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# Summit **T**IMES

Vol 05 | Issue 93 | Gangtok | Saturday | 11 April 2020

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

RNI No. SIKENG/2016/69420

A HUMBLE TRIBUTE TO OUR HEROES AT GROUND ZERO  
FROM THE MEDIA FRATERNITY AND PANKAJ THAPA.

*Thank You!*



**GUARDIANS  
OF OUR GALAXY**

## Death toll due to COVID-19 touches 199; cases climb to 6,412

**NEW DELHI, APR 10 (PTI):** The death toll due to the novel coronavirus rose to 199 and the number of cases to 6,412 in the country on Friday, according to the Union Health Ministry

While the number of active COVID-19 cases is 5,709, as many as 503 people were cured and discharged and one had migrated, it said

The ministry said at least 30 new deaths have been reported since Thursday evening

Twenty-five deaths were reported from Maharashtra, three from Delhi and one each from Gujarat and Jharkhand

Maharashtra has reported the most coronavirus deaths at 97, followed by Gujarat at 17, Madhya Pradesh 16 and Delhi 12

Punjab and Tamil Nadu have reported eight fatalities each while Telangana has reported seven deaths

West Bengal and Karnataka have registered five deaths each. Andhra Pradesh, 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 and Jharkhand reported one fatality each, according to the health ministry data

The 6,412 figure includes 71 foreign nationals

The death toll on Thursday evening was 169

However, a PTI tally of figures reported by various states as on Thursday late evening showed at least 6,640 cases and 227 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 1,364, followed by Tamil Nadu at 834 and Delhi with 720 cases

The cases have gone up to 463 in Rajasthan, while they have risen to 442 in Telangana

Uttar Pradesh has 410 cases so far, followed by Kerala at 357 cases. Andhra Pradesh has reported 348 coronavirus cases

Novel coronavirus cases have risen to 259 in Madhya Pradesh, 241 in Gujarat, 181 in Karnataka and 169 in Haryana

Jammu and Kashmir has 158 cases, West Bengal has 116 and Punjab has 101 positive patients so far

Odisha has reported 44 coronavirus cases. Thirty-nine people were infected with the virus in Bihar while Uttarakhand has 35 patients and Assam 29

Chandigarh and Himachal Pradesh have 18 cases each while Ladakh has 15 and Jharkhand has 13 positive patients so far?

Eleven cases have been reported from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands while 10 were reported from Chhattisgarh

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.

## 10 fresh samples sent for testing

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 10 APR:**

Ten fresh samples have been sent for testing to North Bengal Medical College today. Two patients are from Gyalshing, West Sikkim while eight are from STNM Hospital.

In the COVID-19 Health Bulletin, Health Secretary, Dr PT Bhutia informed that the ten samples were sent today and results will most likely arrive on Saturday.

With the new samples, 58 samples have been sent for

testing so far.

He further informed that the two patients in West Sikkim have been admitted with other ailments including common flu which is why their samples have been sent for testing.

According to Dr Bhutia, in the flu clinic set up at STNM Hospital, 23 persons were screened on Thursday with total 909 persons having been screened in the flu clinic till date.

He added that there are 2943 persons under home quarantine and 25 persons are under facility quarantine.

## Secy to CM inspects border checkpoints in Rongli

**GANGTOK, 10 APR [IPR]:** After the West Bengal government declared Kalimpong as the Corona Hot Spot on 08 April, Secretary to CM, SD Dhakal, made a field visit to Rongli Sub Division in East district on 09 April to oversee the immediate action taken by the Government of Sikkim at different vulnerable check points under Rongli Sub Division.

Mr Dhakal was accompanied by SDM, Rongli and Sub Inspector, Sun Tshering Lepcha.

At Reshi Check Post, Sub Inspector Sun Tshering Lepcha informed that all check posts are completely sealed with no movement of vehicles or people on foot.

He informed that Sikkim

Police is on duty 24x7 in all check posts. Further, he informed that all shortcut footpaths have been sealed with fencing wires and that inspections are being conducted periodically.

Mr Dhakal then visited Arigaon, Khamdong, Upper Khamdong 1, Upper Khamdong 2, Thongsong and Hatticheray checkpoints.

The temporary check post at Hatticheray was also under construction.

The Secretary to the CM also inspected distribution of relief to the beneficiaries at Rorathang.

The quality of relief materials was found to be good and satisfactory. It was



also informed that Rorathang Welfare Society was actively participating in providing

refreshments to the frontline workers for the distribution of relief materials.

## MHA seeks views of state govts on lockdown

**NEW DELHI, APR 10 (PTI):** The Home Ministry has sought views of state governments on the 21-day lockdown including whether more categories of people and services need to be exempted, officials said on Friday, amidst indications of a possible two-week extension of the restrictions to curb the spread of coronavirus.

In its communication, the Home Ministry informed the state governments and Union Territory administrations about the steps taken by the Centre for the strict implementation of the lockdown, announced on March 24. It also conveyed them about the people and services exempted from the purview of

the lockdown.

The Home Ministry asked the state governments and UT administrations to inform it about different aspects of the lockdown and whether there are necessities to give exemptions to some more categories of people and services from the restrictions, a home ministry official said.

A few state governments, including Bihar, wrote back to the home ministry. Among the suggestions of the state governments include allowing construction-related activities in rural areas.

The central government, while imposing the lockdown, had announced that shops dealing in essential

commodities, including the online platforms, will remain open, besides services like health, sanitation, police, media and bank.

The Home Ministry had also asked states and union territories to ensure smooth harvesting and sowing operations, saying agricultural activities were exempted from the lockdown.

It also allowed opening of shops of agriculture machinery, its spare parts, highway truck repair shops, preferably in petrol pumps, tea industry, including plantation with maximum of 50 per cent workers, during the lockdown period.

Movements of essential non-essential cargos were also

allowed by the government.

After Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a meeting with leaders of opposition political parties earlier this week, LoP in Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad had said the PM told the meeting that he had received several requests for extension of the lockdown, but will take a call on it only after consulting experts and the chief ministers of various states.

Azad had said around 80 per cent of the leaders from various political parties, who interacted with the prime minister through video-conferencing, favoured extending the lockdown.

## Sikkim's health workers deserve better. Much better

**STRAYTHOUGHTS  
TSHERING EDEN**

Health workers are on the frontlines of the deadly COVID-19 pandemic that has taken over 90,000 lives across the world. Sikkim, so far, has been lucky to not have any positive cases and the state administration has performed fairly well in handling the situation. However, there are still gaps that need to be filled.

While the general public is doing its bit by staying home, those on the ground actively fighting the pandemic are putting themselves at risk every time they step out of their homes. Doctors, nurses, guards in hospitals, safai karmacharis, ambulance drivers, police personnel, and so many more are now soldiers in this war against time. Till a vaccine or cure is found, the fight will continue. As of now, all we know is that it could take anywhere between 12-18 months for scientists to come up with a vaccine.

An Italian doctor recently warned that countries must protect their health workers or the entire health system will collapse, and if that happens, the fight will be over. Sadly, we are still hearing that in Sikkim, health workers are not being given the priority they so deserve.

A doctor working at STNM Hospital had to take to Facebook to vent her frustration at not being provided transportation.

This is what she wrote:  
"It's lockdown time, and we the doctors are expected to reach hospital flying!! for someone like me (and there are so many others like me) who doesn't know how to drive, it's a difficult time. Why should my husband take the chance of getting infected, every time he drops me to the hospital...with a three year old kid in the house it's a risk I have been forced to take. I wonder why in other cadres, where transportation facilities are given to the junior most officer, we at health, are the neglected lot...the fact that one pool vehicle caters to the entire emergency department and services speaks a lot about the priorities!!! So angry!!"

Other doctors and those who have a family member in the health sector, also commented on the

post sharing similar views and experience of having to remind authorities about the need to arrange for proper transportation.

Why is bringing doctors to hospitals at a time like this even coming up as a problem?

There are far more important issues to be tackled like increasing testing for instance. Transporting health workers to work should be a given, not something that they should be reminding authorities about. Yes, there is the tokenism of a bus service, but it is just that, a token, routine gesture.

A week or so earlier, there was an incident in which a health worker was asked by an official to walk to work if she could not keep with the 4 o'clock deadline on vehicular movement. This was clearly a deadline decided by offices which did not understand the pressures or timings of healthworkers and enforced by officers who have no appreciation of how important health-workers are to Sikkim's defences.

That issue, it is learnt, was resolved but it shouldn't have happened in the first place.

Just like government vehicles are requisitioned for election duty, a similar requisitioning should have been done for hospital duty when the lockdown was announced and government offices closed. Since so many departments are either shut or working with skeletal staff, there must be many government vehicles that are lying unused. Let's say there aren't any, taxis or even private vehicles could then be hired for transporting doctors to hospitals.

In the Facebook post, the doctor also points out that one pool-vehicle is being used to transport the entire emergency department. How is that safe or even advisable? When the rest of the public is being asked, even forced, to adhere to safety measures like wearing masks, maintaining social distancing, avoiding stepping out of the house, why are so many doctors being herded into one vehicle?

If this is how we are treating our health workers right now, one shudders to think of how things will be if the virus were to arrive here. Our health workers deserve better - especially at a time like this.

## IHRC aims to reach essential supplies to 100 families in need



### SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 10 APR:

International Human Rights Council [IHRC], Sikkim, has announced plans to reach essential supplies to over 100 underprivileged families and migrant workers.

Today, an IHRC team comprising of Sikkim State president, Ganesh Sharma, along with state in-charge, Choteyall Prasad, district joint secretary, Mani Kumar

Pradhan, IHRC members Santosh Prasad, Manoj Prasad, Dev Nath Sharma and Nischal Chettri distributed essential commodities to 35 families.

IHRC South District president, Srijana Subba, is working on providing food to stray dogs, a press release informs even as many members have contributed towards the Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

### North donates to CM's Relief Fund

**MANGAN, 10 APR [IPR]:** In view of COVID-19 pandemic, the Pipons of Lachung Dzumsa called on Minister Samdup Lepcha at his residence in Chungthang today and donated Rs 1,10,000 towards the Chief Minister's Relief Fund in order to support the government's fight against the global crisis of COVID-19.

Similarly, Pipon of Lachung, Yanku Tashi Lachungpa, and Tenzing

Ongpu lachungpa have made a contribution of Rs 10,000.

Lachung social workers Thupden Lachungpa (Senior) and Thupden Lachung (Junior) contributed Rs 30,000.

Karma Zigmee Lachenpa of Mangan Bazaar has contributed Rs 51,000 towards the Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

The amounts have been handed over to Minister Samdup Lepcha.

## SPCC dissatisfied over relief distribution process

### SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 10 APR:

Sikkim Pradesh Congress Committee [SPCC] has expressed its dissatisfaction over the distribution process of relief materials in the State. The party has asserted that the State government should take serious note of such reports coming up on social media.

An SPCC press release states that it was sad that essential commodities allotted by the Centre has not reached the people even after 17 days of the lockdown have passed. Despitedirections from the Chief Minister to distribute the relief packages within 48

hours such news reports shows noncompliance of his direction, the party has said.

The state government should be sensitive and distribute relief materials without any discrimination, the release mentions.

SPCC has further pointed out that Sikkim has to depend on North Bengal for the testing laboratory which is a problem for the State. On the same, the party has urged the State government to take appropriate action. The party has further added that the State government should extend the lockdown like Odisha.

## Delhi HC suspends summer break to make up work loss due to coronavirus

**NEW DELHI, APR 9 (PTI):** The Delhi High Court Thursday decided to suspend its summer vacation this year, slated from June 1 to 30, to make up for the loss of working hours due to the coronavirus pandemic lockdown.

The high court has also cancelled the summer break of subordinate courts in June this year.

The decision was taken at a meeting by Delhi High Court Chief Justice D N Patel and other judges considering the severe hardship and difficulties being faced by litigants on account of the lockdown and consequent suspension of functioning of the courts that are currently hearing matters of extreme urgency only through video conferencing.

The high court has been hearing only urgent matters since March 16. Besides, all the interim orders passed by it and the trial courts earlier, which were to expire by March 16 or there after, have

already been extended till May 15.

The high court resolved Thursday that the courts shall continue functioning during the entire vacation month of June 2020.

"This decision has been taken by the Full Court on April 9, to make up for the loss of court working hours and to ensure restoration of normalcy in the functioning of the courts at the earliest," said a statement issued by the high court.

The resolution said, Since during the period of suspension of work, the hearing is limited to the matters of extremely urgent nature or urgent nature, there is negligible fresh filing of cases, lesser disposal and corresponding escalation in arrears, resulting in extreme hardship to litigants."

It said the September 16, 2019 notification, which had declared the period of the summer vacations for the high court and trial courts here in June this year, is modified.

# 'Complete Prevention, Sikkim's only hope against Novel Coronavirus'

## SPYF ON THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND SIKKIM

### VIEWPOINT

#### PRITAM CHHETRI

The time that we are passing through presently is unprecedented. It requires unprecedented measures to combat the unprecedented situation. Except that we have not established our own testing lab for COVID-19 yet, Sikkim has done well in other fronts especially in preventing any kind of transmission of COVID-19 in Sikkim from outside the state.

For a state like Sikkim whose health infrastructure is extremely poor, complete prevention of any kind of transmission from outside to the state is the only the safest way to protect the people from this global pandemic.

With the kind of health infrastructure, we have it would be difficult to put any kind of fight against this pandemic if the number of becomes large. The number of doctors, nurses, testing facilities and other infrastructures are miserably short to pose any kind of fight to the COVID-19. The number of ICUs and ventilators are in acute shortage. The condition of PHSCs, PHCs, CHCs and district hospitals are nowhere near in handling a global pandemic like COVID-19 especially after what we saw in the hospitals of the most developed countries of the world in handling the situation resulted from this pandemic.

So, the only way for us to remain safe is to avoid any kind of transmission of the virus in the state from the outside and in this front, the Govt's role has been praiseworthy. We are very optimistic that the Govt would learn lessons from this pandemic and work earnestly in lifting the condition of public healthcare in our state.

SPYF has been very vocal for over two years now towards changing the face of public healthcare in our state. It may be reminded here that SPYF has recently submitted a memorandum with about 15,000 signatures to the Health Minister with the same demand. We request the Govt to establish a

testing centre of COVID-19 immediately in our state.

### ECONOMIC EMERGENCY RESULTED DUE TO CORONAVIRUS

This global pandemic has created an economic emergency other than the health emergency. The people belonging to the vulnerable section has been hit hard by the economic emergency, perhaps harder than the health emergency. The category of the people whose source of income has completely taken a halt owing to the lockdown has been the worse victim of this 21-days long nationwide lockdown. This includes daily wage labourers, masons, carpenters, plumbers, shopkeepers, drivers, small businessmen, hawkers, small entrepreneurs etc. Most of the people falling under these categories often have a family to feed, students studying in schools and colleges to pay for, aged parents at home who need daily medicines and other medical attention, rent of their business establishments, monthly EMIs, loans etc. Some under these categories like daily wage labourers have no scope for any kind of savings. For them not getting work even for a day puts their daily subsistence at risk.

### ECONOMIC EMERGENCY MUST NOT BE OVERLOOKED

Like in combating the health emergency, the Govt must wage a similar fight against the economic emergency as well. The economic emergency has pushed thousands of people to acute poverty. Govt must play a proactive role in helping the people of the vulnerable category against the economic crisis the coronavirus has brought to their lives. The Govt's distribution of economic relief package has not been satisfactory. The lockdown is about to end but a large section of the deserving population has not availed the benefits yet. Even among those who received the benefits, the quantity of essential commodities was found to be well below actually they were supposed to get. The extreme delay in

distribution of essential commodities in one hand and miserably less in quantity, in some cases, in the other has been extremely disappointing. The lack of transparency in distribution was also quite disappointing. The people were expecting a marked change in the system of distribution of benefits from the previous regime however there was not any to be seen. We request the Govt to complete the distribution of the benefits to the deserving beneficiaries at the earliest. Those who have not received the required quantity as per the Govt notification must be provided with the remaining quantity.

### DELAY IN PAYMENT OF SALARY BY AGRICULTURE AND EDUCATION DEPTS

The delay in payment of salaries has been too frequent in the recent past. Adhoc and MR salaries of some of the Departments has been paid yet. It has been reported that some ad-hoc teachers have not received their salaries from the past several months. MR agricultural labour under the Agriculture department under Daramdin region has also not received their salaries from past three months now. It can easily be understood the situation it result in these meagrely paid employees when the salaries are due from past several months. we would like to draw the immediate attention of the Govt to this utter failure in basic of administration. Failure to pay the salaries to these scantily paid labourers shows the insensibility of the people occupying the responsible positions failing to discharge their duty sincerely.

### DEPRIVED SECTION HIT THE HARDEST BY THE LOCKDOWN

The lockdown has caused a great damage to the people living in the lower strata of the society. Especially those who have migrated from the villages to towns like Gangtok, Namchi, Geyzing, Jorethang, Singtam, Rangpo etc in search of better education, employment opportunities, who live in rented rooms and run shops in rented

buildings in roadsides or markets, have been hit hard by the lockdown. Not only has it completely put a halt to their only source of income but it has also resulted in a situation of paying rents from their pockets. Those with well-established business or well to do family backgrounds may not find it too difficult. But those students and small businessmen belonging to poor families in villages find it extremely difficult to handle this. It may force some to drop their studies or shut their business completely. At such backdrop, we on the behalf of all the students and small entrepreneurs and businessmen request the Government to look into this matter as well.

### AN APPEAL TO THE LANDLORDS, CM AND MINISTERS

At this hour of crisis, we request to all the citizens of the state to help each other in whatever means you can to reduce the hardship of the people in and around it. People are following the lockdown despite facing so much of hardships not only to protect themselves but to protect the entire community as well. Frontline health workers including doctors, nurses, technicians, class IV employees, Police force, Army, Press and Media personals are risking their in this fight against the global pandemic. We request the landlords in the major towns and bazaars of the state including Gangtok to pardon at least a month's rents of their humble tenants who are residing in their rooms or are running small business in their buildings. It is great to see that some have voluntarily come forward to not to take rents of the months the lockdown to last for. We also request the Chief Minister of the state and all the cabinet minister to make a request from their personal levels to all the landlords to pardon the room rents of the students and small businessman living and running their business in major towns and Bazars of Sikkim.

[The writer is a core committee member of SPYF]

## Special DGP Rao tours West Sikkim

### GYALSHING, 10 APR (IPR):

Special DGP, A Sudhakar Rao toured West District and took stock of situation on field. SDGP visited all the deployment points along West Sikkim - Darjeeling border and interacted with the police personnel on the field. Personnel were also briefed on their role and responsibilities in order to make nationwide lockdown successful which is the only alternative to

prevent and control the spread of COVID-19.

SDGPs interacted with the police personnel on the field and appreciated them for their dedication. Further, personnel were also briefed to adhere to safety protocols issued by the competent authority.

SDGP was accompanied by SP West, Tenzing Loden Lepcha; SDPO, Roshan Gurung, Soreng; DySP and SHOs of Nayabazar, Santosh Bania, Soreng and Sombaria.



## Teesta-V distributes essential medicines to new mothers

### SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 10 APR:

NHPC - Teesta-V Power Station located at Balutar, East Sikkim distributed food items and essential medicines like Iron, Calcium, B-Complex, etc. to pregnant women and lactating mothers at Linkutar village, South Sikkim, on 10 Apr, a press release informs.

Distributing the items, Head of Power Station, Sahadev Khatua, Teesta-V Power station advised precautionary measures like avoiding crowds,



social distancing and washing hands frequently to avoid contracting the novel corona virus (COVID-19). He also stated that

since the outbreak of the Corona virus, Teesta-V Power Station has been distributing Personal Protection Equipments (PPE) and other essential

items in the project vicinity area. In addition to this, NHPC also contributed Rs.10 lakh to Chief Minister Relief Fund.

## Airlines engage in banter online amid coronavirus gloom

**NEW DELHI, APR 10 (PTI):** These days being on ground is a wonderful thing, IndiGo. Flying would not be the smart choice, what say GoAir?

These are words from full service carrier Vistara, which was soon joined by AirAsia India, Spicejet and Delhi airport on Twitter.

Amidst planes remaining grounded and gloom in the aviation

sector due to the coronavirus pandemic, airlines, led by IndiGo, on Friday took to the microblogging site with humorous exchanges.

It all started with the country's largest airline IndiGo tweeting, "Hey @airvistara, not #flyinghigher these days we heard?"

Pat came the response from Vistara saying no and

adding, "@IndiGo6E, these days being on-ground is a wonderful thing." To its query "flying would not be the smart choice, what say @goairlinesindia?", GoAir replied saying staying home is the safe feeling.

"We can hardly wait till everyone takes to the skies, coz at the moment it is not like #NowEveryoneCanFly right @AirAsiaIndian?,"

the airline said.

Continuing the chain of reactions, AirAsia India tweeted saying absolutely, staying at home is the "Red Hot Spicy thing to do".

Asking "isn't that right?," the budget carrier tagged Spicejet, which said, "good to know our thoughts match, like our colours!."

## Assoc of Heads of Schools donates Rs 2 lakh to CM Relief Fund

### SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 10 APR:

Members of the Central Executive Committee of Association of All Heads of Secondary and Senior Secondary Schools of Sikkim met the Secretary to the Chief Minister on 07 April in view of the COVID-19 pandemic and presented a cheque of Rs 2 Lakh towards the CM Relief Fund as their support for the State Government's effort to fight the virus.

The delegation,

comprising of the association's president, Karma Sonam Bhutia, general secretary Raju Sharma and the former general secretary Rappay Bhutia thanked the State Government for its efforts to stop the pandemic from reaching Sikkim and keeping Sikkim at zero case till now.

The members of the Executive also assured the Government of their full support in all its initiatives.

## ~ SummitTIMES ~ CLASSIFIEDS

### GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

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

Contact: 9800201335

### LAND FOR SALE

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

### LAND FOR SALE

An area measuring 1 acre at Sadam South Sikkim near Loretto Convent School at Gupti road. Price negotiable any one interested can contact:

78640-04501, 62970-03235, 98320-48410

# Bhaley Dhunga SHG begins stitching face masks

**NAMCHI, 10 APR (IPR):** At a time where wearing face mask has become mandatory due to the outbreak of novel Coronavirus the Yangang sub-division based Bhaley Dhunga Self Help Group (SHG) has come forward to make face mask. This is an all women tailoring group and was formed around the month of December, 2019 when the State Government had allocated the stitching of school uniforms to the SHGs.

There are atleast 20 members in this group who are from Sripatam Gagyong, Yangang Rangang and Neya Mangzing GPUs. These self-reliant tailoring expert each possess a sewing machine and are between the age group 25 to 55.

The idea to sew face mask was encouraged when they learnt that there was a shortage of masks amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The

group follows proper sanitation protocol while producing the mask says Sarita Pokhrel Assistant Project Manager.

As of now atleast 150 mask made out of soft cotton material has been manufactured by the SHG which were given free of cost to the villagers of Lower and Upper Neya and Brum.

The drawback is that the cloth face masks stitched by these ladies do not meet the required medical standards but it is an excellent substitute to handkerchiefs, scarves and many more tiny fabrics worn by people to cover their nose and mouth. Healthy individuals can use this cloth mask rather than surgical and N95 mask as they are suppose to be used by surgeons, medical workers and ailing individuals.

Additionally, the women also help in bringing about ample awareness about the



disease to the locals alongwith urging them to follow the basic hygiene routine in order to fight this crises. It is through volunteering and combined contribution of women like them that rural population are well-informed and prepared to deal with this emergency.

# Can the extension get any simpler?

VIEWPOINT  
JUDAH

After a lockdown of about two weeks, many things have changed in Sikkim - a place 6.19 Lakh souls call home. While the book of active cases is still in the shelf unopened and un-entered, the residents of the land are glad to keep the situation that way by staying indoors. While the staying indoors part of it is not the biggest problem, the how part of it is where the actual problem lies.

Sikkim has been safe for the most part, crimes are low as law enforcement is stringent. The rampant videos of people getting beaten up by the police and daily essential commodities falling short of supply are one Glimpse of it, the Police and the Health folks jeopardising their lives which have the same 206 bones is another picture. While the normal lot have problems between the hours between sleep and rise, the high-ranking officials are devoid of sleep because there's a dire need of a solution to this.

While the public knows discarding the lockdown would be the epitome of foolishness, they also expect the government to know about the miseries since the lockdown.

The first one begins with food. While the people do not demand a delicacy-ready set of ingredients, the provisions fail to meet the need of people who are medically unable to eat of what's being provided (diabetic/old/infants). The quantitative shortage is a major issue as there are families which comprise of 8-10 members too. Shortage leads to war and brawling which is the last thing needed while social-distancing.

Another problem not spoken of is the provision of toiletries which also checks on the list of requisites. People in villages and far-flung areas struggle the most as there are no provision of vehicles and the old man has to walk miles to and fro just to get the kerosene to light up his 'chullah'. Just in case the fuse burns off, the family spends the night in darkness as the police will not behave politely to a man on his street-bike on his way to purchase a fuse.

While most women leave their homes after marriage, they still have their parents back at home. Her emergent vehicular movement back from the laws house to her home is left understood by the Law Enforcers, but they're still her parents (who can fall ill) and she cannot walk all the back. Villages falling under army Jurisdiction are falling prey to worse handlings and scrutiny while an emergency-stricken vehicle are stopped from even reaching the National Highway.

While these seem like small problems, they add up to big and painful consequences. The public was shopped ready for a week. The materials purchased won't suffice for the next extension unless they're allowed to shop for it again.

While the state is not potent to develop a vaccine against the same, the least that can be done is to develop a management wherein things are made simpler for the common man.

## Governor hands over 300 ready-to-eat food packets for stranded migrant workers

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 10 APR:

Governor Ganga Prasad handed over 300 packets of ready-to-eat food to Gangtok Mayor, Shakti Singh Chaudhary, and ADC (Development) East, Tenzing D Denzongpa at Raj Bhawan today.

The food items have been handed over as relief to stranded migrant workers in East District to be distributed through the district administration wherever necessary in view of adversity faced by them during the nationwide lock down, a press release from Raj Bhawan informs.



## Members of different Churches donate blood on Good Friday



AARON RAI

GANGTOK, 10 APR:

On the occasion of Good Friday,

members of different churches from in and around Gangtok donated blood here at STNM

Hospital, Socheygang, on Friday. A total of 32 units of blood have been donated by members of Himalayan Free Church, Church of North India, Word of Life, Omega Church, Bethany Church and other churches from in and around Gangtok and Sikkim Christian Sport Association.

Sikkim Christian Sport Association coordinator, Suman Rai, mentioned

that members from different churches have been donating blood in voluntary blood donation camps on Good Friday every year.

"We found that blood banks have been facing shortage of blood following COVID-19 outbreak, so we have decided to come forward to donate blood in the time of crisis by maintaining proper social distancing," he said. He thanked Dr CM Sharma and his team

of STNM Hospital blood bank for their support in the blood donation camp.

Mr Rai also thanked the Political Secretary to the CM, Jacob Khaling for supporting the initiative by transporting blood donors from different places. He also thanked pastors and members of different churches and S Paul from Golden Tips for donating blood.

## VBDAS continues blood donation camps during lockdown

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 10 APR:

Since the lockdown was announced, Voluntary Blood Donors Association of Sikkim (VBDAS) has organized 12 mini Blood Donation Camps at Namchi, Singtam and Gangtok.

"Despite fear of COVID-19, donors came forward and contacted us through social media and phone call," said VBDAS general secretary, SomBahadur Rai.

The Association assured that they are ready to fulfil the requirements of blood

in all the Blood Banks of Sikkim. They have thanked donors for helping the needy.

Mr Rai also thanked the District Administration Namchi for giving vehicle permission to carry blood donors and Blood Bank officials for their cooperation.

President VBDAS, Kishore Baniya thanked social organizations, religious institutions especially church and the regular donors. He has urged others to also donate blood and help people who are in need.



## 34,010 FIRs in Maharashtra for lockdown violation

NAGPUR, APR 10

(PTI): The police in Maharashtra have registered 34,010 First Information Reports (FIRs) so far for violation of coronavirus lockdown across the state, an official release said on Friday.

The highest number of FIRs were registered

in Pune (4,317), as per a release of the Law and Order Department of state police.

In Mumbai, 1,930 offences were registered while 2,299 cases were registered in Nagpur, 2,227 in Nashik city, 2,994 in Solapur city, 2,690 in Pimpri Chinchwad, 3,215 in

Ahmednagar. FIRs were also registered against 468 persons for violating quarantine norms.

Sixty-nine police personnel faced attacks while enforcing lockdown in the state and 161 persons were arrested.

At least two

policemen have

contracted coronavirus. Both have been quarantined, the release said. The police also registered 777 cases for illegal transportation of various goods including liquor. A total of 2,510 persons were arrested in these cases and 18,995 vehicles seized.

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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.

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

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## Banking Safe

Deposits need to play back more robustly as credit into the local economy

Recent years have been about bad loans and non-performing assets. With the biggies having secured and digested impossibly large loans and not regurgitated anything back into either the economy or towards their EMIs, the banks were delivered a crippling blow; so crippling that even the demonetization-induced flood of cash is unlikely to tide them over. In fact, it is possible that the increased deposits will further set the banks back as they are now required to pay interest on “white” deposits. And now has arrived word that people can opt for a moratorium on their deposits, but even that requires some informed decision-making as the complications of compound interest could have people end up paying more than they had signed up for. That said, even though Sikkim is far removed from the mechanizations of real economics and financial realities, living as it does in a bubble which is getting buffeted around but is yet to burst, people here are also suffering. For the past little over a year, the usually laidback banks (yes even banks become laidback when in Sikkim) have been on overdrive, reopening files to chase down missed EMIs and bad loans, serving notices and running from court to lok adalat and back to court to recover dues.

If one looks at the C:D ratio in the State, improved, on paper, in the past three years from an embarrassing 28.6% in 2014-15 to 42.6% in 2016-17. Banking norms advise the CDR to hover closer to the fifty per cent mark. This means that fifty per cent or more of the deposits made by account-holders should ideally be played back into the economy by way of loans and advances. This is as much to keep the economy buoyant as to trigger economic growth. Economies, one may add here, do not grow when earnings are saved. Economies boom when investments are risked. But, like with most things in Sikkim, even the euphoria over the loan boom might be misplaced. Agreed, a whole lot of individuals and families have managed to secure loans to build homes/ hotels and purchase vehicles with greater ease in recent years, but fact remains that these loans do not really do anything for the economy by way of creating jobs. And the data bears this preference out as well because the tertiary sector (in which housing and vehicle-purchase loans are counted) have notched up between 51% to 82% of the projected targets for loans in Sikkim. Consuming a lion's share of the loans are the minuscule industries in the State which were so favored in 2014-15 that they received 241% of the target projected for this sector. At whose cost, one may ask? The farming community who received only 22% of the loans they were expected to receive that year and in 2016-17, received only 15% of the loans the sector was in need of and expected to receive. Loans to outside agencies emptied out about 40% of the deposits in banks in Sikkim in the last fiscal, 2016-17, and that should attract some attention because that was available loans which could not go to local entrepreneurs.

For an economy to benefit from the presence of so many banks in the State – there are 34 banks in Sikkim which have 142 branches between them here – the State needs to hear about more substantial loans being given to new enterprises here. Unfortunately, that has not been the case in Sikkim. The bigger loans in Sikkim continue to be secured by applicants based outside the State. Is it because the branches here do not have the authority or do not enjoy the confidence of the regional offices to process “big” local loans? Experience also shows that banks here are hesitant to take risks. And yes, Sikkim's poor repayment history is also partly to blame for this, after all, as of 30 June 2016, the recovery position of commercial banks in Sikkim had declined to 18.83% from 34.5% as on 30 June 2015. But come on, these things do not seem to stop banks from throwing thousands of crores behind already lost thousands of crores. Even when it comes to bad loans, it is not the banks that really suffer because they have ways of getting their money back, the real loss is suffered by Sikkim because nothing substantial is achieved for the local economy; not when only personal, housing or car loans are released or when loans go bad because none of these create opportunities or more money.

# Coronavirus: how Europe's monarchs stepped up as their nations faced the crisis

BOB MORRIS & ROBERT HAZELL  
THECONVERSATION.COM

The British Queen's address to the nation on Sunday, April 5 evoked huge interest, respect and widespread appreciation. Nearly 24 million people in the UK watched her deliver the four-minute speech, which paid tribute to National Health Service and other key workers, thanked people for following government rules to stay at home and promised “we'll meet again”.

Her words were greeted with almost universal praise from politicians, press and the public alike. But what made it so special? Who advises the Queen on such occasions? And what does it tell us about the monarchy – what can monarchs do that political leaders cannot?

It was special because of its rarity – this was only the fourth occasion on which Elizabeth II has addressed the nation other than in her annual Christmas message. All have marked particular national moments: war in Iraq, the deaths of Princess Diana and the Queen Mother; her thanks for the celebrations for her diamond jubilee. In different ways they bring the nation together – her heartfelt address before Diana's funeral was especially effective in bringing her people to understand why she had prioritised consoling her bereaved young grandchildren.

The coronavirus speech – a little over 500 words – came invested with the authority of someone able to draw on long personal experience of the country's trials. Instancing her own message as a 14 year-old to child evacuees wrenched from their families in 1940 was but one way of giving the speech a depth of field to which no politician could aspire.

The Queen's use of the words “We'll meet again” – the popular anthem of the second world war – was a masterstroke. It drew on deep wells of public memory, emphasised the nature of the present peril, but avoided the populist and lazy rhetoric of mentioning war

itself.

The world is familiar with the Queen as head of state of the UK and numerous other countries: this was an occasion when she spoke as head of the British nation. The former role is formal, correct and bloodless. The latter requires emotional intelligence and a sense of personal connection with all citizens which enables the Queen to reflect the best of the nation back to itself.

The speech will have been the product of consultation between the Palace and the government. The Sunday Times followed the briefing available at the time, which was that the initiative was Number 10's alone. With the benefit of longer to report the story, its sister paper The Times explained the outcome was the result of a more complex interaction. The Queen was in charge. Number 10 and the Palace would have consulted and early drafts exchanged, but the final product would have been the Queen speaking in her own right.

British monarchs have been determined to protect their political neutrality, a feature which the Constitution Unit's forthcoming book The Role of Monarchy in Modern Democracy identifies as crucial to the survival of all the European monarchies. The Queen is not alone: the existential threat of the coronavirus has caused all European monarchs to make national addresses to comfort their people, support hard pressed public services, and reinforce healthcare messages.

### MESSAGES ACROSS EUROPE

Styles differ: of the various addresses made in Europe from the middle of March, King Philippe of Belgium stressed personal responsibility. Delivering his speech the day after the country entered lockdown on March 17, Philippe said: “We have to do this for ourselves, but also for others and especially for the vulnerable among us”, concluding that: “The current situation reminds us of our

vulnerability, but at the same time it brings out our strength.”

Also speaking on March 17, Queen Margrethe II of Denmark's message tended to the hortatory, spelling out the steps her compatriots were required to take and urging them to comply: “Right now we have to show our togetherness by keeping apart.” King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands emphasised problems of isolation: “We can stop the loneliness virus”, while King Harald V of Norway recognised anxiety plus the need to support preventive policies with kindness.

The King of Spain's consoling and supportive message was greeted with the banging of pots and pans by separatists in Catalonia and elsewhere. The Swedish King's address was issued on the same day as Britain's and walked carefully in support of Sweden's limited social distancing policy.

All addresses were supportive of healthcare and other professionals and offered comfort to the isolated, the ill and the bereaved.

### TIES OF HISTORY

How effective are such addresses? The huge number of people watching the British Queen's speech live provide the answer. So also does the commentary from the UK's neighbour France, where seasoned observers in the republic watched the Queen's speech with envy and admiration. Indeed, commentators from the “serious” French press indulged in almost purple passages of appreciation. David Brunat, in Le Figaro, remarked of the address's style:

“It is a manifest and majestic composure (that good composure which could not lie), a phlegm which is not only British, not simply monarchic, but which belongs properly to this queen whose character and destiny were forged in the face of war, blitz, bombs, the struggle for freedom.”

They recognised that compared

with a republican president there is a direct link between the sovereign and her people which is above politics. In part it comes from the Queen's own longevity, but also from the historic depth of the monarchy as an institution.

The press in other countries made similar points. The Italian Corriere della Sera called the address “historic”, while Katja Majboon in Denmark thought that because of the address “there is no doubt that the nation stands together”.

In Germany, Anna Ernst in an article headed: “How the Queen unites her people” compared the broadcast to a Papal address. There was similar appreciative coverage in other European countries. But perhaps the deepest understanding was registered in the French press, a country after all with a long if secret regard for the British monarchy. The British Queen has again demonstrated that monarchy is entirely compatible with democracy. This is because it can add a layer of non-political leadership to the quotidian but vital struggles of politics. Whereas politics is about government, modern monarchy concerns the state of the nation. No prime minister can do what a nonagenarian – dressed in the colour of hope, as a French journalist pointed out – chosen to represent British society is alone capable of doing when the nation faces an existential threat.

This remains true even in the face of such recent family difficulties as those involving Prince Andrew and Prince Harry. Such misfortunes allow people to identify with the Queen's common humanity and reinforce appreciation for her ability to rise above personal difficulties. In turn, such attributes make the more credible her sympathetic and bracing encouragement at a time of national emergency.

[Bob Morris is Honorary Senior Research Associate, Constitution Unit, UCL; Robert Hazell is Professor of British Politics and Government & Director of the Constitution Unit, UCL]

# Coronavirus: What are the chances we'll change our behaviour in the aftermath?

KATIE GIBBS, ANDREW H KEMP & ZOE FISHER  
THECONVERSATION.COM

The world as we know it may never be the same. The global economy has slowed, people are living in isolation and the death toll from an invisible killer is rising exponentially. The coronavirus pandemic has imposed a harsh reality of bereavement, illness and unemployment. Many people are already facing financial hardship and uncertainty over future job prospects.

Early data suggest that the immediate psychological impact of the pandemic is substantial. There are also more uplifting analyses, however, suggesting the experience may help us change our lifestyles for the better. But are humans even capable of sustainable behaviour change?

We know that crises can lead to anger and fear. At a community level, these emotions can descend into acts of scapegoating, stigmatisation and discrimination. Environmental shocks and epidemics may also cause societies to become more “selfish”, electing authoritarian leaders and showing prejudice towards outsiders.

We also know that existing societal inequality – which is a threat to mental health – deepens after tragic events. Any psychological distress tends to be amplified in those who are less fortunate.

To change our behaviour for the better; we need to first overcome these challenges and boost well-being. Over the last three years, our group has given much thought to “well-being”. We define this as positive connections to ourselves, communities and our wider environment.

On a basic level, positive health behaviours are important to achieve individual well-being, such as eating healthily, sleeping well and exercising. A strong sense of meaning and purpose is especially crucial for overcoming major life events and realising “post-traumatic growth”. In the words of one of our colleagues – who has overcome multiple sclerosis – we must commit to “positivity, purpose and practice” during personal crises. This involves moving beyond ourselves and serving something greater.

Positive social ties and communities are therefore essential. Social relationships lay the foundation for personal identity and our sense of connectedness with others. This gives rise to positive emotions in an upward spiral relationship.

Recent research and scholarly work also demonstrate that we have an innate need to be connected with nature and other forms of life to feel good. Individuals who regularly spend time in nature tend to be happier and have a greater sense of meaning in life.

Unfortunately, it is no longer possible to discuss the link between the environment and happiness without considering the major threat that is anthropogenic climate change. This can give rise to the emotion of “solastalgia” – a state of grief, despair and melancholia resulting from negative environmental change.

The commonalities between the coronavirus pandemic and climate change are stark. Both challenges represent “environmental” problems that are socially driven. A major difference, however, is our global responsiveness to one, but not the other.

The abstract nature of climate change, along with the helplessness we feel in relation to it, contribute to our “sitting on our hands and doing nothing”. This phenomenon is known as “Giddens Paradox”. Perhaps the silver lining here is what coronavirus can and should teach us – that a commitment to action leads to change.

### CHANGE IS POSSIBLE

The Chinese word for “crisis” includes two characters, one for danger and another for opportunity. During the pandemic, many people have been forced to work from home – substantially reducing time spent travelling, as well as air pollution. This may continue, if we see the value in it.

Although not without its challenges, trials of flexible working patterns, such as the four-day working week, also demonstrate an array of benefits to individual well-being.

Coronavirus begs the question: why would we want to fully return to the workaholic status-quo when the end goal can be achieved in a different way, supporting well-being, productivity and environmental sustainability? Any small positive change helps us to feel further empowered. The pandemic has, after all, taught us that we can get by without shopping excessively and going on long-haul flights for holidays.

There is evidence that we can make behavioural changes following a crisis. We know that some preventive measures, such as respiratory and hand hygiene, can become habitual following a viral pandemic. Research has also shown that residents in New Jersey, US, became more likely to support environmental policies following two devastating hurricanes. Experiences of flooding in the UK have similarly been shown to lead to a willingness to save energy. Meanwhile, bushfires in Australia have boosted green activism.

### MAINTAINING CHANGE

That said, research shows that positive change generally dwindles over time. Ultimately,

we prioritise the restoration of societal functions rather than pro-environmental actions. Maintaining any change in behaviour is difficult and depends on many factors including motives, habits, resources, self-efficacy and social influences.

Positive psychological experiences, emotions and a newfound sense of purpose may hold the key to driving non-conscious motives towards environmentally sustainable behaviours. Emerging evidence also suggests that environmental education and nature-based activities can facilitate pro-sociality and community connectedness.

Fortunately, simple interventions such as walking and “mindful learning”, paying attention to the present, have been shown to promote openness towards ideas relating to the overlap between humans and nature. These things can help maintain behavioural changes.

Understanding that our psychological, social, economic, and natural worlds are part of an interconnected system also facilitates an ecological ethic towards protecting and preserving the natural world. To achieve that, interventions grounded in fostering positivity, kindness and gratitude could be effective. We know that these things lead to sustainable positive transitions. Meditation focusing on love and kindness also enables positive emotions and a personal sense of community connectedness.

Another intervention that can reduce stress and promote psychological well-being is keeping a journal. This could even boost pro-ecological behaviour when completed in nature.

### THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY

Some problems are simply impossible for the individual to fix alone, however – hence Giddens Paradox. Positive change by individuals will likely be temporary or insignificant, if not reinforced by policy or regulation. Organisations, industry and government have a big responsibility for promoting positive change.

A first step would be to enable the well-being of all citizens, by overcoming threats of inequality, xenophobia and misinformation in the aftermath of the pandemic. If we fail to do this, we will ultimately be neglecting opportunities for positive change and risking the very survival of our species. What we decide to do today and after the current crisis is of paramount importance.

[Katie Gibbs is PhD Candidate of Psychology, Swansea University; Andrew H Kemp is Professor and Personal Chair, Swansea University; Zoe Fisher is Consultant Clinical Psychologist, Swansea University]

## Assam reports first COVID-19 death

**GUWAHATI, APR 10 (PTI):** Assam on Friday reported the first death due to complications related to COVID-19 with the total number of positive cases in the state rising to 28, state minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

The patient, hailing from Hailakandi district, died early today at Silchar Medical College Hospital, the minister tweeted.

The condition of the 65-year-old retired

BSF personnel turned 'alarming' on Thursday and he was shifted to SMCH during the day.

The minister had said his other parameters were stable but "his oxygen saturation is decreasing and he has been shifted to the ICU for better monitoring".

The person was confirmed coronavirus-positive on Tuesday night and had attended the Tablighi Jamaat meet at Nizamuddin in New Delhi, He also had

travelled to Saudi Arabia before that.

Minister Sarma expressed his deepest condolences and prayers for the bereaved family.

Silchar MP Rajdeep Roy said the funeral of the deceased will be held according to the COVID-19 protocol and the details will be announced later.

The number of positive cases now is 28 with more case confirmed from Dhubri last night.

## From Archery to Culinary, Deepika Kumari's food for thought to beat lockdown boredom

**TAPAN MOHANTA**

**KOLKATA, APR 10 (PTI):**

There's no bull's eye to aim at for the time being so Deepika Kumari doesn't mind rustling up a mean chicken curry which will appeal to the taste buds of beau and fellow international Atanu Das.

Deepika and Atanu, who had been engaged for about two years, originally wanted to focus on Tokyo Olympics and get married once it's over but now it seems early wedding bells for Indian archery's "first couple" with the Games deferred to 2021 owing to the global COVID-19 pandemic.

"Chawal aur daal pakana aataa thaa. Ab non-veg (mostly chicken) banana sikh rahe hain. (I knew basic cooking about making rice and daal but now I'm trying out some non-veg delicacies like chicken curry," Deepika told PTI in an interaction here.

So it's her mother providing some "online tips" on how to prepare a chicken curry which she is often cooking.

"My day starts off with Pranayam and visualisation practice for about 45 minutes. After breakfast, it's time to learn some cooking," she said.

Archery however has not taken any backseat for the former world number one as the duo have made a five-metre range in the hall of their



living room where they shoot for about two hours in the afternoon. It's more of a simulation than actual practice which is out of question till lockdown continues.

"We shoot for about one and half to two hours after setting a target. It cannot compensate for the real shooting range. We practice as much as possible and just staying confined to our home."

"The routine at least helps the body remember about the shooting, so that we are not completely out of touch when camp begins," Deepika, who boasts of 23 World Cup

medals including five gold, said.

A winner of two gold medals at the 2010 Commonwealth Games and an Asian Games bronze medal the same year, Deepika is eyeing her third Olympics stint after London 2012 and Rio 2016.

Das, who made his Olympic debut in Rio, will be looking for second.

"The original idea

was to focus completely on the Olympics and get married once it's over... But now, with the postponement, we're having second thoughts. We've been engaged for close to two years now.

Maybe once the virus scenario eases, we might get married this year," Das was quoted saying by ESPN.

So far, India have secured a team quota place in men's and individual in women's with both Das and Deepika part of the contingent.

Deepika and her teammates were eyeing a team quota from the World Cup stage III in Berlin, slated from June 21-28, before the coronavirus pandemic halted all sporting events.

"I'm not thinking much about tournament

and training now. The most important thing right now is about everyone's safety and well-being. We should focus on staying safe and staying at home," Deepika said.

Deepika was part of a 49-member sports group who interacted with the Prime Minister Narendra Modi earlier to raise awareness in the fight against COVID-19.

"We can again get back to work or competition by staying safe. We all are just hoping that there's a vaccine ready soon for the virus and everything returns to normalcy," she signed off.

## In Manipur, police deliver essentials at doorstep



**IMPHAL, APR 10 (PTI):**

The police in Manipur's Thoubal and Kakching districts have started delivering essential items such as groceries and medicines to the homes of those who are finding it difficult to go out as the nationwide lockdown continues, officials said on Friday.

The police have tied up with local bodies to deliver these items so that people don't face trouble amid the

lockdown, they said.

The district police in Thoubal has formed a team to ensure essential commodities are available at the doorsteps of the people so that they can stay indoors comfortably, Superintendent of Police S Ibomcha Singh told PTI.

"We provide free transportation and if some items are not available in the area, our personnel go to Imphal to get them," he said.

A similar team has also been formed in Kakching district to deliver essential items to the homes and also help those in need to reach hospitals.

It is a humanitarian step in view of the lockdown, with a special focus on those who cannot go out, Kakching district's SP Victoria Yengkhom said.

Many organisations are also involved in the initiative, the officer said.

## Loan moratorium: Banks ask customers to be cautious against frauds

**KOLKATA, APR 10**

**(PTI):** Several banks have cautioned their customers against possible attempts by fraudsters as they became active to exploit the three-month loan repayment moratorium offer in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, officials said on Friday.

The cyber criminals pretending as officials of banks have been reaching out to borrowers, offering them assistance to avail the loan repayment moratorium scheme for phishing out account details, they said.

"They have become active at a time when people are seeking immediate relief from their financial obligations.

"After getting some complaints, many banks have started sending messages to their customers, requesting them to be cautious against possible frauds," an official said.

He, however, did not provide details about number of such cases already registered.

Country's largest lender State Bank of India said, "Please

note that EMI deferment does not require OTP sharing.

Do not share your OTP."

Fraudsters are reaching out to banks' customers through social media, e-mail, phone calls or SMS, another official said.

"Don't let fraudsters profit from the pandemic.

Fraudsters are taking advantage of the COVID-19 pandemic by preying on public fears," Standard Chartered said in a message.

"Posing as bank representative or public officials, they might attempt to obtain personal and financial information from you, which may lead to data compromise and fraudulent transactions," it said.

Axis Bank, in a communication, requested its customers to protect their banking information against frauds relating to EMI moratorium.

"Fraudsters have started a new modus operandi to gain access to your banking details. Imposters may contact you to

help postpone your EMI payments and request you to share OTP, CVV, password or PIN related to your banking accounts. Stay aware," the lender informed its customers.

ICICI Bank, too, has been requesting its customers to be cautious against the deceptive activities by cyber criminals.

The Reserve Bank had recently announced a three-month moratorium on loan repayments in the wake of COVID-19 crisis for dues to be paid between March-May 2020 and left it to the banks to implement the same.

Several private sector banks have decided to go for the "opt-in" option on loan repayment moratorium, putting the onus on the customers to take the initiative of informing the lenders of their choice to go for the three-month breather.

A slew of state-run banks have gone for an "opt-out" option where the repayments automatically get deferred unless a customer informs his or her willingness to pay.

Giving some numbers, the company said it had delivered more than 3.38 crore LPG cylinders in the last 15 days since the lockdown, which is 26 lakh cylinders every single working day.

The oil major appealed to people not to resort to panic-buying of LPG cylinders and suggested they can also book through online portal to avoid cash handling and man-to-man contact, it said.

## 109 undertrials released in Nagaland

**KOHIMA, APR 10 (PTI):**

A total of 109 undertrial prisoners have been released from different correctional homes in Nagaland on interim bail in keeping with the Supreme Court's directions to consider decongesting the jails in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, officials said on Friday.

Following the apex court's direction, a committee was formed and the interim bail and parole were granted based on its recommendation, they

said.

The committee comprised of Nagaland State Legal Services Authority's Executive Chairman Justice S Serto, Principal Secretary (Home) Abhijit Sinha and Additional Director General (Prison) Renchamo P Kikon.

The undertrial prisoners were released from 11 jails across the state.

The jails in the state have a capacity to accommodate 1,450 prisoners and housed 537 people before the



undertrials were released, The committee directed that if any

undertrial who has been released threatens any witness or any person acquainted with the facts of the case or to the victim of the case, he shall be taken into custody immediately.

Besides, it also directed the jail authorities to maintain social distancing inside the prisons.

## Tendulkar chips in again to help needy



**MUMBAI, APR 10 (PTI):**

Cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar, who has already donated Rs 50 lakh for the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, has also decided to feed 5000 people for a month.

Apnalaya, a non-profit organisation through a tweet, thanked Tendulkar for doing his bit for the needy.

"Thank you, @sachin\_rt for stepping in & helping Apnalaya help the ones suffering the most during this

lockdown. He will be taking care of the ration of around 5000 people for a month.

"There are many more individuals who need your support, people! Donate below!" Apnalaya tweeted from their official handle.

To which, Tendulkar replied, "My best wishes to @ApnalayaTweets to continue your work in the service of the distressed and needy. Keep up your good work.

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**SummitTIMES**

## Defiant cyclists reject universal wage cut amid coronavirus chaos

**PARIS, APR 10 (AFP):** A universal wage cut to limit the damage inflicted by the coronavirus pandemic on world cycling is off the table, the sport's Swiss based association of active pro riders insisted on Friday.

The association internationale des coureurs (CPA) says it is ready to compromise but will never accept an across-the-board salary reduction.

Professional cycling faces grave uncertainty due to the shutdown and should the 2020 Tour de France be cancelled it is feared sponsors will flee the sport.

All riders under a contract with a WorldTour, Pro Continental or Continental team are members of the CPA, whose statutes are protected by Swiss law.

Several top calibre WorldTour teams -- CCC, Mitchelton, Astana, Bahrain and Lotto -- have introduced wage cuts, in some cases up to 80 percent for the duration of the lockdown after the teams association AIGCP asked riders to be flexible.

"We are ready to listen," said former pro Gianni Bugno, president of the CPA.

"We are ready to compromise for the good of the sport," said the former Giro d'Italia winner and two-time world road race champion.

"We accept the flexibility asked for by the AIGCP.

"But the rules must be adhered to."

"Major cuts are unacceptable without proof that contracts cannot be fulfilled.

- EMERGENCY -  
"We're aware of the difficulties that sponsors and the teams can face during this emergency," he said.

"But we will be vigilant to avoid any speculation and to limit

the difficulties the riders and their families face." CPA Secretary General Laura Mora said there was no place for an across-the-board salary reduction.

"Each case needs to be individually analysed so we can limit the damage with specific strategies," she said.

In a statement the CPA called for unity in a time of crisis.

"We're all in the same boat, in the middle of a storm and so to save everyone, we've got to respect the common principles and really work as a team," she said.

The Giro d'Italia and spring classics have been cancelled and the Tour de France is in doubt. The world championships in both mountain bike and BMX have also been called off.

For the moment, the road World Championships scheduled in Switzerland at the end of September seem to be safe.

But the International Cycling Union said it had received more than 650 requests for postponements or cancellations of events over a period extending to the month of August.

Some teams fear the worst with no end sight to the current suspension.

"Without the Tour de France, cycling would have a very big problem," Ralph Denk, boss of the German Bora team, told German daily Die Welt.

Patrick Lefevere, the head of the Deceuninck team, faced with the reduction in investment from his main sponsor, agreed.

"If the Tour were not to be raced, it would be a hard blow that (Tour organisers) ASO could probably absorb, but not the teams," he told Belgian newspaper Het Nieuwsblad.

"It could bring down the whole model on which our sport is built.

playing a little bit less aggressively out on the field," Cummins, who was supposed to be IPL's highest paid overseas player at Rs 15.5 crore, told the BBC.

However he didn't rule out that some players might have harboured thoughts about Clarke's assumption that they "sucked up to" Indian skipper Virat Kohli in fear of losing out on IPL pay-checks.

"I'd say that would have been a bigger factor than trying to win or lose friends out on the cricket field. But you never know, that might have been a factor for some players."

Australia skipper Tim Paine also rubbished Clarke's claims on Thursday, saying the Australian cricket team avoided provoking "any fight" with Kohli as part of their strategy to keep the Indian captain's bat quiet and not a ploy to save IPL contracts.

## Football for dummies: Dynamo Brest play before mannequin 'fans' in Belarus



**BREST, 10 APR [THE GUARDIAN]:**

They don't chant, they don't move and they mostly wear the wrong colours. They're not even real. The defending Belarusian league champions, Dynamo Brest, have started boosting home crowds with mannequins in football shirts adorned with the faces of virtual fans who bought tickets online.

Belarus is the only country in Europe hosting professional sport in front of spectators amid the coronavirus pandemic but attendances are shrinking as supporters

decide stadiums are too risky.

Fan boycotts have been announced at 10 of the 16 clubs in the top division, including Dynamo and the Champions League regulars Bate Borisov. With the spectators staying away, the mannequins have arrived.

For Dynamo's Belarusian Cup semi-final against Shakhtyor Soligorsk on Wednesday at least 30 mannequins were placed on seats each topped with a cut-out photo.

They wore a motley array of old shirts ranging from a purple 2016-17 Real Madrid away jersey to early 1990s Aston Villa in claret and blue. Other shirts were stretched over nearby seats.

With no games to watch elsewhere some foreign fans have started following games from Belarus. The Dynamo general secretary, Vladimir Machulsky, wants them to feel at home.

"It's our creative idea. In this way, a virtual spectator who is following the match on television can see himself in the stands," Machulsky said. "We're not trying to imitate a full stand. We understand the

Real Madrid away jersey to early 1990s Aston Villa in claret and blue. Other shirts were stretched over nearby seats.

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## Barcelona in crisis after six directors resign in protest at way club is run

**SID LOWE**

**BARCELONA, 10 APR [THE GUARDIAN]:** Barcelona's crisis has deepened after six board members resigned, including two vice-presidents and the man the president, Josep Maria Bartomeu, had identified as his successor.

In a collective letter deposited with a notary, they cited their inability to change the way the club is being managed and called for presidential elections at the earliest opportunity.

On Tuesday Bartomeu had tried to encourage the vice-presidents Emili Rousaud and Enrique Tombas and directors Silvio Elias and Josep Pont to resign as he sought to move against those who criticised his handling of Barcelona but he had not expected them to be joined by Jordi Calsamiglia and Maria Teixidor, the secretary of the board.

A letter signed by



the six on Thursday night was published by the newspaper La Vanguardia, and Teixidor informed Bartomeu of the decision by telephone. Rousaud had been made a vice-president only at the start of January as Bartomeu sought to put a succession plan into place.

Bartomeu is not obliged to call elections until 2021, when he will not be able to stand, but some board members -- among them those who have resigned -- had

asked him to bring that date forward.

According to the club's statutes, Bartomeu can continue in the presidency because the number of those resigning is below 50% of the board. Those statutes also say there must be at least 14 board members and the six resignations have reduced that to 13. It is possible further resignations may follow as the crisis deepens.

Relationships had been strained for some

time and tensions had been brought to the surface particularly by Bartomeu's handling of the pay cuts imposed on the players, which had prompted Lionel Messi and the club captains to openly criticise the club.

Equally damaging had been claims that Barcelona had paid the company I3 Ventures to set up online accounts that allegedly wrote stories defending the president and damaging the image of some players and

former players. It is claimed the service was paid for in three instalments, allegedly to avoid it being detected by internal financial controls. The letter from the six directors called for the investigation into "Barcagate", carried out by Price Waterhouse Cooper, to be concluded, and if appropriate for action to be taken and money returned.

Barcelona have issued a statement denying wrongdoing and Bartomeu has described the allegations as "completely false". I3 has also denied wrongdoing.

Rousaud and Tombas join Susana Monje, Javier Faus, Carles Villarrubi, Manuel Arojo and Jordi Mestre as vice-presidents who have resigned under Bartomeu, who is both president and vice-president. Eleven of 21 board members have resigned and of the vice-presidents who began with him in 2015 only one remains.

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## Tokyo Games chief says postponed Olympics not certain to go ahead in 2021



**TOKYO, 10 APR [AP]:** The chief executive of the Tokyo Games cannot guarantee the postponed Olympics will be staged next year even with a 12-month delay.

Japan's prime minister, Shinzo Abe, issued an emergency declaration this week to battle coronavirus, putting the country under restrictions after it had seemed it would avoid the spread. Japan,

which has the world's oldest population, has reported about 5,000 cases and 100 deaths.

"I don't think anyone would be able to say if it is going to be possible to get it under control by next July or not," the Tokyo Organising Committee chief, Toshiro Muto, said. "We're certainly are not in a position to give you a clear answer."

The Olympics were

postponed last month with a new date set for 23 July 2021, followed by the Paralympics on 24 August.

Abe has been criticised for being slow to act against coronavirus. Opposition political leaders have suggested he downplayed its severity and have said this might have been tied to wanting to hold the Olympics this year.

"We have made the decision to postpone the Games by one year," Muto said. "So this means all we can do is work hard to prepare for the Games. We sincerely hope that come next year mankind will manage to overcome the coronavirus crisis."

to know the price and who would pay.

He also acknowledged that Tokyo Olympic organisers had taken out insurance. "Tokyo 2020 has taken out several insurance policies," he said, "but whether the postponement of the Games qualifies as an event that is covered is not clear yet."

He was also asked about the Olympic flame, which was taken off public display this week in Fukushima.

"After the Olympic torch relay was cancelled, the Olympic flame was put under the management of Tokyo 2020," Muto said. "In the future there is a possibility it might be put on display somewhere. I'm not going to make any further comment on the issue."

Andy Murray signs up for virtual Madrid Open as tennis takes on Covid-19

**WASHINGTON, 10 APR [AP]:** Andy Murray will swap a tennis racket for a games controller when he takes part in a virtual Madrid Open later this month.

The Scot and Lucas Pouille were announced as the first two ATP players in the draw on Thursday night, as the tennis world raises money during the coronavirus pandemic. The Madrid Open was scheduled to be held from 1-10 May but has been postponed as both the ATP and WTA Tours have shut down their calendars until at least the middle of July because of the global crisis.

However, the clay-court tournament has decided to create an esports replica of its event titled the Mutua Madrid Open Virtual Pro which will take place from 27-30 April, with Murray and Pouille taking part.

Pouille told the official ATP website: "This is going to be a very exciting challenge. I've already started training because I want to win this tournament against my tennis peers as I know they play a lot. Thank you to the Mutua Madrid Open for this great initiative."

Male and female winners will both be given a prize fund of €150,000 (£132,000) and they will get to decide how much goes to tennis players facing financial hardship without any tournaments to enter. A further €50,000 (£44,000) will go towards reducing the social impact of Covid-19.

**Julianne Moore, Finn Wolfhard to headline Jesse Eisenberg's directorial debut movie**

**LOS ANGELES, APR 10 (PTI):** Veteran actor Julianne Moore and "Stranger Things" star Finn Wolfhard will star in Jesse Eisenberg's directorial debut "When You Finish Saving The World".

The project, based on Eisenberg's upcoming Audible Original of the same name, will be produced by his "Zombieland" movies co-star Emma Stone, Dave McCary and Moore.

The comedy-drama will focus on the relationship between Wolfhard and Moore's characters, reported Collider.

The plot is different from Eisenberg's six-part audio show, which is set over three decades and follows three members of a family.

Nathan, a father learning to connect with his newborn son; Rachel, a young college student seeking to find her place in a relationship and in life; and Ziggy, a teenager hoping to figure out where he came from, and where he's headed.

Eisenberg, Wolfhard and "Booksmart" star Kaitlyn Dever voice the three leads in the audio show.

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## Europe's beer brewers fear a bitter summer as lockdowns drag on

Paris, Apr 10 (AFP): Shuttered bars, cancelled concerts and no sporting matches: European beer brewers large and small are bracing for a catastrophic summer as demand dries up during the lockdowns imposed to curtail the coronavirus outbreak.

"When it's nice out, that's when you sell beer," said Maxime Costilhes, head of the French brewers' association, noting that many have little money left in the bank to cushion the blow after building up stocks over the winter.

France may be known for its wine, but beer sales had been soaring in recent years, spurred on in part by the craft brewing trend imported from the United States.

Even Europe's dominant brewers are facing big hits from the absence of restaurant and bar sales, and the wave of scotched summer festivals, concert series and other events in the coming months.

"The impact is expected to worsen in the second quarter," said Dutch giant Heineken, which already forecasts a two-percent drop by volume for the first three months of this year among its 165 breweries in some 70 countries.

Germany's biggest brewer Radeberger, famed for its crisp pilsner, warned that supermarket purchases by people cooped up at home would not come close to compensating for the evaporation of bulk orders from professionals.

"We're assuming that the situation won't show any real improvement in the coming weeks," a spokeswoman told AFP. German officials are even considering calling off the biggest beer celebration of all, Munich's annual Oktoberfest, which attracts millions of people from around the

world.

Clement Baumgartner, the party's organiser, said a decision would be made by June on whether to open as planned this year on September 19.

For Bruno Torres, who founded his microbrewery La Baleine in a gritty corner of northeast Paris a few years ago, the coronavirus crisis is nothing short of a "disaster".

His stainless steel fermenting vats, which normally produce around 560 hectolitres (near 15,000 US gallons) a year, have been sitting empty, and nobody is buying his bottles or kegs.

"Even some smaller supermarkets don't want to open because of the health scare," Torres said.

Overall, French beer sales are expected to be flat for the year as a whole, Costilhes said, after years of rapid growth.

"We had the equivalent of 7,750 full-time jobs as of January 1, an increase of nine percent on the year, so nearly 700 more jobs compared to 2019. But that was before all this," he said.

He did not want to speculate on how many brewers might be facing bankruptcy, but "notwithstanding what some have said, it's not certain that alcohol consumption is going up during the lockdown."

Jacques Lebel, France director for the industry behemoth AB InBev, agreed that "beer wasn't among the products that benefited from any stockpiling effect in France during the first weeks" of the lockdown.

"Beer has been impacted less than other alcoholic beverages, but we were growing at a very slow rate compared to what we had seen in previous years," he told AFP.

According to

consulting firm Nielsen, French beer sales rose seven percent year-on-year during the first two weeks of the lockdown that began on March 15, bucking an overall drop of 3.4 percent for alcohol sales.

"If this is over by the end of April, it'll be OK, but if not, it's going to get very hard," Torres said.

German beer makers are also warning of mass layoffs as many firms "are on the brink of failure," said Holger Eichele, president of the country's brewing federation.

"Sales to the food sector are essential for most brewers. For some, they account for 90 percent of their revenue. And that has now completely disappeared," he told AFP.

In the last week of March, German beer sales were down 9.4 percent on the year, the federation's spokesman Marc-Oliver Huhnholz said.

"It's because consumers are increasingly buying less, and the fact that a lot of occasions for celebrating with friends or family have disappeared," he said.

Exports are also sinking -- Italy and China, which are among the countries hardest hit by COVID-19 outbreaks, are Germany's biggest foreign markets, consuming 3.4 million and 1.8 million hectolitres respectively last year.

Foreign beer sales were down a whopping 58 percent in early April, the federation said.

Some German brewers are even urging clients to buy non-alcoholic beers, such as the family-owned Bavarian firm Volkach.

"We're giving our alcohol to hospitals and pharmacies in the region" so that it can be used to make sanitising hand gel, Volkach's Caroline Dull told a local radio station.

## China reports 42 new confirmed COVID-19 cases, 47 asymptomatic infections

K J M VARMA

BEIJING, APR 10 (PTI): China has reported 42 new coronavirus cases, including 38 imported infections, taking the total tally to 81,907, health officials said on Friday, as the country started a new trial of re-testing the recovered COVID-19 patients amid heightened concern of a rebound of the deadly disease.

The Chinese health authority on Friday also said that 47 new asymptomatic coronavirus cases, including 14 from abroad, were also reported in the mainland.

China's National Health Commission (NHC) on Friday said 42 new confirmed COVID-19 cases were reported, including 38 imported cases on Thursday.

Four new domestically transmitted cases were reported, with three in Guangdong Province and one in Heilongjiang Province, it said.

As the new infections continue to increase, China on Thursday unveiled a new trial protocol warranting re-

testing of the recovered coronavirus patients besides intensifying the screening of asymptomatic cases as concerns grew over a second wave of the infections in the country.

The move comes a day after China lifted the 76-day lockdown in Wuhan, where the pandemic originated.

One death was reported in coronavirus epicentre Hubei Province taking the overall death toll in the country to 3,336, while the overall confirmed cases on the mainland reached 81,907 by Thursday. This includes 77,455 patients who were discharged after treatment.

The NHC said 1,097 asymptomatic cases, including 349 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 but they are infectious and pose a risk of spreading to others, according to a new official notification.



By Thursday, 973 confirmed cases, including four deaths have been reported in Hong Kong, 45 confirmed cases in the Macao and 380 in Taiwan including five deaths.

The new trial protocol on recovered COVID-19 patients included return visits by doctors, re-testing and their health monitoring.

As of Thursday 77,455 patients were discharged after treatment, most of them were from Wuhan and Hubei province which bore the brunt of the virus.

According to the

protocol, recovered COVID-19 patients should stay in quarantine for 14 days either at home or in an isolation centre for medical observation, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

During the isolation period, those having recovered from the disease should take their temperatures daily and be on the lookout for fever and respiratory symptoms, including cough and breathing difficulties, the protocol said.

Designated hospitals should make plans for

patients' return visits and re-testing for the next two to four weeks following their discharge, it said, adding that sputum samples are more reliable and should be the first choice for re-testing.

A high-powered committee headed by Chinese Premier Li Keqiang which was leading the efforts to contain the virus since January has also called for intensified detection and prompt response to asymptomatic case meaning people infected with coronavirus but showed no symptoms.

## Global virus death toll passes 94,000, but some signs of hope

Another horror day of the coronavirus pandemic saw the global death toll pass 94,000, although there were tentative signs of hope that the crisis was peaking in the United States and Europe.

The picture of the unfolding economic catastrophe also became clearer with the IMF warning of a Great Depression and data showing 17 million Americans lost their jobs, but a European Union financial rescue package offered some relief to the barrage of bad news.

Another 1,700 people died in the United States on Thursday, while there were hundreds more deaths across Europe,

driving the confirmed global toll above 94,000.

Nearly half of all pandemic fatalities have occurred over the past week.

But authorities in worst-hit Europe and the United States said a slight decline in daily deaths and infections gave reason to hope the worst could be over.

"The fire started by the pandemic is starting to come under control," said Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez of Spain, where fatalities inched down to 683 from 757 a day before, pushing that country's total above 15,000.

"Our priority now is not to turn back, especially not to return to our starting point, not

to lower our guard."

France also reported that 82 fewer people were in intensive care for COVID-19 -- the first fall since the pandemic broke out.

And Anthony Fauci, the US government's top pandemic expert, said the United States was "going in the right direction".

The US recorded 1,783 deaths in the past 24 hours, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University as of 0030 GMT Friday, lower than the previous day's record toll of 1,973.

The US has seen more than 16,500 confirmed deaths, the second-highest tally in the world after Italy, and more than 460,000 confirmed cases.

In New York, the epicentre of the virus in the United States, only 200 more people entered hospitals, the lowest number since the pandemic struck, even though 799 people died over the last day, Governor Andrew Cuomo said.

"We are flattening the curve by what we are doing," Cuomo said, adding, "We have to keep the curve flat."

But he declined to predict how New York would fare in the coming weeks, telling reporters bluntly: "I have no idea."

Further lifting spirits, the health improved of British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, the highest profile of the 1.5 million people infected

by the virus, and he ended three days of intensive care.

However Britain announced another 881 deaths on Thursday, taking the total to nearly 8,000.

- 'A Europe that protects' -

On the economic front, Europe attempted a fightback with EU finance ministers agreeing in late-night talks to a 500 billion-euro (\$550 billion) rescue package aimed at reducing pain across the 27-nation bloc, especially hardest-hit Italy and Spain.

"Europe has decided and is ready to meet the gravity of the crisis," French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire tweeted after the talks.

## Rohingya camps in Bangladesh put under 'complete lockdown'

COX'S BAZAR, APR 10 (AFP): Bangladesh has imposed a "complete lockdown" in Cox's Bazar district -- home to over a million Rohingya refugees from neighbouring Myanmar -- to halt the spread of coronavirus, officials have said.

Experts have warned that the disease could spread quickly through the cramped, sewage-soaked alleys where the persecuted Muslim minority are housed in canvas and bamboo shacks.

No cases have been confirmed in the camps but one infection has been recorded nearby.

And with the official number of cases doubling to more than 200 nationwide in the last five days, including 20 deaths, officials ordered a lockdown of the district from late Wednesday.

The area "will be put under complete lockdown -- no entry, no

exit -- until the situation improves," the directive said.

Police and soldiers set up roadblocks on the main roads of the district, home to 3.4 million people including the Rohingya refugees, and were conducting patrols inside and around the camps on Thursday.

Refugee commissioner Mahub Alam Talukder said movement restrictions on aid workers had also been imposed, cutting manpower by 80 percent.

"Only emergency food supply and medical services can continue work in the camps by maintaining extreme caution," he told AFP.

Anyone with a recent history of travel abroad would also be prevented from entering the camps until they completed a quarantine, he added.

More than 740,000 Rohingya fled a brutal 2017 military crackdown

across the border in Myanmar and resettled in the squalid refugee camps of Cox's Bazar, where around 200,000 refugees were already living.

Rights groups and activists have expressed concerns that the camps have become hotspots for misinformation about the COVID-19 pandemic because of an internet ban imposed last September.

Tens of thousands of Rohingya woke up in the middle of the night last month to recite the Muslim call to prayer, after rumours spread that the act could stop the spread of the virus.

Amnesty International has warned that basic accurate information about the disease was failing to reach many refugees in the camps.

The refugee commissioner said his office had asked Dhaka to remove the internet restrictions.

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## Daredevil's Deborah Ann Woll Says She's Struggling With Self-Doubt Over Lack of Acting Jobs Since Marvel Role



Marvel star Deborah Ann Woll candidly opens up about a lack of acting work since completing the third and final season of Marvel's Daredevil, saying she was "struggling" even before the coronavirus crisis brought much of the entertainment industry to a standstill. The True Blood actress played Karen Page, confidant to costumed crime-fighter Matt Murdock (Charlie Cox), across all three seasons of fan-favorite Netflix series Daredevil and episodes of The Defenders and The Punisher. All six Marvel Comics-inspired Netflix series — including the interlinked Jessica Jones, Luke Cage, and Iron Fist — were cancelled by the streaming service in late 2018, despite executive producer Jeph Loeb saying Marvel Television had an "idea" for at least three more seasons of Daredevil.

"I'm just really wondering whether I'll get to work again, whether anyone wants to work with me again, and whether I still have it, all of those scary things," Woll told Marvel Creative Director Joe Quesada on Joe Q's Mornin' Warm Up. "And part of my brain goes, 'No, you're just being crazy, calm down.' But the part of me that loves [acting] and the problem with being an artist and an actor, and any of these professions where you put a piece of your soul into your work, is that it becomes a part of your identity."

"If I'm not acting, I'm not sure who I am," Woll continued. "And since it's been so long since I've really gotten to do it, I'm struggling a little bit with how to maintain my self worth, my sense of my own value."

Woll consulted with her husband, E.J. Scott, while debating whether to revisit past works during what she describes as a

"period of self-doubt."

"I was like, 'I'm trying to find a way right now, particularly where I can't even look for work, what can I do to help me remember that I do know what I'm doing and that I can do this and that I do have value?'" said Woll. "I said, 'Well, should I maybe go back and watch some of my earlier work?' Maybe now it would be safe and it would be a way for me to say, 'Look, I did do a great job, that was a great moment.' Or is that opening up Pandora's Box when I'm most vulnerable? And he suggested that I don't do it [laughs]."

In the two and a half years since Daredevil finished, Woll said, "I haven't had an acting job since, and that's been really hard for me. So even before COVID kind of flipped the world on its head, I was struggling with this."

"And I think I was already in an uncertain place, and to add this other layer of uncertainty ... it's just compounding a little bit," she added. "And I have to figure out how I stay confident in myself, even when everyone else is telling me, 'Hey, we don't want to work with you right now,' or 'You're not our choice for this.'"

Woll was celebrated by fans and critics for her portrayal of Karen Page in both Daredevil and The Punisher, where she appeared opposite Jon Bernthal. In our Season 3 review of Daredevil, ComicBook.com praised the "standout" Woll for expertly navigating the "complex and emotionally volatile fallout" with co-star Cox's Matt Murdock.

Fans of Marvel's Daredevil have since rallied around hopes for a series revival, launching the famed #SaveDaredevil campaign.

## Reese Witherspoon Quietly Unloads \$17 Million Pacific Palisades Home

**SELLER:** Reese Witherspoon

**LOCATION:** Pacific Palisades, Los Angeles, Calif.

**PRICE:** \$17 million

**SIZE:** 10,300 square feet, 5 bedrooms, 7 bathrooms

Los Angeles may be currently mired in a mandatory lockdown, but Reese Witherspoon and her Quibi executive husband Jim Toth have still managed to bend and snap their way out of the family's longtime main residence on posh Pacific Palisades Riviera. Deeds and documents show the Oscar-winning "Big Little Lies," "Walk the Line" and "Legally Blonde" star successfully sold her house for a few hairs above \$17 million — and in an all-cash deal, to a buyer who required no mortgage.

Although the home was never listed on the open market, it's no secret that Witherspoon has wanted to sell the Palisades property for quite some time. Way back in 2016, she floated the estate off-market with an ear-piercing \$19.9 million asking price, considerably more than the \$12.7 million she originally paid in 2014.

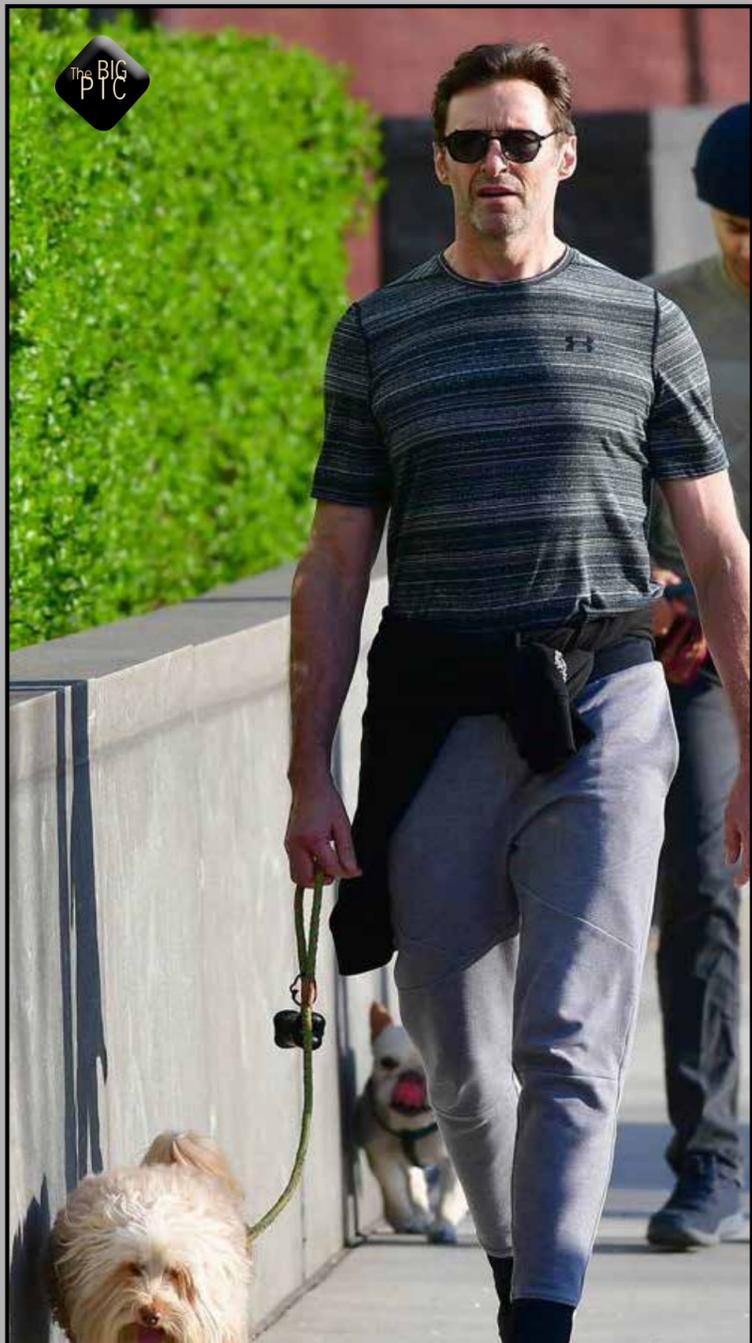
But at the time of Witherspoon's purchase, the 10,000 sq. ft. mansion was still under construction, and she subsequently spent another veritable boatload on costly upgrades, including the installation of a visually impenetrable hedge that screens the entire front of the property. According to neighbors, she also built a guardshack on the .42-acre lot for a full-time security detail — something that reportedly did not go over well with members of the Riviera Homeowners Association.

Since it's never been on the open market, little is publicly known of the lumbering two-story home's specific accouterments. But the Riviera sprawler is an East Coast traditional in style, designed by noted architect Ken Ungar, whose homes are beloved by the likes of Russell Westbrook, Byron Allen and Jennifer Garner. There are five bedrooms and seven baths, expansive backyard terraces for alfresco dining, grassy lawns and a swimming pool with inset spa and Baja shelf.

According to records, the \$17 million buyers are automobile accessories heiress Robin Formanek and her husband John Cianciolo, both originally of Memphis, Tennessee. The former is the only living child of Peter Formanek, the recently deceased co-founder of AutoZone, which now employs 87,000 workers across more than 6,000 locations.

Formanek is not new to L.A., however. Back in 2016, she paid \$9.8 million for a two-parcel residential compound that straddles the border between the tony neighborhoods of Brentwood and Santa Monica. That "starter" property, currently up for sale with a \$10.3 million ask, is now in escrow.

As for Witherspoon, she also maintains a small handful of residences in her hometown of Nashville, Tennessee — some of them reportedly occupied by family members. Last year, she paid \$6.25 million for Malibu's gorgeous Zuma Farms ranch. And she continues to own a luxe getaway in the Bahamas, in a legendarily fancy guard-gated community filled with multimillion-dollar mansions.



**DOG DAYS!** The actor, Hugh Jackman steps out with his dog to go for a casual walk in New York.

## Sony delays Camila Cabello-starrer 'Cinderella' till Feb 2021

LOS ANGELES, APR 10 (PTI): Camila Cabello-starrer "Cinderella" is the latest Hollywood project to be delayed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The project, to be directed by Kay Cannon, has been described as a retelling of the classic fairy tale.

According to People magazine, the Sony Pictures film will now release on February 5, 2021.

The movie will feature Cabello in the title role, with Billy Porter as the fairy godmother and Idina Menzel as the evil stepmother.

British actor Nicholas Galitzine will star opposite Cabello as Prince Robert.

Former James Bond star Pierce Brosnan

is aboard the project and he will play the king and father of Galitzine's Robert.

Popular TV host-actor James Corden is producing the project along with Leo Pearlman through their banner Fulwell73.

Sony had delay a number of its upcoming releases, including Spider-Man spinoff "Morbius", the new "Ghostbusters" and Tom Holland starrer "Uncharted", after the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic.

"Morbius", starring Jared Leto as the titular anti-hero, is now coming in theatres on March 19, 2021, while Jason Reitman-directed "Ghostbusters: Afterlife" has been shifted to March 5, 2021.

Holland's "Uncharted" is now hitting theatres on October 8, 2021.

### ARIES:

The theme 'return of the past' has been showing up in your cards for sometime now. Are you not acknowledging the end of something? Is there a cord that is yet to be cut? When we don't honour the soul lesson we're meant to learn, we end up repeating cycles. For some, this theme could translate quite literally. Yes, we're talking about somebody from your past coming back into your life. There's a reason things didn't work out in the first place. Keep that in mind when you find yourself reigniting the spark.

Tip: It's time to acknowledge the soul lesson.

### TAURUS:

Sharing space isn't always easy, even with your loved ones. Taurus, be warned: you're likely to bicker over the silliest things... things you will laugh about when you're on the other side of this quarantine. But for now, it's a good idea to give each other some space. Think of this as a wonderful opportunity to catch up on your reading list or revisit the creative projects you parted ways with.

Tip: Give each other some space.

### GEMINI:

Compromise is a part and parcel of every relationship. You win some, you lose some, right? But if you're the only one giving, you know there is a problem that needs to be addressed, Gemini. Today, take a step back. We're not asking you to be selfish, we're asking you to care for yourself, and if that means saying 'no' to somebody else, so be it. Trust that people will respect you more once you set your boundaries, even if it makes them uncomfortable initially.

Tip: Address your own needs first.

Love and other drugs can wait for now. You're in the mood

to make some coins and up your self-care game. It's all about the inner alignment, Cancer. If you're doing what you're meant to be doing, it will bring you both joy and a sense of purpose. A BossBabe quote to give you just the motivation you need at this moment: "Make more moves and less announcements."

Tip: You're focused on making money and reinventing your self-care game.

### LEO:

Love at first sight is overrated. What the two of you have is rare, precious, and magical. An elixir that gets more intoxicating with each passing day. Raise a toast to this connection! Single Leos, Cupid may or may not be quarantined at the moment. If you've got the feels for somebody, it's best to take things in your own hands. As such, spending time with the family is also going to be big on the agenda. Set up a virtual gathering tonight if you're all living away from each other.

Tip: Your love is like an elixir that gets more intoxicating with each passing day.

### VIRGO:

When one door closes, many others open. Redirect your gaze. Cut your losses and become aware of what is being offered to you. Coupled Virgos are being asked to observe their partner's love language. Just because they're not expressing themselves in the same way as you are, doesn't mean they don't have affection for you. Maybe they prefer acts of service over words of affirmation. Paying attention to the effort they're putting into this relationship will restore your faith.

Tip: Pay attention to their actions, not just their words.

### LIBRA:

Self-improvement is a big theme for you during this time period. You're revelling in your company like never before, establishing new routines, prioritising self-care, healing, transforming, and accessing higher levels of consciousness. 'Meditation' is no longer a big word, Libra. But don't think of this silence as something you "do". Think of it as a state of being, one that transforms the most mundane tasks into a soulful experience. PS: You are exactly where you need to be.

Tip: Meditation is a state of being.

### SCORPIO:

Scorpio, the cards are reminding you of how magnificent you are; how beautiful you are. Anybody would be lucky to have you by their side! So don't feel the need to overcompensate or settle for anything less than what you deserve. Restoring the balance between giving and receiving is the need of the hour. Single Scorpios, you've been seeing the signs for a while now. Give yourself the permission to open your heart.

Tip: A new way of loving is on the cards.

### SAGITTARIUS:

Hope and healing are a big theme for you this weekend. The journey to where you are now has been anything but easy. But you have chosen the lessons you are meant to experience in this lifetime. You understand that each challenge is in essence an opportunity to grow. Continue to look at your past through the eyes of wisdom. Know that you are co-creating a new reality for yourself right now and in this moment. A Louise Hay affirmation to help you along the way: "I am a limitless being, and I can manifest whatever I desire in this physical reality."

Tip: The cards speak of hope and healing.

### CAPRICORN:

It doesn't matter how many times you've failed. You can always start over, Capricorn. This is the time to find inner alignment and go after what sets your heart on fire. Some of you may find yourself bitten by the love bug. Your time away from the matrix is inspiring you to let your guard down and allow your true self to be seen, even if this feels intimidating in the beginning. Trust that this is the secret to building authentic connections.

Tip: The cards speak of new beginnings.

### AQUARIUS:

Aren't you tired of playing out the runner-chaser dynamic? It's time for some real talk, Aquarius. If you want to make things work, spell it out. If you want to part ways and focus on your own journey, you need to spell that out too, instead of leaving the other person hanging. Put yourself in their shoes for a second. How does it feel to not be in a space of clarity about the direction in which you are heading. This will help you act from a space of compassion.

Tip: Honesty is the need of the hour.

### PISCES:

You may or may not feel like the most energetic version of yourself, and that's okay. We all have our own cycles and rhythms, so don't get too hung up on the idea of 'productivity'. Sip on your chai like it's the most important task of the day. Give yourself the permission to 'be'. Miscommunication may pose as an issue for some of you. Remember, things are often a bigger deal in our heads than they are in our reality. Hold space for an open and honest conversation and trust that you will sort this one out.

Tip: Honour the cycles and rhythms of your body.