and hoarding.

Observing that the combined efforts of the Centre and states have helped reduce the impact of COVID-19, he said the situation is rapidly evolving and constant vigilance is paramount.

On the exit plan from the lockdown, Modi said there seems to be a consensus amongst the states on an extension by another two weeks, but underlined that the government wants to not only save lives but also livelihoods.

"While announcing the lockdown, I had said 'jaan hai to jahan hai'... Most people in the country understood it and discharged their responsibilities by remaining indoors. And now it is imperative to focus on both aspects, 'Jaan bhi Jahan Bhi', for India's bright future, and prosperous and healthy India," Modi said.

While Modi asked states to curb violations to the lockdown conditions, the Union Home Ministry separately has written to the West Bengal state administration, flagging a "gradual dilution" of lockdown in the state including by allowing permission to hold religious gatherings and keep open shops of non-essential goods.

In another communication to all states and union territories, the Union Health Ministry has asked them to prohibit the use and spitting of smokeless tobacco in public places as spitting in public places could enhance the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Ever since its emergence in China last December, more than 17 lakh people have tested positive for this deadly virus globally, while more than 1 lakh people have died. The US reported more than 2,000 deaths in a single day on Friday, while France also reported over 1,000 deaths in a day. An estimated 3.4 lakh people are considered to have recovered from COVID-19 so far.

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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).

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### 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



# Nyingma Institute Principal donates to CM's relief fund



**MANGAN, 11 APR (IPR):**

Principal of Nyingma Institute, LachenDungseyOngdakDorjee La, Martam and Trust Member of Nyingma Institute, HayruLachungpa, donated Rs. 3 lakh to Chief Minister's Relief Fund in order to support the government's effort to fight the global crisis of COVID-19.

The cheque has been handed over to the Minister for Roads and Bridges and Cultural Affairs & Heritage Department, Samdup Lepcha at his residence in VIP Colony, Gangtok.

The Minister thanked LachenDungseyOngdakDorjee La and HayruLachungpa on behalf of the government for their kind gesture and generous contribution.

# Titan donates PPE kits and hand sanitizers to State Govt

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 11 APR:**

Titan Company Limited handed over 4000 bottles of hand sanitizers, 5000 face masks and 65 sets of PPE kits today to the Government of Sikkim through Commerce & Industries Department, a press release informs.

The items were handed over to Secretary, C&I, HK Sharma, Director C&I, N Jaswant, in the

presence of Factory Head, Rahul Kulkarni, Jewellery Division, Factory Head, AshishKukreti, Watches Division, Admin Officer, Dipendu Das, Watches Division and Admin Officer, E Sathish Kumar, Jewellery Division.

This contribution is part of the company's CSR activities, in public interest and to help the state fight COVID-19, the release mentions.



# Mamata extends lockdown in Bengal till April 30

**KOLKATA, APR 11 (PTI):** West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Saturday declared extension of the lockdown till April 30, soon after a video-conference. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had with CMs of different states where a broad consensus emerged about expanding the duration of the shutdown amid spurting COVID-19 cases.

Banerjee said the prime minister noted that the next two weeks were going to be "crucial and critical" in the fight against COVID-19.

All schools and colleges in West Bengal will remain closed till June 10, she added.

The Trinamool Congress supremo said she raised the issue of a financial package for the state and clearing its dues.

The Centre should also bring in a special package for the unorganised and MSME sectors, she said.

"The PM, during the video-conference, said the lockdown will be extended till April 30. We have already said that we will support whatever decision the Centre takes in this regard. The PM also said the next two weeks are going to be very crucial and critical.

"Till April 30, the lockdown would continue in Bengal, too. We will again review the situation at the end of April," Banerjee told reporters here.

On the Union Home Ministry's communication to the state's DGP and chief secretary, objecting to what it called was a "gradual dilution" of the lockdown in West Bengal where shops

selling non-essential goods were allowed to open and police giving permission for religious gatherings, Banerjee said the Centre has asked her government to keep a watch on some specific areas.

Banerjee said she urged the central government to ensure strict vigil in the border areas, so that no one is able to sneak in during this period.

"We have sought a financial package from the PM to tackle the outbreak in the state... We asked the Centre to announce a Rs 10-lakh crore package for the states," the chief minister said.

Banerjee also said she spoke to the prime minister about a few central ministers and a section of people spreading "canards and fake news" about the

state.

Asked about the steps taken to deal with COVID-19 hotspots in West Bengal, she said there are "no hotspots" but "micro-planning areas" where proper measures are being undertaken.

"We have identified some sensitive spots while drawing a map, which was prepared by our COVID-19 task force. We will see to it that the lockdown is totally imposed in those areas.

It does not mean that we will shut down grocery shops, doctors' chambers... or nobody will be allowed to go to the market... gatherings won't be allowed," Banerjee said.

The chief minister, however, refused to divulge the details of the "sensitive and micro-planning areas".

On Tuesday, she had

said her government identified seven COVID-19 hotspots in the state and it was taking necessary measures to break the cycle of transmission.

She said the state government has decided to grant relaxation to some sectors, but everybody has to adhere to the norms and regulations laid down by the health department.

"We are thinking of allowing bakeries to function...

In the tea gardens also, we had earlier allowed 15 per cent workforce but tea garden owners are keen on 25 percent workforce, which we are considering," she said.

Markets and essential services shops in West Bengal will now remain open from 10 am to 6 pm in order to avoid crowding, she said.

# With liquor stores shut, Goa opts for hurrack

**PANAJI, APRIL 11 (PTI):** Even as liquor stores in Goa downed their shutters amid the COVID-19 lockdown, locals are increasingly opting for traditional hurrack as a substitute for their beer and brandy.

Distilleries manufacturing hurrack, which are found in every nook and corner of Goa's villages, have even been asked to home deliver the brew.

"There is a huge demand for hurrack

these days. People have been trying to purchase hurrack by any means possible," said Mac Vaz, founder-president of Cashew Distillers and Bottlers' Association.

Hundreds of wine shops in the coastal state were shut, following the nationwide lockdown, which was imposed to contain the spread of coronavirus.

Hurrack, which is made from cashew apple juice, is not commercially sold, but

is bottled up at backyard distilleries spread across Goan villages.

A one litre bottle of hurrack costs around Rs 100, and it is important to note that distillers have not hiked the price of this summer brew despite the rise in demand, Vaz said.

Vikas Prabhu, a cashew grower based in Nirancal near Ponda, said most of the hurrack is purchased for home consumption and the drink does not

have a long shelf-life.

"People wait for the hurrack season, but the demand for the traditional drink has gone up as wine shops are closed," he said, adding that the brew is a strong substitute for any good quality drink and is affordable.

The rise in demand is helping cashew growers, who are also involved in distilling the cashew apple juice at their farms, Prabhu said.

Meanwhile, president of All Goa Liquor Traders' Association Dattaprasad Naik said they will keep wine shops shut, till the government asks them to do so.

"We support the government in its fight against coronavirus. Wine shops are also one of the most vulnerable places where deadly virus can spread, as people from different sections of the society turn up here," he said.

# Essential items donated to GMC workers



**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 11 APR:**

Marwari Yuva Manch, Perna Branch, Gangtok and the only women's branch of Sikkim under All India

Marwadi Yuva Manch donated essential items to Gangtok Municipal Corporation workers who are serving the society since the lockdown began, a press release informs.

Since social distancing had to be strictly followed, members all around Gangtok carried out the task at their respective houses.

# Churches ask people to hold Good Friday prayers at home

**YOGENTHATAL**

**SINGTAM, 11 APR:**

Due to the lockdown, Good Friday prayers were not held in churches this year and people prayed in their homes.

"This time all the people of our community were asked to carry out the prayer ceremony in their respective houses," informed Leela Pradhan, the pastor of Shiloh church, which is one of the biggest churches in Singtam bazaar.

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**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.

## Symptoms of nCoV

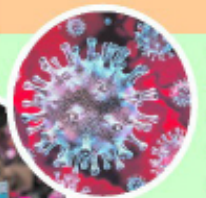
- Fever
- Difficulty in breathing
- Dry Cough
- Severe acute respiratory syndrome
- Pneumonia - like symptoms

## Treatment

- Treatment is symptomatic and supportive, based on the patient's clinical condition.
- No vaccinations available as of now.
- Visit Doctor in case symptoms detected.

## Precautions to Prevent nCoV

- 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.



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District surveillance Officer  
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WEST : 9593297809  
NORTH : 9641957468  
SOUTH : 7407691463  
New STNM  
AMS : 9434711402

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

# Case booked against man for spitting in public

**HYDERABAD, APR 11 (PTI):** With the Telangana government banning spitting in public places in the backdrop of COVID-19 pandemic, a police case has been registered here against a man for violating the rule.

During vehicle-checking on Friday, police

found the man spitting on the road here and registered a case against him for disobedience to order duly promulgated by a public servant, police said.

Spitting in public places and institutions has been banned in the state in view of the pandemic with the

government saying such acts pose a serious threat of leading to spread of infections.

"In the interest of public health and safety, the spitting of paan/ any chewable tobacco or non-tobacco product, sputum in public places & institutions is hereby BANNED with immediate

effect," a government notification said.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to the fore the importance of hygiene and cleanliness in both personal as well as public spheres, the April 6 notification issued by the Health, Medical and Family Welfare department said.

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(URGENT SALE)**

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## Invest in Learning

*Because that is what education is really about*

The COVID-19 confusion has forced many compromises, not all of them bad. Education for instance is finally being forced to leverage information technology tools beyond the tokenism of smart classrooms. Things will eventually return to normal and boring routines imposed by uninspiring teachers and uncaring babus will return. The current interregnum which is forcing educators to think out of the box and students to explore wider learning options and opportunities should hence be used well to lay the groundwork for what is really important.

So what is really important?

Some year back, the State Government had made an ambitious announcement to revolutionise education in Sikkim starting with primary schools and building up from that. This is an initiative well-intentioned, and welcome because it identified the beginning of schooling as the most important years for learning. For far too long, primary schools have received only token attention and funds when human resource should have been the focus area. Hopefully, that is what the new dispensation in office also recognizes. The State has also cobbled together a State University, and at least on paper, open to the idea of allowing it autonomy. It is unclear what will be unique about this institution or what missing component of higher education it will provide a fillip for, but there really cannot be any complaints about more places of learning and there cannot ever be too many of them so long as they are about learning and not dispensing degrees or accommodating job aspirations alone. And please, when deciding policy for education, don't impose employability as a criteria for the courses unless they are technical and skill-imparting trainings. Make the institutions genuinely about learning and then the products will automatically become much sought after human resource for any sector they wish to join. Instill a keenness for learning, and you will have students who can adapt and pick up skills and expertise for any job that catches their fancy. Obsess over imparting employable skills and you will never succeed because the job market is huge and ever changing. It needs people with aptitude, not necessarily skills because those can be picked up on the job. Give the young confidence and they will be ready for the world. Constrict them into school uniforms when they should be discovering and expressing themselves more confidently and you are only producing order-takers in times which require independent thinkers. As mentioned earlier, the disruption to the established system, even if temporary, provides the opportunity to aspire for better.

One also hopes that the interest in revolutionizing education is not limited to civil engineering projects where much money is expended on infrastructure and not enough attention is being paid to the education that these improved infrastructures should impart. Leaders hold up education as an empowering tool and if it were really so, students from underprivileged families would not drop-out from school the moment an opportunity presented an option. The mid-day meal scheme is all very fine if it is malnutrition that the planners intended to address, but if they thought this would keep children in school, then they should have invested in teachers first, on their training next and finally on an effective monitoring system to keep them on duty. And more importantly, the planners should invest on fashioning a syllabus that is contemporary and prioritises learning, not rote. Students drop out from school not because they cannot afford it, but because they cannot understand how education empowers them. It carries no relevance either for them or for their families. Those from underprivileged families will drop out of school and the better heeled drop out from college. More students drop out because they want to start working at improving their lives, learning by rote does not open their minds to the appreciate how education offers a way out; but, if schools encouraged students to think for themselves, analyse information and situations, they will understand what education means and then struggle to stay in school.

What this requires is not just for the syllabus to change, but also how subjects are taught in our schools, the manner in which learning is evaluated. There are those who believe that the Indian education system is the best, pointing out the achievers that our schools and colleges export. And therein lies proof of its drawbacks – the better minds still need to go out to achieve their potential. As a nation, India produces a lot of educated people, but when it comes to thinkers and visionaries, people who give the world the next big idea, even when their nationality is Indian, they are products of education systems that are not on our shores. So yes, let's invest in infrastructure, make sure that a well-provided-for school is the vicinity of every habitation, but also simultaneously, let's invest thought into how this infrastructure can work with a syllabus and pattern that makes thinkers of the next generation, not just note-takers.

## Coronavirus Highlights the Painful Political Truth About Health Inequality. Is Social Democracy the Answer?

CAROL JOHNSON  
THECONVERSATION.COM

Health inequality was a major concern of 20th century social democrats in countries ranging from Britain to Sweden.

During the current coronavirus crisis, it has once again become one of the most crucial issues that social democrats need to address.

Coronavirus itself does not discriminate in terms of class. Indeed, those with the financial means to travel have often been among the first victims. More men than women appear to be dying of it.

Nonetheless, what a difference your position in the social hierarchy can make.

Access to excellent and affordable health care obviously remains a key issue, even allowing for the fact the wealthy may also fail to have access to ventilators in the current crisis. Years of neoliberal cutbacks have undermined the formerly good public health systems that social democrats established from the 1940s.

Significantly, the struggling Italian health care system has suffered from privatisation and substantial budget cuts.

Years of wage stagnation and the growth of precarious work have also resulted in rising economic inequality. This has made it impossible for many workers to build up a financial buffer for hard times and seriously limited their ability to stock up with food and medicines.

Some poorly paid workers cannot afford not to turn up to work even when they have possible symptoms. Others are continuing to work in jobs that put them at risk.

The economically vulnerable are also less likely to be able to afford

the technology to enable people to work from home or help children study while schools are closed. Similarly, it is harder for them to buy in food or other services.

WOMEN ARE DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTED, TOO

Women may have a lower mortality rate than men, but have often been in a weaker financial position due to wage disparities and precarious and part-time work. In many countries, these factors can also reduce the payments women are entitled to if they become unemployed due to the pandemic.

At the same time, women's (gendered) carer responsibilities will have massively increased. Many are working in industries, such as aged care or health care, with an increased exposure risk. Some are now restricted to home with abusive partners.

Consequently, health professionals have emphasised the importance of having a gendered analysis of the impacts of the pandemic. Similar calls have been made in countries ranging from the US to India.

Bizarrely, conspiracy theories are now appearing suggesting the coronavirus is divine punishment for increased gender and same-sex equality. It is apparently all the fault of "gender theory".

THE PERILS OF GLOBALISATION

The list of COVID-19 scapegoats is a long one. Various racial and ethnic groups were among the first to experience virus-related discrimination.

Many racial and ethnic groups are also often in an economically vulnerable position, which then exacerbates their existing problems during a pandemic.

Remote Indigenous communities are particularly at risk.

Doctors are having to make difficult choices about who gets access to scarce medical equipment. The elderly are at particular risk of being denied treatment in some countries. Older citizens are more prone to dying as a result of the virus, but there are suggestions ageism could be a factor, too.

Meanwhile, the perils of globalisation are becoming clear as global supply chains of crucial medical equipment, chemicals and food are disrupted. Countries are discovering they can no longer manufacture the essential products they need, including medical ones.

Major pharmaceutical and other companies are among those racing to develop treatments and vaccines. But will cheap, generic versions be publicly available or will they be subject to restrictive patents and price gouging?

After all, there are claims the shortage of ventilators in countries such as the US is partly due to firms prioritising producing more expensive and highly profitable models over cheaper, basic ones. Bidding wars for scarce ventilators are already breaking out.

A RETURN TO SOCIAL DEMOCRACY?

Given the market is not coping and the need for government to intervene is more apparent than ever, one might think the time for social democracy has come again.

Some countries, such as Sweden, are indeed evoking social democratic values of solidarity and caring for others. Controversially, the Swedish government may believe those values are so strong that stricter lockdown provisions are not required to enforce

community compliance.

Other social democratic countries such as Denmark were among the first to introduce forms of wage support for those thrown out of work.

However, in a time when even conservative governments in countries such as Germany, Britain and Australia are abandoning neoliberal strictures on fiscal restraint to throw billions at the pandemic and their collapsing economies, the need for social democratic governments may not be as apparent as before.

Furthermore, social democratic governments face the same impossible challenges as conservative ones.

In my recent book on social democracy and equality, I argued that one of the main aims of social democratic governments was to make citizens feel secure and less fearful. Providing good publicly available health services and income support for the sick and unemployed was an important part of this.

But how can any government or political party make people feel secure or less fearful in a pandemic and economic disaster of this scale? This is a once-in-a-hundred-year crisis that could exacerbate xenophobia, as well as existing domestic social and economic divisions.

Consequently, the challenge for social democrats is that issues they would normally address may instead be taken up by their mainstream conservative opponents or those on the far right.

*[the writer is Emerita Professor, Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Adelaide]*

## Inside the Beatles' messy breakup, 50 years ago

TIM RILEY

THECONVERSATION.COM

Fifty years ago, when Paul McCartney announced he had left the Beatles, the news dashed the hopes of millions of fans, while fueling false reunion rumors that persisted well into the new decade.

In a press release on April 10, 1970 for his first solo album, "McCartney," he leaked his intention to leave. In doing so, he shocked his three bandmates.

The Beatles had symbolized the great communal spirit of the era. How could they possibly come apart?

Few at the time were aware of the underlying fissures. The power struggles in the group had been mounting at least since their manager, Brian Epstein, died in August of 1967.

'PAUL QUILTS THE BEATLES'

Was McCartney's "announcement" official? His album appeared on April 17, and its press packet included a mock interview. In it, McCartney is asked, "Are you planning a new album or single with the Beatles?"

His response? "No."

But he didn't say whether the separation might prove permanent. The Daily Mirror nonetheless framed its headline conclusively: "Paul Quits the Beatles."

The others worried this could hurt sales and sent Ringo as a peacemaker to McCartney's London home to talk him down from releasing his solo album ahead of the band's "Let It Be" album and film, which were slated to come out in May. Without any press present, McCartney shouted Ringo off his front stoop.

LENNON HAD KEPT QUIET

Lennon, who had been active outside the band for months, felt particularly betrayed.

The previous September, soon after the band released "Abbey Road," he had asked his bandmates for a "divorce." But the others convinced him not to go public to prevent disrupting some delicate contract negotiations.

Still, Lennon's departure seemed imminent: He had played the Toronto Rock 'n' Roll Festival with his Plastic Ono Band in September 1969, and on Feb. 11, 1970, he performed a new solo track, "Instant Karma," on the popular British TV show "Top of the Pops." Yoko Ono sat behind him, knitting while blindfolded by a sanitary napkin.

In fact, Lennon behaved more and more like a solo artist, until McCartney countered with his own eponymous album. He wanted Apple to release this solo debut alongside the group's new album, "Let It Be," to dramatize the split.

By beating Lennon to the announcement, McCartney controlled the story and its timing, and undercut the other three's interest in keeping it under wraps as new product hit stores.

Ray Connolly, a reporter at the Daily Mail, knew Lennon well enough to ring him up for comment. When I interviewed Connolly in 2008, he told me about their conversation.

Lennon was dumbfounded and enraged by the news. He had let Connolly in on his secret



about leaving the band at his Montreal Bed-In in December 1969, but asked him to keep it quiet. Now he lambasted Connolly for not leaking it sooner.

"Why didn't you write it when I told you in Canada at Christmas!" he exclaimed to Connolly, who reminded him that the conversation had been off the record. "You're the f-king journalist, Connolly, not me," snorted Lennon.

"We were all hurt [McCartney] didn't tell us what he was going to do," Lennon later told Rolling Stone. "Jesus Christ! He gets all the credit for it! I was a fool not to do what Paul did, which was use it to sell a record..."

IT ALL FALLS APART

This public fracas had been bubbling under the band's cheery surface for years. Timing and sales concealed deeper arguments about creative control and the return to live touring.

In January 1969, the group had started a roots project tentatively titled "Get Back." It was supposed to be a back-to-the-basics recording without the artifice of studio trickery. But the whole venture was shelved as a new recording, "Abbey Road," took shape.

When "Get Back" was eventually revived, Lennon – behind McCartney's back – brought in American producer Phil Spector, best known for girl group hits like "Be My Baby," to salvage the project. But this album was supposed to be band only – not embroidered with added strings and voices – and McCartney fumed when Spector added a female choir to his song "The Long and Winding Road."

"Get Back" – which was renamed "Let it Be" – nonetheless moved forward. Spector mixed the album, and a cut of the feature film was readied for summer.

McCartney's announcement and release of his solo album effectively short-circuited the plan. By announcing the breakup, he launched his solo career in advance of "Let It Be," and nobody knew how it might disrupt the official Beatles' project.

Throughout the remainder of 1970, fans watched in disbelief as the "Let It Be" movie portrayed the hallowed Beatles circling musical

doldrums, bickering about arrangements and killing time running through oldies. The film finished with an ironic triumph – the famous live set on the roof of their Apple headquarters during which the band played "Get Back," "Don't Let Me Down" and a joyous "One After 909."

The album, released on May 8, performed well and spawned two hit singles – the title track and "The Long and Winding Road" – but the group never recorded together again.

Their fans hoped against hope that four solo Beatles might someday find their way back to the thrills that had enchanted audiences for seven years. These rumors seemed most promising when McCartney joined Lennon for a Los Angeles recording session in 1974 with Stevie Wonder. But while they all played on one another's solo efforts, the four never played a session together again.

At the beginning of 1970, autumn's "Come Together"/"Something" single from "Abbey Road" still floated in the Billboard top 20; the "Let It Be" album and film helped extend fervor beyond what the papers reported. For a long time, the myth of the band endured on radio playlists and across several greatest hits compilations, but when John Lennon sang "The dream is over..." at the end of his own 1970 solo debut, "John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band," few grasped the lyrics' implacable truth.

Fans and critics chased every sliver of hope for the "next" Beatles, but few came close to recreating the band's magic. There were prospects – first bands like Three Dog Night, the Flaming Groovies, Big Star and the Raspberries; later, Cheap Trick, the Romantics and the Knack – but these groups only aimed at the same heights the Beatles had conquered, and none sported the range, songwriting ability or ineffable chemistry of the Liverpool quartet.

We've been living in the world without Beatles ever since.

*[the writer is Associate Professor and Graduate Program Director for Journalism, Emerson College]*

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*PM spoke about extending lockdown till April 30, West Bengal also on same page: Mamata*

**KOLKATA, APR 11 (PTI):** West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Saturday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has spoken about extending the nationwide lockdown till April 30, as the next two weeks are going to be “crucial and critical” in battling the COVID-19 pandemic.

Banerjee said West Bengal, too, is in favour of continuing the restrictions till the end of April.

“The PM, during the video-conference with chief ministers, said the lockdown will be extended till April 30.

We are also on the same page with the Centre. The PM also said the next two weeks are going to be very crucial and critical.

We all have to be more careful and stay indoors,” she told reporters here.

Banerjee said she requested the central government to ensure strict vigil in the border areas, so that no one is able to sneak in during this period.

“We have sought a financial package from the PM to tackle the outbreak in the state... We asked the Centre to announce a Rs 10 lakh crore package for the states,” she said.

## Tripura reports 2nd COVID-19 case

**AGARTALA, APR 10 (PTI):** A 32-year-old man tested positive for COVID-19 in Tripura on Friday, taking the total number of such cases in the state to two, Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb said.

The man, who is from Madhya Pradesh, is presently staying at Damcherra in North Tripura district, he said.

He has travelled in a train along with the state’s first COVID-19 patient, chief minister said.

“Alert! One more #COVID19 positive case in Tripura has been confirmed, taking the total number to 02.

“The patient is 32 years old male from Madhya Pradesh and currently staying at Damcherra and has travelled along with the last COVID19 positive patient in train,” Deb said in a Facebook post.

Tripura reported its first case on Monday when a 44-year-old woman from Udaipur town in Gomati district had tested positive for coronavirus.

The chief minister

## Quebec virus ban puts WTA Montreal event in limbo

**MONTREAL, APR 11 (AFP):** The WTA tournament in Montreal, scheduled for August 7-16, is in jeopardy after Quebec Province officials requested that all sporting and cultural events be cancelled through August 31.

The measure is aimed at slowing the spread of coronavirus.

“Tennis Canada is currently evaluating the consequences of this announcement by discussing the various options with the WTA regarding the postponement of the Rogers Cup presented by National Bank event in Montreal,” Tennis Canada said in a statement.

With lockdowns and stay-at-home orders in place around the globe, tennis is at a standstill until at least

July 13.

French Open organizers postponed Roland Garros until September and Wimbledon was cancelled altogether.

“We understand the decision coming from the Government of Quebec who has to consider the health and safety of the Quebec population,” tournament director Eugene Lapierre said.

“Our priority in the management of this crisis has always been to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our players, fans, volunteers, partners and employees and therefore our decisions will reflect this.

“We hope that our discussions with the WTA will allow us to make an official announcement on the status of the Rogers Cup by (Saturday).

### One killed, two injured in blaze in Bengal

**ALIPURDUAR (WB), APR 11 (PTI):** A woman was killed and her son and mother-in-law were injured in a blaze in West Bengal’s Alipurduar district, police said on Saturday.

The blaze erupted in a house in Meghnad Saha Nagar locality in Madarihat police station area early on Saturday, an officer said.

Three persons sustained burn injuries and were admitted to the North Bengal Medical College and Hospital in Siliguri, where one of them succumbed to her injuries, he said.

The fire has been doused and the cause of the blaze is yet to be ascertained, the officer added.

# Allow phased opening of alcohol industry, online sales: CIBAC to Commerce Min

**NEW DELHI, APR 11 (PTI):** Liquor manufacturing association CIBAC has urged Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal to allow phased opening of the alcoholic beverages industry which is facing financial stress and job losses due to the lockdown.

In a letter to the commerce minister, the Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies (CIABC) said since the lockdown was ordered to tackle the coronavirus crisis, all wholesale and retail trade has been closed.

“We seek an urgent phase-wise opening of the alcoholic beverage industry in conformity with COVID-19 prevention guidelines,” it said, adding trucks are stranded, distribution warehouses are locked and retail shops are sitting on unsold stock.

“The industry which contributes almost Rs 2-lakh crores by way of various taxes, sustains livelihood of nearly 40 lakh farmers, and employs nearly 20 lakh people directly and indirectly is in

dire straits,” CIABC Director General Vinod Giri said.

He also demanded extension of excise year for three months till June 30 and online sale of liquor.

“What has compounded the problems for alcoholic beverage industry is the fact that excise policy for many states come to an end on March 31. Prior to that date, there are several statutory requirements that ought to be met by companies for them to keep continuity of operations,” he said.

He added that a

prolonged shutdown of industry will not only have a huge economic cost on companies, but may also force lakhs of workers into joblessness.

“Shops should be asked to enrol for home delivery through online applications. Government may charge a fee, this being an addition to license. Each qualifying shop should be given 3-4 movement passes for home delivery personnel.

“Customers may place order online on over phone, along with an ID proof establishing age. Government may

limit amount of liquor delivered or frequency of delivery as it deems fit,” he said.

Giri further said that since social distancing will be the new normal going forward, government should consider institutionalising home delivery as a separate channel administered online.

“The governments can even consider setting up their own portals for facilitating home deliveries. It can rope in food delivery aggregators to do so,” he added.

## Arunachal govt launches apps for essential commodities

**ITANAGAR, APR 11 (PTI):** To help people, who are confined to their homes due to the lockdown, the Arunachal Pradesh government has taken various steps to ensure that essential commodities reach their doorsteps.

Online apps like ‘U Tell Us’ and ‘Dukan Dada’ were introduced by the state government immediately after imposition of the lockdown since March 25, while ‘Mebuddy’ and ‘APeats’ were later introduced to supply groceries and other essentials including masks, sanitizers and ambulance.

“The yeoman service rendered by multi-service stores and grocery delivery apps introduced with the help of private developers to provide essential

commodities at the doorsteps gave a sigh of relief to Capital denizens as they remained indoors and maintained social distancing to prevent spread of COVID-19 pandemic,” Capital SP Tumme Amo, who conceived the idea, said.

Capital Police have stationed two vehicles - one each at Itanagar and Naharlagun, for carrying patients to hospitals, serve elderly people and lifting mortal remains in case of death, the SP said.

“The services of both vehicles could be availed by contacting police COVID control room,” he added.

Many stores have also pitched in to offer essential services, while ‘Henkakopus’ app has been facilitating online payment of electricity bills, booking and delivery of Bharat gas

cylinder, the SP said.

‘U Tell Us’, ‘Dukan Dada’ and ‘Mebuddy’ - have been reaching residents of Itanagar, Naharlagun, Nirjuli and Yupia, the headquarters of Papum Pare district, to deliver essential services to the people by various delivery boys with reasonable delivery charges.

The people have been placing orders through online platform, mobile apps and phone calls for which payment could be cash on delivery or online payment, the SP added.

Epi Jamoh, ‘U Tell Us’ Managing Director, an online multi-store that delivers every basic goods and services at the doorsteps of the people from 1000 hours to 1400 hours daily, said that the store has been receiving over 800 calls regularly

and delivering essentials to about 500 consumers on daily.

“Our services include essential commodities, sanitizers and masks given by district administration, vegetables, meat, detergent, ambulance and vehicle to carry mortal remains in case of any death,” Jamoh added.

‘Dukan Dada’, the first grocery delivery app of the state delivers essential items 24x7 with order timing from 0900 hours to 1400 hours, said its managing director Doni Riba.

“Serving a population of about 1.5 lakh in the state capital based on information technology is nothing but a miracle for which the credit goes to BSNL. Various Whatsapp groups have been created for consumers to place

online orders and make payments, involving system operators and delivery team,” Higio Zarngam, a public relations officer of the Information & Public Relation department, who is supervising effective implementation of the system, said.

“All delivery boys have been provided with identity cards for crossing the checkpoints set up by police and district administration across Capital Complex, particularly in view of the prohibitory order imposed order under 144 CrPc imposed since April 7 by Capital Complex district magistrate Komkar Dulom,” she added.

The state government had selected 13 grocery shops in state capital to supply essentials to online marketing team for home delivery on receipt of orders, Zarngam disclosed.

## Garment exporters ask PM to allow opening of sampling units

**COIMBATORE, APR 11 (PTI):** Tirupur Exporters Association (TEA) on Saturday requested the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to take steps towards allowing opening of the sampling units with less than 50 workers to prepare sample and also opening of preparatory processing units.

Tirupur knitwear cluster exports Rs 26,000 crore worth of knitwear garments annually, and provides employment to six lakh workers directly

**Lyon has taken over from Ashwin as best off-spinner in world cricket: Brad Hogg**

**NEW DELHI, APR 11 (PTI):** Ravichandran Ashwin is a prolific performer but former Australia chinaman bowler Brad Hogg feels that fellow countryman Nathan Lyon has upstaged the Indian tweeker as the best off-spinner in longest format.

Just like most international players are doing during lockdown, the 49-year-old Hogg, who played 7 Tests and 123 ODIs for Australia, had a twitter Q&A session for cricket lovers.

When asked whom among Ashwin and Lyon does he consider better in Test cricket, Hogg replied: “I feel Lyon has taken the mantle from Ashwin over the last year just as the best off spinner, but I love the way both continue to improve there games and not be complacent where they are at. #hoggytime,” Hogg tweeted.

and two lakh workers indirectly.

“We would like to drive home the point that our competing nations like China, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Cambodia and Pakistan have already started functioning and been supplying garments to buyers - small stores in the EU, the UK and the US,” TEA president Raja M Shanmugham said in a letter to the Prime Minister.

“Also, we wish to note that these small stores have been asking our exporters to send Spring Summer sample to give approval and place orders for shipment,” Shanmugham said in the letter.

At this crucial period (in view of the lockdown), it is paramount importance for opening of the sampling units with less than 50 workers to

prepare sample and also giving permission for opening of preparatory processing units that knit and dye, among others, he said.

The units can be operated in a phased manner after ensuring social distancing and providing mask, disinfectants in the wake of the COVID-19 spread, he said.

Expressing apprehension that any delay in giving permission for

commencement of sample preparation would lead to an adverse impact on Tirupur cluster, the TEA chief said the cluster would be at a standstill for another six months, resulting in loss of employment to a large number of workers.

“Considering the gravity of situation, may TEA request the Prime Minister to advise reopening of sampling units on priority basis and protect the Tirupur clusters,” Shanmugham said.

## F1’s Renault furlough ‘vast majority’ of UK staff

**PARIS, APR 11 (AFP):** Renault became the latest Formula One team to furlough staff as the sport continues to wrestle with the huge financial setbacks caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

The French manufacturer said “the vast majority of staff (at their base at Enstone in the UK) will effectively have a total shutdown until May 31”, in a statement.

Staff at the team’s engine site at Viry-Chatillon on the outskirts of Paris will be placed “on a part-time schedule for a provisional period of 12 weeks”.

Renault join grid rivals Williams, Racing Point and McLaren in furloughing staff after nine of the scheduled 22 races in the world championship were either cancelled or postponed.

The season will not start until the French Grand Prix on June 28 at the earliest.

“It was agreed to top-up the amount allocated by the British government to guarantee a minimum of 80 percent of the actual salary for all team members,” said a Renault statement in reference to the job retention scheme in the UK.

“Salaries of active staff, including management, will be reduced in the same proportions.” Renault team chief Cyril Abiteboul said the measures were necessary to safeguard the team.

“We must use all the measures at our disposal to get through this prolonged period of uncertainty and inactivity as best as we can,” he said.

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# Carry on Barcelona: the comic tale of tragedy and drama that keeps on giving

**SID LOWE**  
**London, 11 Apr**  
**[theGuardian]:** The resignation letter six Barcelona directors handed to a notary on Thursday night, deepening the club's crisis, included a demand that the external investigation into what has become known as "Barçagate" be completed, with anyone responsible punished and any money repaid. The allegations, first reported by Cadena SER Radio, are that payments totalling €900,000 were made to the company I3 Ventures to run social media accounts and websites that attacked opposition figures, players past and present, and defended the reputation of the president Josep Maria Bartomeu.

Barcelona, Bartomeu and I3 Ventures have strongly denied wrongdoing, with the president describing the allegations as "completely false", but either way the episode has made things worse. If it did happen, it didn't work. Sometimes there are too many fires to be put out and no chance of the men in the middle not getting burnt. However zealously a president is protected – and parts of the media are ready to champion Bartomeu – when so many bad things happen so fast, they aren't going to emerge unscathed. And, boy, has a lot happened at Barcelona. Even not

playing couldn't stop that, which may even make sense: for so long, the team have propped up the club; without it, maybe things were bound to fall down.

In an interview in mid-February, Lionel Messi had said: "Since January there has been problem after problem". He wasn't wrong and it hasn't slowed. Nor, in fact, has he. Instead, it has accelerated, the catalogue so endless and so absurd as to be almost comic. The resignation of six board members, including two vice-presidents and the man earmarked as Bartomeu's successor, isn't even the latest incident.

Within hours of resigning, Emili Rousaud told RAC1 he thought someone at Barcelona had their "hand in the till". That prompted a statement from Barcelona "reserving the right to take legal action" – another court case for a club with a collection of them – and insisting that, anyway, the resignations had been all part of Bartomeu's plans to "restructure" the board. And, so, on it goes.

Any list risks leaving things out, and it is long enough anyway, even when limited to what has happened since January. Barcelona sacked their manager Ernesto Valverde, despite being top of the table. They offered the job to Xavi Hernández, who said no, later implying that he would not return under



this board and insisting that "toxic" influences had to be kept away from the dressing room. They offered the job to Ronald Koeman, who said no. As they should have known he would, committed as he is to the Netherlands. And they spoke to Mauricio Pochettino. Who said no too. They gave the job to Quique Setién, who admitted his surprise. This appointment was part of a long process, they said; I got the call yesterday, Setién replied, another lie laid bare.

Next, the sporting director Eric Abidal suggested the players had played their part in Valverde's sacking. Messi, whose patience had long worn thin, who had once claimed that the then vice-president Javier Faus "doesn't know anything about

football", publicly called Abidal out, accusing him of "sullyng" the players names and demanding Abidal take responsibility for his own actions.

Messi had leapt because, as he later admitted, he was sick of the accusations that he runs the club. "I don't know why people think that," he said. Perhaps because they wish he did.

There was more. Barcelona needed a striker. They didn't buy one, but they did sell two. They lost Luis Suárez and Ousmane Dembélé to long-term injuries and made the emergency signing of Martin Braithwaite – for more than they had been prepared to spend when the window was actually open, leaving Cédric Bakambu stranded at an airport thousands of miles away and leaving

the squad so thin that they didn't have enough first-team players to fill the bench. Defeat in the clásico followed, for the first time in four years. And, with every new day, new transfer targets but no new money to buy them with.

In the midst of it all came the I3 Ventures allegations and the suspension of Jaume Masferrer, the president's closest adviser – a scapegoat who many believe is still there behind the scenes. Then came negotiations over a pay cut – at the club that, a month before, had announced itself as the biggest sporting brand in the world – and yet another public display of discontent and division. The players were furious, a statement released

by Messi expressing "surprise" that from "within the club" they had been thrown to the lions, strategic leaks in their preferred papers designed to pressure them and make them look bad. "We were angry because things were said that were not true," Suárez noted this week.

The players also put up an extra 2%, paying those employees the club could not or would not. Good news that made the club look bad and its president look worse. His public insistence that the leaks had not come from him or the CEO Oscar Grau, pushing blame elsewhere, deepened distrust on the board, where some members were demanding answers about that and about I3: they wanted to know too why so much

had been paid, and why it had been paid in instalments conveniently small enough to avoid triggering internal audits – all of which came to a head with Rousaud's accusations.

The debt is asphyxiating, the squad debilitated. Weaker by the year, but no cheaper: players' salaries account for an unhealthy 67% of the budget. There is mistrust everywhere: between players and board; between board member and board member, too. Bartomeu, whose mandate runs until 2021 when he cannot stand again, was encouraged to bring forward elections. Some thought his model too presidentialist, and consider him too indulgent of footballers who have even less faith in him than they do. He saw disloyalty, even among those board members who were supposed to be more firmly on his side, building to a Catalan night of the long knives.

It is only a month since Bartomeu named Rousaud as a vice-president, the man put into place to succeed him. Instead, Bartomeu moved against him. On Tuesday he called four directors – Rousaud, Enrique Tombas, Silvio Elias, Josep Pont – and in effect invited them to walk, knowing that he could not sack them. "He told me he had concerns about a series of directors,

including me: it's illogical," Rousaud said. "I don't like the way he handled it."

Two days later, Rousaud, Tombas, Elias and Pont did indeed walk. That could be seen as a victory, but Bartomeu had not anticipated their being joined by Jordi Calsamiglia and Maria Teixidor. Besides, collective resignation is rarely a victory for any president, still less when it is as public as the players' increasing criticism, when it draws divisions even further into the open, when the crises accumulate.

Of the board Bartomeu put together in 2015, less than half are left. There are 13 people there now, when the club's statutes say there must be at least 14. And, Rousaud claimed, "there are at least three more directors considering [resigning]". Bartomeu has had four sporting directors and as many directors of communication. It is inevitable that people ask whether it really is always their fault; whether at the very least he might have chosen better; and what he will do next time someone steps out of line, where the departures will stop. He has seen seven vice-presidents depart. There are three left, two posts vacant. At least one of them is a man he's never going to sack, even as many think he should, if only because one of them is he.

## Travelling fans fear being victims of greed after Olympic postponement

**LAUSSANE, APR 11 (AFP):** Thousands of fans planning to travel to the Olympics in Tokyo face uncertainty over flight refunds and reimbursements from hotels, after the 2020 Games were postponed until next year due to the coronavirus pandemic and fear they may become victims of greed.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) last month made the decision to delay the Games because of the disease which has now claimed over 100,000 lives worldwide.

The IOC has said that tickets for sporting events will be refunded if people cannot attend in 2021, but admitted that it could "not comment on hotel or flight bookings which were done through third parties".

An American professor of sport management at the University of Washington had reserved 31 rooms for her students for 26 days at a cost of 90,000 (82,300 euros). She says that if she does not ask for the ticket reimbursement, hoping that her students can make the new dates from July 23 to August 8 next year, there is "no guarantee" that the hotel and plane reservations will be postponed accordingly.

"We are still waiting on both the hotel and the airline," Lisa Delpy Neirotti told AFP.

"They said it would take a while to let us know.

"I truly believe that

if hoteliers and airlines start to be greedy and not work with Olympic fans or organisations, the government will need to step in, as it will not look good for Japan tourism, but for Japan as a country."

In 2018, the Japanese ministry of tourism said that it was counting on 600,000 foreign spectators attending the Games, providing a significant economic windfall.

But many of those prospective visitors remain at an impasse, three weeks after the postponement was announced.

"I made a reservation two years ago for six nights at the Sakura Cross Hotel in Tokyo, for around 60,000 yen ( 553) via booking.com," a Frenchman, who wanted to remain anonymous, said.

"I am not asking to recover this amount but just to transfer the reservation to 2021."

But the hotel refused, saying that it "couldn't take into account the specific circumstances".

"I had taken out insurance at the same time as the plane ticket," he added.

"But the exact conditions of insurance do not say clearly if the pandemic is covered."

- SHOCK FOR JAPANESE HOTELS -

The delay will also affect the Japanese hotel industry, which had already seen hotel bookings fall in March

compared to last year.

"This is an enormous shock for us, with sales in many of our member hotels already down by half because of plunging demand for tourism, not only from abroad but also inside Japan due to the coronavirus," said Shigemi Sudo, secretary general of the Tokyo Hotels and Ryokans Association.

Faced with bad publicity and growing discontent, some Japanese hotels are keen to be understanding.

"Normally we'd be able to collect cancellation fees, but in this case it isn't the fault of our customers, so we can't request that," a spokesman for hotel chain Via Inn said.

"I don't know if we can negotiate with Olympic officials about compensation or not." An official with the Tokyo organising committee said the issue surrounding hotel reservations was "under consideration". "Like everybody else, it is a setback. We will struggle for a while," said Greg Harney, a consultant for Cartan Global, an American company selling packages for the Games. "I've heard of very few people having asked for a refund, probably a couple, it's encouraging.

"When the crisis is over, I have the feeling that people will want to travel even more than before. The interest for the Games will be even bigger.

## BARNEY RONAY

**LONDON, 11 APR**  
**[THEGUARDIAN]:** The best way to annoy a group of scholarly historians, if you ever have an urgent need to annoy scholarly historians – perhaps in some kind of emergency situation – is to propose a counterfactual analysis of events.

You know the kind of thing. What if Winston Churchill had died of a heart attack in 1941? What if skiffle, rather than the music of the Beatles, had seized the imagination of the world in 1963?

This is an inflammatory line of reasoning, interesting to readers of alarming pulp novels about the Third Reich taking over the world, but likely to cause an outbreak of pipe-chewing, tweed-flapping rage within the common rooms of Big History. It is also an interesting dynamic when applied to sports writing and sports analysis. Most of it would collapse if the counterfactual analysis were outlawed.

What is Expected Goals, or the Expected Points Table, or a counterintuitive stats-based gallery of the leading creative left-backs in Europe (No 5 will surprise you!) if not the type of "unhistorical shit" that so enraged the

20th-century historian EP Thompson? What is a revisionist colour sidebar take on the managerial achievements of José Mourinho, but the kind of counterfactual "parlour game" EH Carr, chronicler of the early Soviet Union, would have raged against?

And yet right now counter-facts are all sport has. In the Guardian's pages this week you will have seen detailed analysis of a significant staging point: 100 days since coronavirus took hold and changed the world. This has mainly been a business of hard facts, sifted out from an overload of actual real-world news.

But not in sport. It is a month now since the first cancelled Premier League Saturday, a month since sport basically stopped. And this is the one significant event sport has to offer, its own cancellation. The story didn't happen. That's the story. It feels like counterfactual history in action. The best way to understand what happened in sport between March and April 2020, is to understand what didn't happen.

At which point wind chimes tinkle, the screen starts to dissolve, and we're back in the undoctored timeline, the one where sport still exists, where the talk of an

illness in China remained talk of an illness in China, and where the wheels of Big Sport have continued to grind on.

In counterfactual April 2020 more than 300 unplayed professional men's and women's football fixtures have been played in the last four weeks. Close to £1bn in revenue has still been raked in.

In the Premier League Liverpool stuttered a little, then romped across the line, clinching the title with victory at Manchester City on 5 April, a moment that confirmed once again in its sheer operatic sweep that Premier League football is, and always will be, the most important thing currently happening to human civilisation.

Pep Guardiola declared himself "so very, very happy", albeit in a murderous, glassy-eyed sarcastic whisper. The Liverpool board announced that the title win was "vindication for a community club where finances take second place to our football family – and let's face it nothing's ever likely to test this idea so there you go."

Elsewhere news of Cristiano Ronaldo's agreement to sign for Manchester United on a world record weekly wage led to questions

in parliament over footballers' salaries. "We have always backed the right of the market to decide how much individuals earn, this is all good for Britain," Matt Hancock, MP for West Suffolk, announced, to cheers from the benches.

England's cricketers continued to rebuild the Test team along strict attritional lines, battling out all 10 days of the two-match series in Sri Lanka to seal a triumphant 0-0 series draw. At home the ECB continued to plan for the Hundred, the nonexistent tournament involving nonexistent teams played out in front of nonexistent fans, which actually doesn't sound such a weird idea these days.

Meanwhile, in the one really astonishing turn of the non-Covid timeline, Formula One announced that it would cease to function with immediate effect, having re-evaluated its place in human society, renounced its role as a carbon-fed playground for the mega-rich, and apologised in particular of watching the best car win in dubiously-framed locations around the world. So congratulations, there, Formula One.

Away from all this the real business of sport didn't un continue.

It was announced that a combined one million miles would not go un-run in the postponed London Marathon, and £50m of charity donations not be deferred in the process. Around the country 350,000 amateur cricketers would not miss their final winter nets, and continue to look forward to another endless summer.

The FA would not cancel completely the seasons of at least 100 leagues in men's and women's non-league football. Similarly the results of the entire sub-pyramid of the amateur game – hundreds of leagues, thousands of clubs – were not declared null and void and scrubbed from the record.

In the wider world hundreds of thousands of coaches, teachers and volunteers did not stop working away at grassroots sport and the shared health of the nation. A combined two million people from the age of four upwards didn't fail to participate in cancelled parkruns. And beyond this an unquantifiable mass did not fail to take their first step into sport or to come back to some kind of a more active life.



# China reports 46 new coronavirus cases, three deaths: NHC

**K J M VARMA**

**BEIJING, APR 11 (PTI):** China has reported 46 new coronavirus cases, including four local and 34 asymptomatic infections, while three more people have died due to the global pandemic, taking the death toll in the country to 3,339, health officials said here on Saturday.

According to China's National Health Commission, the Chinese mainland reported a total of 1,183 imported cases as of Friday. Of them, 449 have been discharged from hospitals after recovery, and 734 are being treated with 37 in severe condition.

The overall confirmed cases in the country reached 81,953 by Friday, including 1,089 patients who were still being treated, 77,525 people discharged after recovery, and 3,339 people have died of the disease, it said.

A total of 46 new confirmed COVID-19 cases were reported on Friday, of which 42 were imported, it added.

The four new domestically transmitted cases were reported,

with three in Guangdong and one in Heilongjiang, it said in its daily report on Saturday.

Three deaths, all in the epicentre Hubei province and eight new suspected cases, all imported ones, were reported on Friday on the mainland China, it said.

The commission said that 44 people, all imported ones, were still suspected of being infected with the virus.

Also on Friday, 34 new asymptomatic COVID-19 cases, including seven from abroad, were reported on the mainland.

The NHC said 1,092 asymptomatic cases, including 338 from abroad, were still under medical observation.

Asymptomatic cases refer to people who are tested positive for the coronavirus but develop no symptoms such as fever, cough or sore throat. They are infectious and pose a risk of spreading to others.

By Friday, 989 confirmed cases including four deaths had been reported in Hong Kong, 45 confirmed



cases in Macao and 382 in Taiwan including six deaths.

As the numbers of new cases showed sharp increase after China contained COVID-19 in its epicentres Hubei province and its capital Wuhan, President Xi Jinping on Friday called for tighter supervision of safety measures at workplaces.

His orders came as China resumed work and production in a big way after over two months of battle against the coronavirus pandemic.

Xi asked officials to strengthen monitoring and law enforcement of production safety even as coronavirus cases began

to rise again in China following the return of Chinese nationals from abroad in big numbers.

The authorities should firmly hold the bottom line of workplace safety, Xi was quoted as saying by the state-run Xinhua news agency on Friday.

Premier Li Keqiang, who headed the leading group of officials to control COVID-19, also said officials must ensure there is not let up on workplace safety at a time when the country is in a critical period of coordinating epidemic control and work resumption.

The instructions were delivered at a

national teleconference on workplace safety in Beijing on Friday.

Starting from Sunday, China has also made it mandatory for all hotels in Beijing to admit guests with only negative test results of the coronavirus.

The novel coronavirus which originated from China in December has killed 102,669 people and infected over 1.6 million people globally. The US has the highest number of infections at 500,399, while Italy leads the death toll with 18,849 fatalities, according to Johns Hopkins University data.

## G20 ministers vow to calm oil markets but quiet on output cuts

G20 energy ministers pledged to work together to ensure oil “market stability”, in a statement released Saturday after a virtual summit hosted by Saudi Arabia that did not mention production cuts.

The summit came after an output cut agreement between OPEC and its allies to shore up crude prices hit an impasse, with Mexico rejecting the proposed curbs.

The standoff had cast doubt on efforts to bolster oil prices, pushed to near two-decade lows by the demand-sapping coronavirus pandemic and a Saudi-Russia price war that rattled global markets.

The subsequent G20 talks were expected to seal the deal more widely with non-OPEC countries

in the group including Mexico, the United States and Canada, but there was no mention of cuts in the group's final statement.

“We commit to ensure that the energy sector continues to make a full, effective contribution to overcoming COVID-19 and powering the subsequent global recovery,” the statement said.

“We commit to work together in the spirit of solidarity on immediate, concrete actions to address these issues in a time of unprecedented international emergency.

“We commit to take all the necessary and immediate measures to ensure energy market stability.”

Mexico is the lone holdout in the

multilateral OPEC-led deal to slash output in May and June by 10 million barrels per day. The cuts would gradually be reduced until April 2022, according to the deal.

Under the deal, Mexico was expected to cut production by 400,000 barrels per day but the country resisted during the overnight talks.

But Mexico's President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said he had reached an agreement with his US counterpart Donald Trump to cut production by only 100,000 bpd.

Trump confirmed the deal, saying the United States will “make up the difference” by cutting “some US production”.

## US marks record over 2,100 coronavirus deaths in one day: Johns Hopkins data

**LALIT K JHA**

**WASHINGTON, APR 11 (PTI):** The US has become the world's first country to have registered more than 2,000 COVID-19 deaths in a single day with 2,108 fatalities reported in the past 24 hours, while the number of infections in America has crossed 500,000, the highest in the world, according to Johns Hopkins University data.

China, where the deadly coronavirus disease started in December last year before spreading across Europe and America killing more than 100,000, has so far recorded 81,000 cases of positive infections and 3,339 deaths.

In terms of fatalities, the US might soon overtake Italy where 18,848 COVID-19 deaths have happened so far. By Friday night, the US had 1,8679 recorded deaths, closely behind Italy. More than 16,000 people have died in Spain and over 13,000 in Germany, the

university data said.

By Friday night more than 2,108 Americans had died due to the novel coronavirus and 500,399 people had tested positive with the dreaded disease, it said.

The COVID-19 positive cases in the United States are now more than the other top countries taken together: Spain (158,000), Italy (147,000), Germany (122,000) and France (112,000).

New York, which has emerged as the epicenter of COVID-19 deaths, has registered over 1.7 lakh positive cases, which is more than any other country.

More than 7,800 people in New York have died due to coronavirus. New Jersey has has nearly 2,000 deaths and more than 54,000 confirmed cases.

Before the start of the week, members of the White House Task Force on Coronavirus had projected between 100,000 and 200,000 deaths in the US.

While President Donald Trump had said that this was going to be a “terrible, terrible” week in terms of death, US Surgeon General Jerome Adams said the week was going to be 9/11 and Pearl Harbour moment for the country.

On Friday, Trump told reporters that as per the new projections the death toll was expected to be below 60,000.

“Hard to believe that if you had 60,000 (deaths), you could never be happy, but that's a lot fewer than we were originally told and thinking. So they said between 100 and 220,000 lives on the minimum side, and then up to 2.2 million lives if we didn't do anything. But it showed a just tremendous resolve by the people,” he said.

Trump has declared a national emergency, has notified major disaster declaration for almost all of the 50 States and more than 95 per cent of the 330 million population are under stay-at-home order.

## Drowned out by pandemic, a muted victory for Joe Biden

**WASHINGTON, APR 11 (AFP):** Barack Obama celebrated the kickoff of his “historic” White House challenge before thousands of ecstatic supporters. Hillary Clinton also marked her “milestone,” as the first woman nominee of a major US party, to thunderous applause.

And what of Joe Biden? The resurgent Democrat has been denied the climactic rollout that his predecessors enjoyed.

Like most Americans he is under stay-at-home orders due to coronavirus, and therefore marked becoming the party's de facto 2020 nominee this week with a press release and comments broadcast online from his basement.

Obama delivered the best of his soaring rhetoric in June 2008 in a passionate speech upon clinching the Democratic Party's nomination, a barrier-busting feat for a man who would become the nation's first black president.

He told a packed Minnesota arena that

the moment marked “the end of one historic journey with the beginning of another.” It was the launch pad for an unprecedented and victorious campaign, a “huge celebration,” his former advisor Dan Pfeiffer recalled on a recent podcast.

Biden's conquering moment in the national spotlight has not materialized. Some 15 state primaries have been postponed, and there is no triumphant rally to send him off on his challenge against President Donald Trump.

An anxiety-provoking pandemic does not lend itself to campaign jubilees.

Biden, the 77-year-old former vice president, clinched victory in the Democratic primaries more swiftly than both Obama and Clinton, after his lone remaining rival Bernie Sanders quit the race on Wednesday.

That evening, with his gaze fixed on the camera and his library bookshelves as a backdrop in his home studio, Biden offered warm words to Sanders

before quickly turning to voters' concerns about the pandemic during an internet livestream.

He has since taken to Twitter to discuss the crisis, called on Americans to help him defeat Trump on November 3, and put forward questions to the president ahead of his daily coronavirus task force briefings.

But Biden has struggled to crack through in the national media landscape.

“It's certainly a highly unusual time and it has meant that all campaigns are on mute,” American University professor of government David Lublin told AFP Friday.

“You're competing not just with the president, but also with the international crisis of COVID-19” that is dominating American interest and headlines, he added. Biden's campaign “gets less attention.”

Could Biden not engage more, such as meeting -- at appropriate social distance -- with first responders or medical

personnel crucial to fighting the outbreak? No doubt he and his team “are continuing to think about what he could be doing” campaign-wise, Lublin said.

Biden expects to earn the endorsement of Obama, who remains very popular among Democrats and whose rare public political pronouncements carry significant weight.

Meanwhile the presumptive nominee gives interviews, usually about the pandemic and its effects on Americans, from home. He said early this month that the clips have been seen by some 20 or 30 million people.

Trump, for his part, is front and center as he hosts lengthy daily press conferences on the crisis that are broadcast across major US news outlets.

But the relentless exposure has the potential to backfire.

The Wall Street Journal, not among Trump's usual detractors, this week attacked the “wasted briefings” as self-congratulatory ramblings and “boring

shows” of the president jousting with journalists.

By contrast, the virus crisis allows Biden, a political veteran whose own life has been shaken by tragedy, to highlight key strengths, including “competence and knowledge about how government works, but also empathy,” Lublin added.

Already a known quantity to most Americans, Biden benefits from a slight lead over Trump in head-to-head polls, and perhaps a lack of exposure would be to his advantage now, argued Miles Coleman, a political analyst at University of Virginia.

“He already has universal name recognition, and like a sports team that's ahead and trying to run out the clock, it may be in his interest to lay low,” Coleman said.

Like Trump, Biden is not without his faults.

“It seems that the Democrats would do better if they made this election a referendum on Trump,” Coleman said, “rather than a choice between two candidates.

## In Mexico, beach towns block themselves off because of virus

**MEXICO CITY, APR 11 (AP):** In Mexico, beach towns have begun blocking off roads in some cases, constructing barricades of rubble across roadways to seal themselves off from the outside world in a bid to stop the new coronavirus from entering.

The Gulf of California beach town of Puerto Peasco announced Friday that two of three highways leading into the town would be closed, and anyone entering would be subject to an enforced 12-day quarantine. The only people who can enter are residents of the seaside town also known as Rocky Point.

Nobody who is not a resident of Peasco

will be allowed to enter; relatives, friends, tourists and people from outside will be prohibited from entering, in order to avoid possible contagion, said Puerto Peasco Mayor Kiko Munro.

Oscar Castro, the town's health director, acknowledged that residents cannot, by law, be banned from leaving, or returning; but if they decide to return, they'll be quarantined.

Castro said Puerto Peasco currently has no coronavirus cases, and officials want to keep it that way; Puerto Penasco has a strictly enforced curfew. Puerto Penasco is a popular among Americans it is close to Phoenix and Tucson and the

restrictions have drawn a mixed reaction.

Shandra Keesecker-Rivero, the co-founder of the RockyPoint360 news group, wrote: Many foreign residents (i.e. from US that have homes here) are frustrated in particular, and locally there are questions as to what if any leniency there is if someone has to go to another city for already scheduled healthcare appointments, as Puerto Peasco does not have a broad scope of specialized services as it is.

At the same time, there is a segment of the local population - both Mexican and foreign expats - that are impressed with and applaud the measures

the local administration has taken as there are yet to be any confirmed cases of COVID-19 here. They see this as efforts to prevent COVID-19 reaching our shores, wrote Keesecker-Rivero.

Besides lacking health care resources, beach-side communities can see what has already happened in heavily touristed areas: Mexico's highest per-capita infection rate is in the Caribbean coast state of Quintana Roo, home to resorts like Cancun.

Further south in the Pacific coast beach town of Rincon de Guayabitos, video posted on social media showed dump trucks piling huge mounds of construction rubble

across a highway leading into town to prevent tourists from entering.

In the nearby beach community of Sayulita, residents posted videos of themselves at informal, vigilante-style roadblocks, turning back visitors' cars.

That came after Nayarit Gov. Antonio Echeverria launched a harsh verbal attack on tourists from the bigger neighboring state of Jalisco, blaming them for “their irresponsible presence... some even come when they are infected. They will always be welcome, but now on this occasion they should stay at home, Echeverria said.

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# COVID-19: Angelina Jolie asks people to take care of their children

**LOS ANGELES, APR 10 (PTI):** Hollywood star Angelina Jolie has urged people to take extra care of their children in times of the coronavirus pandemic.

In an essay for Time magazine, which was published on Thursday, the Oscar winner said though children are less vulnerable to COVID-19, it doesn't make them completely safe.

"Of the many ways that the pandemic is making us rethink our humanity, none is more important, or urgent, than the overall protection of children," Jolie wrote.

"They may not be as susceptible to the virus as other groups, but they are especially vulnerable to so many of the secondary impacts of the pandemic on society," she added.

Jolie believes that social distancing could inadvertently "fuel a direct rise in trauma and suffering for vulnerable children".

"There are already reports of a surge in domestic violence around the world, including violent killings.

"It comes at a time when children are deprived of the very support networks that help them cope: from their trusted friends and teachers to after-school sports activities and visits to a beloved relative's house that



provide an escape from their abusive environment," the actor added.

Jolie urged people to reach out to family and friends who might be in vulnerable situations and educate themselves on the signs of domestic violence.

"It is often said that it takes a village to raise a child. It will take an effort by the whole of our country to give children the protection and care they deserve," the actor concluded the essay.

## Filmmaker Obayashi, who portrayed war's horrors, dead at 82

**TOKYO, APR 11 (AP):** Nobuhiko Obayashi, one of Japan's most prolific filmmakers who devoted his works to depicting war's horrors and singing the eternal power of movies, has died. He was 82.

The official site for his latest film, Labyrinth of Cinema, said that Obayashi died late Friday.

Obayashi was diagnosed with terminal cancer in 2016, and was told he had just a few months. But he continued working, appearing frail and often in a wheelchair.

"Labyrinth of Cinema" had been scheduled to be released in Japan on the day of his death. The date has been pushed back because of the coronavirus pandemic, which has closed theaters.

"Director Obayashi fought his sickness to the day of the scheduled release of his film. Rest in peace, director Obayashi, you who loved films so much you kept on making them," the announcement said.

The film was showcased at the Tokyo International Film Festival last year, which honored him as a cinematic magician and screened several of his other works.

Obayashi stayed stubbornly true to his core pacifist message through more than 40 movies and thousands of TV shows, commercials and other video.

His films have kaleidoscopic, fairy tale-like imagery repeating his trademark motifs of colorful Japanese

festivals, dripping blood, marching doll-like soldiers, shooting stars and winding cobblestone roads.

"Labyrinth of Cinema is an homage to filmmaking. Its main characters, young Japanese men who go to an old movie theater but increasingly get sucked into crises, have names emulating Obayashi's favorite cinematic giants, Francois Truffaut, Mario Bava and Don Seigel.

Obayashi's Miss Lonely, released in 1985, was shot in seaside Onomichi, the picturesque town in Hiroshima prefecture where Obayashi grew up and made animation clips by hand.

His other popular films include his 1977 House, a horror comedy about youngsters who amble into a haunted house, and Hanagatami, released in 2017, another take on his perennial themes of young love and the injustices of war that unfolds in iridescent hues.

Obayashi was a trailblazer in the world of Japanese TV commercials, hiring foreign movie stars like Catherine Deneuve and Charles Bronson, highlighted in his slick film work that seemed to symbolise Japan's postwar modernisation.

He was born in 1938, and his childhood overlapped with World War II, years remembered for Japan's aggression and atrocities against its neighbors but also a period during which Japanese people suffered hunger, abuse and mass deaths. His pacifist beliefs were reinforced by his father, an

army doctor, who also gave him his first 8-millimeter camera.

His works lack Hollywood's action-packed plots and neat finales. Instead, they appear to start from nowhere and end, then start up again, weaving in and out of scenes, often traveling in time.

During an Associated Press interview in 2019, Obayashi stressed his believe in the power of movies. Movies like his, he says, ask that important question: Where do you stand? Movies are not weak, he said, looking offended at such an idea.

Movies express freedom. He said then he was working on another film, while acknowledging he was aware of the limitations of his health, all the work taking longer.

At the end of the interview, he said he wanted to demonstrate his lifetime goal for his filmmaking. He showed his hand, three fingers held up in the sign language of I love you. Let's value freedom with all our might. Let's have no lies, said Obayashi.

Obayashi is survived by his wife Kyoko Obayashi, an actress and film producer, and their daughter Chigumi, an actress.

A ceremony to mourn his death was being planned, according to Japanese media, but details were not immediately available. The Tokyo city and central government have requested that public gatherings are avoided because of the pandemic.



**TIME FOR A JOG! The actress, Margaret Qualley gets in her daily exercise despite the rainy weather in Los Angeles.**

### Inflating budget of next film forces Scorsese to reach out to Netflix, Apple



**LOS ANGELES, APR 10 (PTI):** Filmmaker Martin Scorsese is reportedly in talks with Apple and Netflix to produce or distribute his next feature "Killers of the Flower Moon".

After "The Irishman", the veteran filmmaker is once again facing issues due to the budgetary issues.

According to Wall Street Journal, the inflating cost of the film, which has now reached the USD 200 million figure, has made the studio Paramount Pictures tense about the project.

At the insistence of

the studio, Scorsese's representatives have started talks with Netflix and Apple for either financing the film or distributing it.

According to the report, the filmmaker has also reached out to other potential players, Universal and MGM. Paramount is open to a deal that would still allow them to participate as as financier or distributor.

"Killers of the Flower Moon" will feature Scorsese's favourite leading men -- Robert De Niro and Leonardo DiCaprio.

The film, based on David Grann's historical book of the same name, is set in 1920s Oklahoma and centres around the Osage Nation murders, in which members of the Native American tribe were murdered one by one after the group became rich off the oil found underneath their land.

This is the second time that the filmmaker is having trouble with making his film. His previously directorial, "The Irishman" was also set up at Paramount but due to its climbing cost, the film was sold to streamer Netflix.

## Lady Gaga wants to get married, have kids

**LOS ANGELES, APR 11 (PTI):** Pop star Lady Gaga says it is her desire to get married and become a mother someday.

The 34-year-old singer, who will be soon unveiling her new album 'Chromatica', is currently in a relationship with entrepreneur Michael Polansky.

In an interview with InStyle magazine, Gaga said getting married features in among the top of her priorities in life.

"Marriage. More music, more movies, more charity with the Born This Way Foundation (a nonprofit dedicated to empowering youth and supporting mental health and wellness).

"I want to do way more philanthropy. I want to help fund more research about fibromyalgia and neuropathic and chronic pain by putting a team of doctors together. I have a lot of dreams and hopes. What I will actually accomplish, I have no idea, but I know that I'll be doing it with the people I love," Gaga said.

The "Shallow" singer said she looks forward to starting a family soon. "I will say I am very excited to have kids. I look forward to being a mom. Isn't it incredible what we can do? We can hold a human inside and grow it. Then it comes out, and it's our job to keep it alive.

**Aries:**  
Aries, you have enough for both your wants and your needs at this moment. If that isn't a good enough reason to be grateful, then what is? The cards are urging you to tap into that space of compassion and see how you can pay the kindness forward. There's no better time to support local communities or contribute to a cause you resonate with than now! A woman in your life could be instrumental in nudging you towards the right direction.

Tip: Share your bounty with those in need.

**Taurus:**  
Chaos and upheaval may feel like a constant in your world. But it's not just you, Taurus! We're all going through our own trials and tribulations right now. The cards are urging you to connect with your tribe, the good folks who remind you of how powerful you are and inspire you to tap into your inner reserves. You've got this! Getting some sunlight through the course of the day may also be a good idea. Yes, there are always chores to do, but you just have to find time for self-care irrespective.

Tip: Make sure to get some Vitamin D!

**Gemini:**  
Happiness is an inside job, Gemini. This means, you have to decide the energy you want to vibrate at. So walk away from the petty quarrels. Draw your boundaries. Practice self-care. Know that this too shall pass, and soon. The truth is, you will not agree with everything other people say. Issues related to finances could become a point of contention. Have something valuable to say? It's best to wait until clarity prevails.

Tip: This too shall pass.

**Cancer:**  
When Taylor Swift sang the line "It's a love story, baby just

say yes", she was obviously talking about you and your favourite book. Things are getting nerdier at the Cancer HQ, and nobody's complaining. Sure, you miss going out once in a while, but you've found yourself a slice of paradise exactly where you are. For coupled Cancerians, this day brings with itself magnificent news. If you and your partner have not been on the same page about certain things, trust that balance and harmony will be restored.

Tip: You're jamming at the same frequency.

**Leo:**  
Expect unexpected news on the money front. So what if the world is on lockdown? Abundance and prosperity can still be yours to keep. If you are a business owner, this could manifest in the form of an increase in profits. Stay open to miracles, Leo. That is the secret to living your best life. Recognition is also going to be a big theme for you. It's not just your peers, your family members are applauding your success too. Wield your power for the greater good. Think about how you can support those who are less privileged than you.

**Virgo:**  
The starving artist act is getting a little old, Virgo. The Universe wants you to know that you can live a life that's both creatively and financially satisfying. Address the beliefs that have convinced you that you cannot have the best of both. Be cognisant of the thoughts and feelings you have at this time. They are giving you a clue as to what is in alignment with your highest good (and what is not). As Esther Hicks famously said, "The only true measure of success is the amount of joy we are feeling."

Tip: Align yourself with the life you were always meant to live.

**Libra:**

You will never like everybody in a room, and that's okay. Don't let their opinions mess with your state of Zen. Happiness is an inside job, Libra. This means that you have the power to be the bigger person, disengage, and exit sticky situations. On the upside, you're likely to feel good juju in the money department. Some of you could be thinking about giving your space a grand makeover (post the lockdown, of course!) or investing in a property that speaks to your heart.

**Scorpio:**

Spoiler alert, Scorpio: The Universe is under no obligation to make you feel comfortable at all times. Remember, comfort equals stagnation and stagnation is the enemy of growth. So think long and hard about what you need to let go of. Maybe you're holding onto a negative belief that's preventing your growth. Either way, you will know in your heart that it's time to move. Trust that you will have many epiphanies along the way, epiphanies that are bringing you closer and closer to your truth.

Tip: Let go once and for all.

**Sagittarius:**

You can either cry about the lemons life throws at you or perfect the art of making lemonade. It all comes down to where you want to vibrate at, Sagittarius. So make peace with your circumstances. The cards are also bringing your attention to your relationships with the women in your life. Spending time with your mother will prove to be especially therapeutic. Consider cooking or gardening together—anything that inspires you to get your hands dirty and connect with the element of earth. PS: she will let you in on a few secrets in the process.

Tip: Lemons or lemonade? You choose.

**Capricorn:**

We're always talking about beginnings, but endings have their own beauty and grace too. They bring with itself the news of completion and signal the end of a chapter. Capricorn, be grateful for what was and what will be. Know that the best is yet to come. The cards are also bringing your attention to marriage or a long-term relationship. Let's admit it! Finding a sync in the beginning wasn't easy. But you dealt with the not-so-pretty parts of commitment and have now arrived at a point where things really are starting to look like roses and lilies.

Tip: Be grateful for what was as you prepare for what is yet to come.

**Aquarius:**

When so many people are locked in the same house indefinitely, there are bound to be conflicts. I mean, each has their own way of leading their life! Instead of focusing on what makes you different, find similarities. Remember, we are all connected, despite what our physical reality will have us believe. On the upside, your soul family is showing up for you like never before. In the mood to raise the universal vibrations? Consider a virtual coven gathering tonight.

Tip: Be kind.

**Pisces:**

You can either think of this as a period of confinement or a time to explore your freedom. A healthy dose of denial is on your prescription now, and for the rest of the lockdown. So make coffee, make music, make art, make love. Get your hands dirty in a way you never have before. There is no better time to unlock the gates of creativity than now. You'll find that the more time you spend connected to the flow, the more clarity you will have on your soul purpose.