



**'ARTEMIS FOWL WILL SKIP THEATRES AND GO STRAIGHT TO DISNEY PLUS**  
*pg 08*

**Attention, Please!**  
*Some ground realities also require attention*  
*pg 4*

**CHRISTOPHER CROSS TESTS CORONAVIRUS POSITIVE**  
*pg 08*



# SummitTIMES

Vol 05 | Issue 88 | Gangtok | Monday | 06 April 2020

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

RNI No. SIKENG/2016/69420

## As lockdown forces liquor shops to shut, NGO to help those suffering withdrawal

**RUDRA KAUSHIK GYALSHING, 04 APR:**

Mukti Recovery Group (MRG), a social organization formed by recovering users, has decided to work for the welfare of the people of West district who are suffering from alcohol addiction. Due to the nationwide lockdown, liquor shops have not been allowed to remain open. During such a time, those addicted to alcohol will be suffering from withdrawal symptoms and the organization has decided to help such people.

Santosh Sharma, president

of Mukti Recovery Group informed that there are reports of people experiencing withdrawal and harming themselves. The organisation will provide medical assistance and counselling to the people suffering from different kinds of withdrawal symptoms, he said.

“Our foundation will work in coordination with the district health department to help people fight problems caused due to alcoholism. We will also bear the cost of patients’ transportation to the hospital. Anybody from any

part of West Sikkim can contact us,” Mr Sharma said.

Another member of the group talked about the kinds of withdrawal symptoms and measures to control harmful withdrawal symptoms. He shared that a mild withdrawal symptom when someone gives up alcohol include shaky hands, anxiety, headache, Nausea, vomiting and insomnia while serious withdrawal symptoms amongst alcoholics range from hallucinations and seizures which may push the victim to take harmful steps.

He maintained that pa-

tients suffering from withdrawal symptoms need peaceful surroundings and support of close friends and family members to overcome the symptoms.

“Our objective is to provide necessary help to people who may be suffering from withdrawal symptoms due to the ongoing lockdown. The family members and friends of the victims who are dealing with harmful withdrawal symptoms should not shy away from reporting about the patients. Inform us and we

will be at the patients door-step,” he said.

Any persons needing necessary help may contact the members of MRG on 9593780276, 7076084190, 8145009505.

Meanwhile, Excise department officials today inspected liquors shops of Gyalshing and directed shop owners to keep liquor shops completely shut during the lockdown and warned that strong action would be initiated against liquor shop owners who were found flouting the prohibitory orders.

## COVID-19 death toll rises to 83, cases climb to 3,577

**NEW DELHI, APR 5 (PTI):** The death toll due to the novel coronavirus pandemic rose to 83 and the cases climbed to 3,577 in the country on Sunday after 505 new infections were reported in the past 24 hours, according to the Union Health Ministry.

The active COVID-19 cases stand at 3,219, while 274 people were either cured or discharged and one had migrated. Seven deaths have been reported in the past 24 hours, the ministry data stated.

However, a PTI tally of figures reported by states directly showed at least 110 deaths across the country, while the confirmed cases reached 3,959. Of them, 306 have been cured and discharged.

There has been a lag in the Health Ministry figures compared to the numbers announced by different states, with officials attributing to procedural delays in assigning the cases to individual states.

According to the ministry, Maharashtra has reported the most coronavirus deaths at 24, followed by Gujarat 10, Telengana seven, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi six each and Punjab five.

*Turn Page 2*

## First batch of essential medical supplies flown into Sikkim VIRUS RESEARCH LAB AT STNM HOSPITAL SOON

**SAGAR CHETTRI**

**GANGTOK, 05 APRIL:**

The first batch of essential medical commodities for Sikkim arrived in the State on Saturday aboard an Indian Air Force helicopter after an Air India cargo flew it in to Bagdogra from New Delhi.

Announcing the receipt of the consignment, Chief Minister PS Tamang [Golay], wrote on his Facebook page: “Despite the shortage in the market, our Government contacted various suppliers and transferred the consignment from Mumbai via New Delhi and Bagdogra. We assure you that our Government will do everything possible to ensure that all the essential items are available for our people. This will help our frontline workers to be



more efficient against our fight with COVID-19. The safety of every Sikkimese is our priority and we will take every necessary step to ensure that.”

The consignment consisted of 165 boxes containing 5,098 Personal Protection Equipment kits, 10,000 N95 masks,

2.24 lakh 3-ply masks, 300 disposable gowns and 3,000 VTM kits.

This consignment was received here by Principal Secretary, Health Department, K Shrinivasulu, and Director General/ Secretary, Dr PT Bhutia and other officials and staff of

Health Department at Libing Helipad, Gangtok.

Addressing a press conference, the Health Department Principal Secretary remarked that the arrival of these medical supplies would further strengthen the efforts and preparations of the State government

against COVID-19.

He thanked the Chief Minister, Chief Secretary and Residential Commissioner in Delhi for playing a big role in bringing this consignment to Sikkim.

He assured that the State already had the necessary health equipment and facilities and that this supply would further strengthen Sikkim’s preparation against COVID-19.

He also appealed to the people not to panic and strictly follow directions of the government for the lockdown.

He informed that a virus research lab under provisions of Department of Health Research - Indian Council of Medical Research [ICMR] will be set up soon at STNM Hospital complex at Gangtok.

## SDF reiterates demand for testing lab, wants govt to seek out expert advice

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 05 APR:**

Sikkim Democratic Front spokesperson, MK Subba, has demanded that the State government immediately set up a COVID-19 testing facility.

While lashing out against the State Government for not having been able to set up such a testing facility in the State, he called on the Governor to intervene in the matter using his spe-

cial discretionary powers and immediately set up a COVID-19 testing facility here.

Speaking to media persons here on Sunday, Mr Subba regretted that the State Government remains unable to establish this necessary facility and alleged that even in the recent video conference of Chief Ministers with the PM, the CM “totally failed” to

properly address the testing facility issue and preferred instead to just repeat the preparations of the government.

The SDF spokesperson mentioned that the Prime Minister has been asserting on the need for testing, tracing and quarantine to address COVID-19, but the CM failed to make the appeal to the PM.

He reiterated his party’s allegation that the

State government has not been able to strictly follow provisions of the Disaster Management Act and this was why the State still did not have a COVID-19 testing lab.

Mr Subba also demanded that the State government immediately constitute an expert medical advisory committee comprising of doctors from private and government hospitals

and retired doctors to give medical advice to the government on COVID-19.

He further demanded that the government immediately set up an expert economic advisory committee to help it decide how to provide relief to different sections of the society and in preparing a memorandum to petition the Centre to provide economic relief to the State.



**BOOTS ON THE GROUND:** Beside Health workers and Law & Order personnel, also in the frontlines to sustain some sense of normalcy in these times of lockdown are personnel of the Power Department. Its engineers and linesmen continue to toil to ensure uninterrupted power supply. Here, the field functionaries of Power Department carry out repairs to restore supply [disrupted by high winds since Saturday evening] to five villages at Rawtey-Rumtek. [from SUBASH RAI]

## Farmers’ Helpline to help tide over lockdown complications

District	Contact Details
North	1. Shri B. D. Rai, Additional Director, Agriculture, Mobile No. 9733275066 2. Shri Dup Tshering Kazi, Deputy Director, Horticulture, Mobile No. 94341 74828
East	1. Shri Passang Tamang, Deputy Director, Horticulture, Mobile No. 7602848818 2. Mrs. Rachana Gurung, Deputy Director, Agriculture, Mobile No. 9735761613
West	1. Shri Karma Sherpa, Deputy Director, Horticulture, Mobile No. 8145574864 2. Shri Tshering Norboo Bhutia, Deputy Director, Agriculture, Mobile No. 9474059458
South	1. Shri Dikendra Bhujel, Deputy Director, Horticulture, Mobile No. 7866829200, 9002802995 2. Dr. Pratap Subba, Deputy Director, Agriculture, Mobile No. 9733255160

**SUMMIT REPORT**  
**GANGTOK, 04 APR:**

A Farmers’ Helpline has been set up with two dedicated senior officers from each district who will be available over phone every day from 8am to 6pm to extend all possible support for marketing and other

farmer-related issues during the lockdown period, a press release informs.

The helpline was created after the Agriculture and Horticulture Departments jointly held a meeting through video conferencing with district level officials on

03 Apr, 2020 to discuss various issues relating to farmers’ welfare in view of lockdown due to spread of COVID-19.

The meeting chaired by the Principal Secretary, Agriculture and Horticulture Departments was also attended by Secretary,

*Turn Page 2*



# HSP wants Govt to improve relief delivery

## SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 05 APR:**

Hamro Sikkim Party has demanded that the State Government refine its efforts in reaching relief to Sikkimese affected by the lockdown not only in the State but also outside.

An HSP press release issued today by the party's spokesperson, Biraj

Adhikari, claims that the party has been receiving messages from "people in numerous villages in Sikkim" complaining about lack of essential rations and also from Sikkimese students outside complaining that the publicized helplines have not reached the promised aid [although some students have re-

ceived help].

Arguing that sufficient time has now passed since the lockdown began, HSP fears that "more delay in delivering promised aid has the potential to be a crisis of unimaginable proportions, especially for the poor."

The party has demanded that a "foolproof

mechanism" be set up by which non-medical help reaches affected people around Sikkim and financial help for students studying outside be taken up on priority.

The party wants all-out efforts to be launched "to bring about Govt. to Govt. contact with all states, especially in cities where our children are,

and even Siliguri, our gateway where stranded people are stuck."

"Immediate steps be taken to advertise the point of contact or helplines, again and for as long it is required, so that the effected people can contact the right agencies and nodal persons, so that no one is left in the lurch," HSP demands further.



LOCKDOWN RELIEF: Relief packages being distributed at Temi in South Sikkim today.

## Sikkim remains COVID-free

### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 05 APR:**

No cases of COVID-19 have been reported so far in Sikkim.

A total of 37 samples have been sent so far for COVID-19 testing from Sikkim and all have returned negative.

Speaking to media persons on Saturday, Health Department Director General-cum-Secretary, Dr PT Bhutia informed that reports of two samples sent for testing on Friday have also come negative and hence Sikkim continues to remain free from COVID-19 cases.

**Mail us at  
advertise@  
summittimes.  
com  
or call us at  
:03592-208698**

### Farmers' Helpline..

Agriculture, Secretary, Horticulture and other senior officers of both the Departments. The districts were represented by District In-charges/senior officers of both the Departments.

The Principal Secretary took stock of the overall situation of departmental activities as well as supports being extended to the farmers during ongoing lockdown period.

It was apprised by the districts that they have been facilitating the aggregation and market linkages including issue of passes so that the farm produce could be sold to the consumers through Farmers Producers Organizations (FPOs), NGOs and SIMFED without any difficulty.

The Principal Secretary and both the Secretaries briefed officials manning Helplines regarding ways and means to facilitate farmers during lockdown period as well as using the channel to educate them for observing safety measures to prevent spread of coronavirus.

The meeting also directed the district officials to explore possibility of utilizing lockdown period for preparing District Annual Action Plan for 2020-21. The district officials highlighted various field level activities undertaken by them across the State to mitigate current situation concerning farmers.

Currently, with the support of Department; almost all FPOs are fully engaged in aggregation and marketing of their farm produce. They are also making optimum use of transport vehicles granted to them by the State Government for marketing purpose.

## SSC seeks support for distressed tourism and transport sector, set up COVID-19 testing lab

### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 05 APR:**

Sikkim Subject Committee has demanded that the State Government initiate some relief measures for the tourism and transport

tation sector which have been severely hit by the lockdown and also demanded that a COVID-19 testing facility be set up in Sikkim at the earliest.

A press release is-

sued by SSC vice-convenor, Nawin Kiran, on Saturday highlights that "to seriously fight the present pandemic, huge numbers of COVID-19 tests have to be carried in Sikkim and for that we

need a COVID-19 testing kits and laboratory in our very state."

Towards this end, the State Government should set up a COVID-19 testing facility in the State at the earliest, SSC reiterates.

## Indian macroeconomic situation bleak, set to worsen if lockdowns continue: Jean Dreze

### BIJAY KUMAR SINGH

**NEW DELHI, APR 5 (PTI):**

The Indian macroeconomic situation is bleak and all set to get worse if local or national lockdowns continue for some more time, renowned economist Jean Dreze said on Sunday.

Dreze further said that due to the country-wide lockdown, social unrest in many parts of India has already started.

The country is under a 21-day lockdown as part of larger efforts to curb spreading of coronavirus infections.

"The situation is bleak and all set to get worse,

if local or national lockdowns of varying intensity continue for some time, as is likely to happen.

"Even otherwise, the world-wide recession is likely to have adverse affects on the Indian economy," the Belgian-born Indian economist told PTI in an interview.

Talking about the impact of the coronavirus outbreak on the Indian economy and job creation, Dreze noted that some sectors are badly affected, but segments like medical care may even grow during the crisis.

"Most sectors would be unable to thrive if oth-

ers are not in good shape.

"... It's like, if a bicycle has a puncture, you cannot expect it to move forward on one wheel. In short, if the crisis lasts, it will spread to most parts of the economy, including the banking system," he emphasised.

Observing that as soon as the lockdown is relaxed, migrant workers who are marooned in different parts will try to return home, Dreze pointed out that they will probably hesitate to migrate again for a while.

"But there is hardly any work for them at home, except for some

farming if they have land," he said, adding that because of reduced migration, sectors that rely heavily on migrant labour may face a shortage of manpower.

Pointing out that already there are reports of shortage of labour for wheat harvest in parts of north India, Dreze said, "This is the paradox of this situation, that shortages and surpluses may coexist, because the circulation channels have been severely disrupted."

Asked whether it is the right time to go for Universal Basic Income (UBI), he said this is not

the time to reinvent the wheel.

"That is why it is best to build on existing schemes for now, including the public distribution system and social security pensions.

"... In other contexts, UBI may be feasible and appropriate, but in India today, it is a distraction," Dreze, a former member of the previous UPA government's National Advisory Council argued.

Several international credit rating agencies have cut growth estimates for India in recent days on concerns about the fallout of the Covid-19 outbreak.

## Ker govt comes to rescue of cancer-afflicted child

**ALAPPUZHA, APR 5**

**(PTI):** Coming to the

rescue of a toddler in need of crucial treatment for cancer, the Kerala health department scrambled its resources for transporting a toddler from here to Hyderabad on Sunday.

In a co-ordinated action, the department arranged for an ambulance and necessary travel permits for the nearly 16-hour 1,100 km inter-state journey that started at 7.15 am from Cherthala in this district with the entire cost to be borne by the

state government.

Health Minister K K Shailaja on Saturday said all steps have been taken to facilitate the travel of the toddler and her family members to Hyderabad after local media reports highlighted the plight of the child.

The state Chief Secretary had discussed the matter with his counterparts of other states en route to ensure a smooth journey,the Health Ministry said.

"The travel permit and directions to other states through which

the ambulance has to pass were issued from the police headquarters. All district police chiefs were given instructions from the headquarters to arrange for passage of the ambulance," it said in a release.

The journey started at 7.15 am and they are expected to reach Hyderabad at 11 pm.

"The state government will bear the expenses incurred for the journey. The ambulance will remain in Hyderabad and will return with the family," it said.

The first phase of treatment was done at

the L V Prasad Hospital in Hyderabad and the family was supposed to travel again within 21 days for the next phase of treatment.

As the family could not undertake the journey in view of the nation-wide lockdown to check coronavirus scare, the state government swung into action to help the child.

The number of confirmed novel coronavirus cases in the country climbed to 3,374 on Sunday while the death toll rose to 77, according to Union Health Ministry data.

## Spanish farmers, fishermen feel COVID-19 fallout

**MADRID, APR 5 (AFP):**

The start of spring is usually a profitable time for Sergio Gomez, a strawberry farmer in southern Spain, but the coronavirus pandemic has completely disrupted his harvest this year.

"We have been losing money for five days now!" he said.

Spain, like much of the rest of Europe, has been in a lockdown since mid-March to curb the spread of the virus and this has altered consumers' habits, with people making fewer trips to the supermarket and no longer eating out.

The closure of Spain's borders has added to the burden, leaving farmers struggling to bring in crucial temporary workers to pick produce and care for animals.

One of the hardest-hit

crops has been strawberries from Huelva in the southern region of Andalusia, which supplies Europe with 90 percent of the fruit at this time of the year.

Demand for strawberries has been halved this year, according to farmers' unions.

And with the border with Morocco closed, only one-third of the temporary workers who usually come to pick strawberries were able to make the trip.

"The whole sector is very frightened," said Gomez, who exports 70 per cent of his crop to France, Poland and the Czech Republic.

Demand is "on a roller coaster", he added.

"One day I have an order and I have to work an hour extra, the next I am twiddling my thumbs."

Manuel Piedra, secretary general of the UPA farmers' union in Huelva, said people were shopping as little as once every 10 days, causing sales of perishable goods to plunge.

"Consumers have completely changed their habits," he said.

Uncertainty also reigns in the "Sea of Plastic", some 20,000 hectares of greenhouses in the province of Almeria where much of Europe's fruits and vegetables are grown.

"We don't know how the market will react, it's a lottery," said Juan Antonio Criado, a local farmer who next week will start harvesting watermelons for export to Germany.

Adoracion Blanque, head of the provincial branch of farm union

ASAJA, said foreign demand for vegetables has "remained practically the same" but farmers were struggling with a shortage of workers due to lockdown restrictions.

The government has pledged 236 million euros (258 million) to help growers hire 200,000 workers.

"All food products are arriving (in stores) in absolutely normal quantities and qualities," Agriculture Minister Luis Planas said this week.

Livestock farmers will also suffer from travel restrictions.

Gaspar Gonzalez of the Fovex Sat cooperative in the sparsely-populated southwestern region of Extremadura was counting on bringing over workers from Uruguay to shear 100,000 sheep between April and

June.

They will arrive this year in May at the earliest.

Finding local replacements will be hard because "here, unfortunately, this profession has disappeared," said Gonzalez.

Meanwhile the price of meat has fallen, especially for lamb which has dropped nearly 40 per cent.

Demand for meat and fish is down because bars and restaurants that buy a lot are closed.

"Everything sells, but at lower prices," said Jose Malvido, a fisherman from the northwestern region of Galicia who said he had earned nearly half of what he usually does from the sale of turbot and sole.

His wife "moves around a lot" to sell his

catch door to door to elderly people during the lockdown, he added.

The price of fish caught by Spanish boats in European waters has dropped by more than half, according to European fishermen's organisation Europeche.

In the Mediterranean, more than 90 percent of boats have simply stopped fishing out of fear of being infected by the virus and a lack of protective equipment, said Basilio Otero, president of the Spain's National Federation of Artisanal Fishing.

In the Bay of Biscay off Spain's northern coast, fishermen have launched their annual mackerel campaign however, even though prices have almost hit rock bottom.

## PM speaks to Sonia, Manmohan, Pranab on coronavirus

**NEW DELHI, APR 5 (PTI):**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday reached out to top leaders from across the political spectrum, including Congress president Sonia Gandhi and TMC chief Mamata Banerjee, to discuss the situation arising out of the coronavirus outbreak.

He also spoke to former presidents Pranab Mukherjee and Pratibha Patil, and former prime ministers Manmohan Singh and HD Deve Gowda, sources said.

Details of the discus-

sions were not immediately known.

The prime minister called up the leaders of various political parties, including Mulayam Singh and Akhilesh Yadav of the Samajwadi Party (SP), Odisha Chief Minister and Biju Janata Dal (BJD) leader Naveen Patnaik, Telangana Chief Minister and TRS leader K Chandrasekhar Rao, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) leader M K Stalin and Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) leader Parkash Singh Badal.

### COVID-19 death...

The highest number of confirmed cases was reported from Maharashtra at 490, followed by Tamil Nadu at 485 and Delhi 445. Kerala has 306 positive cases so far, while the number of cases has gone up to 269 in Telangana and 227 in Uttar Pradesh.

Jammu and Kashmir has 92 cases so far and West Bengal has 69. Ten cases have been reported from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands while Chhattisgarh has nine infections.

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

### About 40,000 Indian...

He said NUSI has earmarked a corpus of Rs 10 crore to support retired Indian seafarers, disabled seafarers, widows of seafarers and jobless seafarers who have been out of job for the past nine months.

"This novel move is aimed at alleviating their economic hardships in the current pandemic scenario," he added.

Mandaviya on Friday had exhorted port officials and other stakeholders to convert the present crisis into an opportunity by ensuring smooth cargo operations so that supplies are not hit during the lockdown.

The representatives from ports sector had raised concerns on high port operation cost, port congestion, shortage of labourers, movement of workers and truck drivers, among others, due to the lockdown.

India has 12 major ports -- Deendayal (erstwhile Kandla), Mumbai, JNPT, Mormugao, New Mangalore, Cochin, Chennai, Kamarajar (earlier Ennore), V.O. Chidambaram, Visakhapatnam, Paradip and Kolkata (including Haldia).

~ 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



# Agri Minister convenes meeting to ensure smooth passage of essential commodities

**RANGPO, 05 APR [IPRI]:** Agriculture Minister Lok Nath Sharma chaired a meeting at Rangpo today to ensure smooth passage of vehicles loaded with essential commodities and relief materials to every godown and identified locations in all districts at the earliest.

Following proper guidelines of social distancing, the meeting was attended by the Managing Director SIMFED Pawan Awasthi, Chief Medical officer (CMO) District Hospital Singtam Dr T Laden, SDPO Rangpo Kushal Gazmer, SDM Rangpo Prem Kamal Rai, Joint



Secretary Chief Minister's Office Deepen Sharma, Police Inspector Rangpo Kessang D Bhutia, General Manager SIMFED (ICS) DR Dewan, General Manager (P/A) Yogesh Gurung, and General Manager (F/A) Sherap

Bhutia.

The Minister discussed the various aspects and challenges being dealt with at the gateway of Sikkim and urged the officials to follow the correct procedure to identify and allow SIMFED and oth-

er designated vehicles carrying relief materials and essential commodities like vegetables, rice, potato, oil, pulses etc. after completing all precautionary measures, so that the beneficiaries will be availed notified facilities at the earliest.

He also applauded the relentless efforts of every official and staff working at the Check post and further encouraged them to continue their proactive services with utmost sincerity to save the state from COVID-19.

## Amid Karnataka-Kerala border standoff, Vijayan and Palaniswami express bond of love

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, APR 4 (PTI):** At a time when Kerala and Karnataka are at loggerheads over the closure of border roads, gestures of unity and brotherhood were seen from the chief ministers of Kerala and Tamil Nadu on Saturday.

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan had on Friday debunked the fake news that the state had closed its border with Tamil Nadu after it witnessed a spike in COVID-19 cases.

Vijayan had said there are some difficulties to travel due to nationwide lockdown, but

“that doesn't mean that we will close our borders. We will never do that. They (Tamil Nadu) are our brothers”.

His approach was reciprocated by his Tamil Nadu counterpart E K Palaniswami, who on Saturday expressed hope that the friendship and brotherhood between the two states would grow.

“Happy that Kerala is showing love and treating TN people as brothers and sisters. I wish to state that TN will be an able aid to the brothers and sisters of Kerala in all

their joy and sorrow. Let this friendship and brotherhood grow forever,” Palaniswami tweeted.

Vijayan responded and said both the states will overcome the challenges of the pandemic together.

“The relationship between Kerala and Tamil Nadu is bonded in love, brotherhood, history, language and culture. People who make fake news can't fathom the depth of the relationship between the two States. Together we will overcome the challenges. Love & Respect,” he tweeted.

Tamil Nadu has till now reported 485 positive cases, whereas Kerala has 254 cases.

Karnataka had closed its borders with Kerala after Kasaragod became a hotspot of coronavirus with at least 123 positive cases till now.

The Kerala High Court had directed Karnataka to open the borders for the transport of essential vehicles like ambulances and food trucks but it refused.

Karnataka later approached the Supreme Court to put a stay on the HC order.

The Supreme Court

has sought responses from the Centre and the Kerala government on the plea of Karnataka. It orally asked the Kerala government to not to precipitate the issue of opening of borders till further hearing of the matter on April 7.

The northern part of Kasaragod district in Kerala depends on Mangaluru for medical facilities, especially for dialysis patients.

The nationwide lockdown and closure of border roads has resulted in the loss of seven lives inside the Kerala border.

## Shah Rukh Khan offers his office for BMC quarantine facility

**MUMBAI, APR 4 (PTI):** Days after Shah Rukh Khan and his wife Gauri Khan announced several initiatives to help the central and state government in their fight against the coronavirus pandemic, the superstar has now opened his office for treating Covid-19 patients.

The local municipal body, Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), took to social media on Saturday to thank Shah Rukh and Gauri for the help.

We thank @iamsrk & @gaurikhan for offering their 4-storey personal office space to help expand our Quarantine

capacity equipped with essentials for quarantined children, women & elderly. Indeed a thoughtful & timely gesture, BMC's official Twitter handle post read.

The 54-year-old superstar on Thursday announced various initiatives to help

the country during the crisis.

The actor has taken the help of his companies -- Kolkata Knight Riders, Red Chillies Entertainment, Meer Foundation and Red Chillies VFX -- to provide support to the central and state governments.

SRK along with Gauri

and business partners -- Juhi Chawla and Jay Mehra -- will be contributing to the PM-CARES Fund through IPL franchise Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) and will also make a donation to the Maharashtra CM's Relief Fund through his film banner Red Chillies Entertainment.

## Trump suggests firing watchdog was payback for impeachment

**WASHINGTON, APR 5 (AP):** President Donald Trump suggested on Saturday that he fired the inspector general for the intelligence community in retaliation for impeachment, saying the official was wrong to provide an anonymous whistleblower complaint to Congress as the law requires.

Trump called Michael Atkinson a disgrace after informing Congress late Friday night that he intended to fire him. In letters to the House and Senate intelligence committees, Trump wrote that he had lost confidence in Atkinson but gave little detail.

A day later, Trump was more blunt, telling reporters at the White House: I thought he did a terrible job, absolutely terrible.

The president added: He took a fake report and he took it to Congress with an emergency, OK? Not a big Trump fan, that I can tell you.

The whistleblower report was not fake, but a detailed complaint written by an anonymous intelligence official who described Trump's pressure on Ukraine to investigate Democrat Joe Biden and his son.

Atkinson determined the complaint was urgent and credible and therefore was required by law

to disclose it to Congress, but he was overruled for weeks by the acting director of national intelligence, Joseph Maguire.

After a firestorm sparked by media reports of the complaint, it was turned over and made public. A congressional inquiry led to Trump's impeachment by the House in December. The GOP-led Senate acquitted Trump in February.

On Saturday, Trump questioned why Atkinson didn't speak to him about the complaint, though Atkinson's role is to provide independent oversight.

Never came in to see me, never requested to see me, Trump said. He added: That man is a disgrace to IGs. Atkinson's removal is part of a larger shakeup of the intelligence community under Trump, who has always viewed intelligence professionals with skepticism. His ouster came under immediate fire from Democrats and a handful of Republicans.

Sen. Chuck Grassley, the Iowa Republican who leads the Finance Committee, said that Congress has been crystal clear that written reasons must be given when inspectors general are removed for a lack of confidence.

More details are

needed from the administration,” Grassley said.

Maine Sen. Susan Collins, a GOP member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, said she didn't find Trump's reasoning in his Friday letter to be persuasive, and said Atkinson's removal was not warranted.

Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman Richard Burr, R-N.C., said an inspector general “must be allowed to conduct his or her work independent of internal or external pressure. Trump's criticism Saturday came after Atkinson's peers had rushed to his defense.

Michael Horowitz, the inspector general at the Justice Department, said Atkinson was known for his integrity, professionalism, and commitment to the rule of law and independent oversight.”

He said that included Atkinson's actions in handling the Ukraine whistleblower complaint.

Asked during his daily coronavirus briefing about firing Atkinson, Trump returned to his attacks on the Democratic-led impeachment investigation and trial and his defense that his phone call with Ukraine's president was perfect but had been inaccurately described in the whistleblower's ac-

count.

In fact, the partial transcript later released by the president largely supported the whistleblower's account.

Atkinson is at least the seventh intelligence official to be fired, ousted or moved aside since last summer.

In his letters to the intelligence committees informing them of the firing, which were obtained by The Associated Press, Trump said that it is vital that he has confidence in the appointees serving as inspectors general, and that is no longer the case with regard to this inspector general.

Trump said Atkinson would be removed from office in 30 days, the required amount of time he must wait after informing Congress. He wrote that he would nominate an individual who has my full confidence at a later date.

According to two congressional officials, Atkinson has been placed on administrative leave, meaning he will not serve out the 30 days. One of the officials said Atkinson was only informed of his removal on Friday night. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because Atkinson's administrative leave had not been announced.

Atkinson's firing thrusts the president's

impeachment back into the spotlight as his administration deals with the deadly spread of the coronavirus. As Trump was removing Atkinson, the number of U.S. deaths due to the virus topped 7,000. By the time of his remarks Saturday, it was over 8,100.

The top Democrat on the Senate intelligence panel, Virginia Sen. Mark Warner, said it was unconscionable that Trump would fire Atkinson in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic.

We should all be deeply disturbed by ongoing attempts to politicize the nation's intelligence agencies, Warner said.

House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff, D-Calif., who led the House impeachment inquiry, said the president's dead of night decision puts our country and national security at even greater risk.



**STETHOSCOPES ON THE READY, DOCS ALSO DIP INTO THEIR POCKETS FOR SIKKIM:** Already on the frontlines of Sikkim's fight against Novel Coronavirus, government doctors also contributed to the bottomline of Sikkim's reserves against COVID-19 on Saturday when they [medical and dental fraternity] pooled in and donated Rs 1,01,100 towards the Chief Minister Relief Fund through the Sikkim Govt Doctors Welfare Association (SGDWA). The association has thanked the doctors for their contributions in this hour of need and also thanked medical shops and Future Diagnosis for donating Rs 20,000 through SGDWA to the Garib Jan Kalyan Prakosta [GJKP].

## SC stays Raj HC order for not listing bail pleas during coronavirus lockdown

**NEW DELHI, APR 3 (PTI):**

The Supreme Court Friday stayed the Rajasthan High Court's order which had directed its registry not to list cases like bail and ap-

plications for suspension of sentence in the category of “extreme urgent matters” during the country wide lockdown amid coronavirus pandemic.

A bench comprising Justices L Nageswara Rao and Deepak Gupta, which heard the matter through video-conferencing, also issued notice on the plea challenging the March 31 order passed by a single

judge bench of the high court.

The high court order had said that matters like bail and applications for suspension of sentence cannot be considered to be of “extreme urgency” at a time when there is complete lockdown in the country.

The high court, which had passed the order while hearing a bail plea, had said that such matters would be listed after withdrawal of lockdown by the Centre. It had observed that release of an accused or convict at the “cost of breaching the order of

lockdown and at the cost of risking lives of many” cannot be considered to fall within the category of extreme urgent matter.

It had also noted that during Holi, Dussehra, Diwali and winter vacations ranging from few days to few weeks, bail pleas and applications for suspension of sentence were not taken up by the high court.

The high court had also referred to a report by DG Prisons, who had said there is no overcrowding in jails and inmates are regularly checked medically.



**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>	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">    </div> <p>If you seek help, you may call :            -Toll free no. 104            District surveillance Officer  <b>EAST : 7029372100</b>  <b>WEST : 9593297809</b>  <b>NORTH : 9641957468</b>  <b>SOUTH : 7407691463</b>  <b>New STNM</b>  <b>AMS : 9434711402</b></p>	
<p><b>DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH &amp; FAMILY WELFARE</b>  <b>GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM</b></p>	



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



## Attention, Please!

*Some ground realities also require attention*

At the time of writing this, the 9 o'clock candlelight vigil - that gesture of solidarity so "Khan Market" that it cannot be without a touch of irony that one receives it from portals which routinely dismiss civic engagement in their pursuit of divisiveness - had still not played out. With an infantilized nation all excited about the prospect, and agencies which could be using their time in bigger concerns lending their weight to the appeal, countless candles must have melted for nine minutes. May be the distraction helped, but what is certain is that the virus is still among us, as is the lockdown. Midway through this unprecedented exercise, one hopes that more officers are thinking for themselves instead of waiting for directions from the Centre and wading out of embarrassments they routinely paint themselves into. After all the corrections are palmed off as detailed circulars, one hopes that some ground realities receive the attention they deserve.

When televisions beamed images of thousands of migrant workers embarking on perilous journeys forced by shortsighted, superficial planning, there was enough collective empathy generated for governments too to notice people they otherwise don't care much about. As a people, we can still do much better for the migrant workers, but at least their suffering has been recognized and work initiated to attend to them better. One hopes that these efforts continue to get refined and improved. One also hopes that states like Sikkim realize that it also has its own set of unique challenges which the Centre is expectedly clueless about but which also need to be addressed.

This is the beginning of a new month; a week when landlords start expecting rents to be paid. Yes, right at the start of the lockdown, one had heard of official appeals being made to landlords not to insist on rent at the present time. This is clearly not enough. Yes, one has heard claims that some landlords have decided not to insist on rent for now, but because of their compassionate nature they would have done so even without a nudge from the government. Clearly, there is no need for salaried people to be extended any exemption from paying rent, but there are many out there, taxi drivers for instance, who have been without proper earning for nearly a month now who must be finding it difficult to make rent. Yes, they could discuss things with their landlords and secure some relaxations and there is no reason to suspect that landlords will not be considerate, but if an appeal has gone out from the government, it should be followed by an official assistance. One does not expect the government to pay the rent for all affected people, but it can at least float a proposal on how the crisis can be tided over and how neither tenants nor landlords suffer. They can at least initiate the conversation in this regard through their local-level representatives like panchayats and councilors.

The migrant labourers have made it to the news, but also matching them in numbers and perhaps also in stress are what must be thousands employed in the hospitality sector, not all of whom are "regular" employees and must also be wracked by uncertainty about their immediate and long-term futures. One hopes that they are also being reached out to at an official level beyond just appeals, claims and assurances. While on the hospitality sector, some thought also needs to be spared for the business owners staring at staggering rentals, huge EMIs and no earnings. Hopefully, some serious deliberations in this regard are already underway. Yes, the banks are offering a three-month moratorium on loans. Again, this is not something that salaried people might require, but is desperately needed by people like taxi-owners/ drivers and those in the travel-hospitality sector who have lost earnings and still cannot spy a turnaround in the immediate future. Most in this category, especially those with smaller businesses or those who might have bought taxis they purchased on loan and drive themselves, will not understand the complexities of compound interest and banking procedures and could use good counsel and possible bailout offers from the government. Hopefully, such an exercise is also being considered and processed as are many other Sikkim-specific situations, like how agriculture is managing in these times of social distancing and lack of transportation, which are too many to list in this limited space...

# Architecture: Four Ideas From History That Offer Healthier Design

HANNAH LE ROUX  
THECONVERSATION.COM

The response to COVID-19 has taken a spatial turn. Borders have been strengthened, people are being asked to confine themselves to their homes. Public spaces - markets, stadiums, schools - have been closed. It has suddenly changed the image of homes and cities.

I've compiled a short list of some of the design features of architecture through history that provide useful insights into what COVID-19 has taught us to be mindful of.

#### 1. WATERPOINTS

A necessary and immediate public health intervention to stop the transmission of COVID-19 is through washing of hands. New rituals for timing the action, like singing Happy Birthday twice, have been invented.

Most modern buildings do not have taps anywhere near the entrances, as bathrooms, considered primarily as private places for toilet functions, are located deep within them.

In contrast, historical places were deeply sensitive to the transmissive dangers of gathering. In Rome, the provision of fountains supplied water from afar to the growing city. Their restoration in the Baroque period allowed for the hydration of pilgrims, itself a public health support, and for everyday practices such as washing and laundry.

At a closer scale, the location of cleansing rooms to support Islamic practices of wuḍū', the ritual cleansing before prayers, is a model for transformed practices.

#### 2. LEARN FROM BRASS

The newest coronavirus appears to attach well to modern materials like glass, some metal alloys and plastics. The shiny surfaces most associated with cleanliness are potentially the most risky.

In contrast, the roughness of organic surfaces such as fabrics, and

possibly wood and raw ceramics, appears to break up the RNA chains.

But porous surfaces bring their own cleanliness challenges. We could learn from Alvar Aalto's use of brass as a material for handles, given the far faster degradation of viral material on copper than on its modern substitute, stainless steel.

#### 3. COURTYARDS, PORCHES AND LOBBIES

The courtyard allows for households to interact with sunlight and open air without needing to step into the public realm. It is typical of many of the largest towns of the world prior to the 20th century.

A hutong or traditional lane in Beijing. Gideon Mendel/Corbis/Getty Images

The alleys called hutongs in Beijing in Beijing, the corte or courtyards of Venice, the lapa of Southern Africa and the patio of Latin vernaculars all have an intrinsic function of supporting quarantine if required. The courtyard is a place to store provisions, to hang out bedding to air or dry, to allow children to play and to hear each other's sounds of health or distress.

Later typologies developed through colonial encounters with the indoor-outdoor spaces of Asian and African vernaculars incorporated porches - roofed, open air additions to the shell of the house. Like courtyards, they offer opportunities to access fresh air and sunlight.

Within many older homes in colder climates, the lobby is an integral element in the transition from outside to indoors. Apart from the thermal value, it functions as a quarantine zone for items of clothing, umbrellas and bags. Leaving these wet or dirty items behind in the lobby limits the intrusion of potentially unhealthy materials and biological agents into the home. As architects designed ever more minimal social



housing in the 20th century, and supported the rapid decrease in the size of commercial apartments in the 21st, the excess space of the lobby was an easy target to shrink or remove.

Returning to the logic of lobbies will allow for reinsertion of these valuable thresholds of health and safety.

#### 4. MEDICINAL GARDENS

The knowledge of medicinal plants among indigenous people is deep, and the many scholars and practising botanists who have kept track of such knowledge have often created a spatial resource in the form of medicinal gardens.

These places are not just sources of knowledge for research and education, but also materially valuable as environments of vaporised antimicrobial oils. Hedges of plants around gardens can further filter out transmissive agents.

South African lists of the indigenous knowledge of medicinal plants

include over a dozen commonly used indigenous ones used to alleviate flu symptoms, including umhlonyana or lengana (*Artemisia afra*), which is cultivated in backyards, and imphepho (*Helichrysum* species).

The prodigious aloes are also an easy supply of gels to rehydrate hands that are dried out by frequent washing.

#### BUT THERE ARE CHALLENGES

Why is this information important at a time of medical crisis?

COVID-19 has made it clear that unequal access to health facilities, along with cost containment, standardisation and the market-driven design of space, comes at an enormous price in human and financial terms. In reacting to the pandemic, architecture can reclaim its impact by conceding its loss of connection with public health, looking beyond Western thinking for its references.

*[the writer is Associate professor of Architecture, University of the Witwatersrand]*

# Can I complain about coronavirus? Why it is OK to vent, sometimes

ARASH JAVANBAKHT  
THECONVERSATION.COM

The COVID-19 pandemic is different from many crises in that it has affected all of us regardless of politics, economics, religion, age or nationality. This virus is a good reminder that humanity is vulnerable to what nature throws at us, and that we are all in this together.

I am an academic psychiatrist specializing in research and treatment of anxiety and stress. Believe me, you are not alone if you feel like complaining.

#### COVID-19 HAS AFFECTED US IF NOT INFECTED US

This pandemic has profoundly changed our way of living. Overnight, dining out, exercising at the gym or seeing friends in person became impossible for millions of Americans. Remote working, reduced work hours and income, and uncertainty are indeed stressful. Most of us are having to make important adjustments and quickly learn new skills, such as how to do virtual meetings or be motivated to work from home. Given we are creatures of habit, these adjustments can be hard.

We are also stressed by continuous exposure to sad news, often contradictory predictions and recommendations coming from different sources. The constantly changing and evolving nature of this situation is very frustrating.

We humans hate the unknown and limited sense of control over life. Worse, our fear system is designed for fending off dangers, not for modern life crises where we do not need to fight or escape a predator. Hence, we need to find creative ways of responding to crisis, some adaptive and some not.

#### COMPLAINING AND VENTING

Humans are a social species, which means sharing one's thoughts, feelings and experiences. Successful social connection involves the ability to share both positive and negative emotions. During crisis, we can get comfort in sharing our fears and receiving calming and objective feedback from others.

The question is: How much can I complain without being the person everybody avoids? We don't want to be an Eeyore.

To answer this question, consider what we and others get out of such communication. Is the end result for us feeling less worried or sad, and others feeling supportive? Or

are both parties emotionally exhausted and feeling worse?

#### BENEFITS OF VENTING

Venting our fears and concerns can be beneficial. Sharing feelings with others, just the act of verbalizing those feelings will reduce their intensity.

Others may provide support and care, and soothe the negative feelings. And we can do the same for them. We learn that we are not alone in this, when we hear others are also having those feelings.

And, we may learn from others, how they cope with their frustration or fear, and that can help us adopt those methods in our life.

#### WHEN TO KNOW THE LIMITS

Venting should not become a habit, though. At the end of the day, it won't fix the problem. Here are suggestions on when to stop sharing negative emotions:

- When venting becomes the main coping style, and importantly, when it delays adaptive necessary action. Venting about homeschooling children will not take care of their education.

- When sharing with others stresses them. It is unfair to make myself feel better at the expense of others' sanity. When people start avoiding you in response to your venting, it means you are stressing them out.

- When venting does not achieve the goal of feeling better, and one or both of us feel worse. Do not vent just for the purpose of complaining. Your mind is like your stomach: If you feed it good food, you will be healthy and happy. If you keep feeding it garbage, you will feel sick.

- Young children are not there to listen to our problems, and their job is not to soothe us. Being parents' therapist can have negative long-term effects on children, the least of which is that they may learn that complaining as a main coping style.

- When you experience signs of clinical depression (depressed mood, low energy, poor or increased appetite, insomnia, poor concentration, among others), talk to your doctor to see if you need professional care beyond just a listening ear.

#### OTHER WAYS TO COPE

Here are a few tips on how to cope with the stress of these days:

- Get your facts from medical experts, and websites such as the Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention and local health authorities, not from rumors or random social media posts. By knowing the facts, you get an objective estimate of the risks. Knowing legitimate ways of protecting yourself and your loved ones provides a sense of control and reduces anxiety. Just know enough to protect yourself and your family.

- Do not get obsessed with the news, and do not keep checking for hours and hours. Make sure to give yourself hourslong breaks from the news. Don't worry - the network anchors will always be there for you to come back to them.

- Give yourself a chance to be distracted from bad news. Watch movies or TV series, documentaries (animals are awesome), or comedies if you want to watch something.

- Remember all the activities you always wanted to do but did not have time. This does not have to always be errands or housework. It could, and should, include fun activities and hobbies.

- Keep your routines. Go to bed and leave bed at the same times you did before, and eat your normal meals. Now you can spend more time cooking and eating healthy.

- If you are a social person, stay connected via phone, video chat or other technology. Physical isolation should not lead to social isolation. Connect, especially now that you have free time.

- Stay physically active. Regular exercise, especially moderate cardio, not only improves physical health and immune system but also helps with depression and anxiety. Trainers are offering free home exercise training these days online. You can also use exercise as a means for bonding with your loved ones.

- Meditate and use mindfulness techniques.
- Work on your yard or gardening projects. You will be safe, active and productive.

Finally, know that this too shall pass. Medicine will ultimately control the pandemic. We are a very resilient species and have been around for millions of years. We can survive this with wisdom.

*[the writer is Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, Wayne State University]*

Now you can whatsapp

SummitTIMES @

9832556698

9832080753



# DRDO designs disinfection chamber, spl face mask

**NEW DELHI, APR 5 (PTI):** Joining efforts to fight COVID-19, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has designed a full-body disinfection chamber and a special face protection mask for healthcare professionals, officials said.

The special chamber called 'PSE' has been designed by Vehicle Research Development Establishment (VRDE), Ahmednagar, a DRDO Laboratory.

The walk through enclosure is designed for personnel decontamination, one person at a time. It is a portable system equipped with sanitiser and soap dispenser, officials said.

The decontamination is started using a foot pedal at the entry. On entering the chamber, electrically-operated pump creates a disinfectant mist of hypo sodium chloride for disinfecting, the DRDO said in a statement.

The mist spray is calibrated for an operation of 25 seconds and stops automatically indicating completion of operation. As per procedure, personnel undergoing disinfection will need to keep their eyes closed while inside the chamber, it said.

The system consists of roof mounted and bottom tanks with a total of 700 litres capacity. Approximately 650 personnel can pass through the chamber for disinfection until the refill is required, the DRDO said.

The system has see-through glass panels on side walls for monitoring purpose and is fitted with lights for illumination during night-time operations, it added.

This system can be used for disinfection



of personnel at the areas of controlled ingress and egress such as entry and exit to hospitals, malls, office buildings and critical installations, officials said.

Also, Research Centre Imarat (RCI), Hyderabad, and Terminal Ballistics Research Lab-

oratory (TBRL), Chandigarh, have developed face protection mask for healthcare professionals handling COVID-19 patients, the DRDO added.

Its light weight construction makes it convenient for comfortable wear for long duration. This design uses com-

monly available A4 size Over-Head Projection (OHP) film for face protection, it said.

One thousand face shields are being produced daily in TBRL and provided to Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh, it said.

Similarly, 100 are produced at RCI and these have been handed over to Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC), Hyderabad. A demand of 10,000 shields has been received from PGIMER and ESIC hospitals based on successful user trials, the DRDO added.

## India's lone shooting portal completes 15 years

**NEW DELHI, APR 5 (PTI):** The country's only website dedicated to shooting, [indiashooting.com](http://indiashooting.com), on Sunday completed 15 years, during which time it has also been used by cricketers such as Mahendra Singh Dhoni to a import top-end rifle. Fifteen years ago on this day, former India shooter Shimon Sharif launched the website while he was still an active rifle shooter.

Replying to a post by the [indiashooting.com](http://indiashooting.com), Olympic champion Abhinav Bindra tweeted, "Congratulations and thank you for your contribution to the sport over the last 15 years. Best wishes!"

Apart from shooters even cricketers have used the portal. Former Indian skipper Dhoni had imported a top-end Walther rifle in 2010 with the help of the website.

"The idea of a shooting website first struck me after I came back from

competing in the ISSF World Cup in Korea," said Sharif.

In 2004, when Rajyavardhan Rathore won India's first individual Olympic silver medal at the Athens Games, the interest in shooting sport started to grow.

"Our sport needed a website and I gave it one. I tried to load it with as much information as possible. Within days, emails started pouring in from all corners of the country. Everyone wanted to know more about our sport," said Sharif.

On April 5, 2005, the website was officially inaugurated by Rathore in an event attended by the members of the Indian shooting team and National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) officials.

"It's been an incredible journey so far, and I'm so grateful to be a part of it. It's been amazing to see how so many people have used [indiashooting.com](http://indiashooting.com) to come close to our sport," added Sharif.

## Yamuna water turning transparent sans human activity



**MATHURA, APR 5 (PTI):** Nature activists and enthusiasts are thrilled to find that the water of River Yamuna is gradually turning transparent in the wake of the national lockdown imposed to arrest the spread of coronavirus.

Rakesh Tewari, vice president, Mathur Chaturved Parishad, said after 42 years, we could see clear Yamuna waters on Yamuna Chhath' on March 30.

The pollution control board officers, social organisations and other nature lovers have credited the lockdown for the clean waters of Yamuna.

Normally, Yamuna river gets polluted due to

bathing by floating population, throwing flowers, garlands and other worship material as well as the industrial affluent, District Pollution Control Board officer Arvind Kumar said.

Social activist Gopeshwar Nath Chaturvedi, who had filed a PIL in Allahabad High Court in 1998 for cleaning Yamuna, said the major game changer has been reduced discharge of industrial affluent into the river.

Since factories are not discharging their affluent in Yamuna, owing to their closure during the lockout, the river water is gradually turning clean, he said.

# Haptik-powered corona chatbot sees over 2 cr users

**NEW DELHI, APR 5 (PTI):** The government's dedicated WhatsApp chatbot MyGov Corona Helpdesk, which aims to provide timely updates and help citizens clear their queries on Covid-19, has been used by over 2 crore users.

Artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot company Haptik Infotech Pvt Ltd, which is 87 per cent owned by Reliance Jio, developed the MyGov Corona Helpdesk chatbot.

According to Haptik, more than 55 million messages have been sent by over 20 million users since the chatbot was launched by the government on March 20.

"Misinformation &

rumours are the primary outlets of panic. The @reliancejio & @haptik powered official @mygovindia coronavirus chatbot has helped eliminate these outlets for millions. Whatsapp +919013151515 for your queries," Haptik tweeted.

In two weeks since its launch, the coronavirus helpdesk chatbot has been used by over 2 crore users in India.

Within the first week of its launch, the chatbot registered over crore users and processed over 1.4 crore conversations.

"Language is no barrier when it comes to the official coronavirus chatbot. The 'MyGov Corona Help-



desk' is equipped to resolve your virus related questions in Hindi. Send a Whatsapp message to the number +91 9013151515 to prevent misinformation," Haptik tweeted.

The MyGov Corona Helpdesk can be used by all WhatsApp users for free. Users just need to save the number -- 9013151515 -- in their contacts list and send a message to get a re-

sponse.

The coronavirus has killed about 100 persons and infected over 3,300 in India.

The chatbot reportedly had over 17 lakh daily active users on March

25 -- the day when Prime Minister Narendra Modi mentioned its availability. The following day, the number of active users grew exponentially to 35 lakh, and the number has been growing since then.

## Life insurance policyholders get 30 days more to pay premium

**NEW DELHI, APR 5 (PTI):** Regulator Irdia has provided an additional 30-day grace period for policyholders to pay premium on life insurance policies, whose renewal date fall in March and April amid the lockdown to fight against coronavirus pandemic.

Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) has already provided additional time for payment of renewal premium in case of health insurance policies and motor third party insurance.

Responding to rep-

resentations made by life insurers and Life Insurance Council, the regulator issued the instructions for providing the additional grace of 30 days for premium payments.

The insurers and the council had flagged operational constraints and difficulties being faced by policyholders due to the nationwide three-week lockdown and social distancing advisory.

Irdai further said where unit linked policies mature (up to May 31, 2020) and fund value is to be paid in lumpsum, life insurers



"may offer settlement options" in accordance with relevant regulation.

"This one time option is regardless of whether such option exists or not in the specific product," Irdai said in a circular.

Life insurers, however, will have to exercise all due care and diligence to explain clearly the possible downside risk of continued fluctuation of fund value based on daily net asset value

(NAV).

Last week, Irdai had said motor third party insurance and health insurance premiums -- falling during March 25 to April 14, 2020 -- can be paid on or before April 21, 2020. Risk cover to continue from the due date of renewal of such policies.

Meanwhile, Irdai has also provided insurers additional time for filing regulatory returns.

In case of filing monthly returns, the additional time is 15 days, while in case of quarterly, half yearly and yearly returns insurers will get 30 days more.

**HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?**  
email us: [news@summittimes.com](mailto:news@summittimes.com)

## Man killed in clash over setting up of quarantine centre in Birbhum

**SURI (WB), APR 4 (PTI):** A man was killed in a clash between two groups of villagers allegedly over setting up of a quarantine centre at a village school in Birbhum district on Saturday night.

The incident occurred in Talibpur village under Parui police station.

"A clash broke out between two groups of villagers.

Prima facie a man succumbed to bomb injuries," Superintendent of

Police Shyam Singh said.

Police forces have been deployed in the village where the situation is tense but under control, he said.

The police, however, did not say anything on the reason behind the clash.

Local sources claimed that the administration has decided to set up a quarantine centre for suspected COVID-19 cases at a school in the village and it was not liked by a section of villagers while others were in favour of it.

An altercation on the issue between members of the two groups led to a clash and a middle-aged was killed, they said.

There are many books for children too - "The Best of Tenali Raman", "The Girl Who Stole an Elephant" by Nizrana Farook, "Journey to the Forbidden City" by Deepa Agarwal, and "I Hate my Curly Hair"

besides few from Penguin's Hook Book Series - "Hey Diddle Diddle" (Anushka Ravishankar), "My Daddy and the Well" (Jerry Pinto), "A Quiet Girl" by Paro Anand, and "Who's There? by Hans-da Sowvendra.

Two recommended books for children are science related - "From Leeches to Slug Glue" by Roopa Pai and "Reignited Volume 2" by Srijan Pal Singh.

## Penguin Random House offers quarantine reading list

**NEW DELHI, APR 5 (PTI):** Penguin Random House India has offered a quarantine reading list of books for the coronavirus lockdown period.

Among the recommendations for adult fiction are "The Death of Jesus" by JM Coetzee, "The Boy from the Woods" by Harlan Coben, "Soar: A Novel" by Amit Majumdar, "Sarojini's Mother" by Kunal Basu, "Not All

Those Who Wander" by Arjun Nath, "Trending in Love" by Pankaj Dubey, "The Girl Who Disappeared" by Vikrant Khanna and "Crown of Seven Stars" by Gitanjali Murari.

Some culinary books are also in the reading list - "Uparwali Chai" by Pamela Timms, "Party Like a Star" by Shilarna Vaze, "Bhagwaan Ke Pakwaan" by Varud Gupta

and Devang Singh, and Pooja Makhija's "N For Nourish".

Non-fiction books include "Bahawalpur" by Anabel Lyod, "The Other Side of the Divide" by Sameer Arshad Khatlani, and "An Officer and his Holiness" by Rani Singh.

In sports, some books recommended are "Howzatt Butterfingers" by Khyrunnisa A, "Let's Play! Puffin

Book of Sports Stories" by Harsha Bhogle and "Dear Me", a collection of letters from some of the most-celebrated names in sports by HT Media.

There are many books for children too - "The Best of Tenali Raman", "The Girl Who Stole an Elephant" by Nizrana Farook, "Journey to the Forbidden City" by Deepa Agarwal, and "I Hate my Curly Hair"

**SummitTIMES IN NEPALI**  
<https://www.facebook.com/SummitTimesSikkim/>

**Watch our Nepali news broadcast every evening on Facebook at the Summit Times Daily Page.**  
**Please like, Share, Comment and let us know how we can improve.**  
**Thank You**

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

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

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

For more Details Contact : 6294745117, 8768809862  
Email : [chitishchetri7@gmail.com](mailto:chitishchetri7@gmail.com)

**SummitTIMES**



## Kobe, Duncan, Garnett headline Basketball Hall of Fame class

**NEW YORK, APR 5 (AP):** Kobe Bryant's resume has yet another entry to validate his greatness: He's now, officially, a Hall of Famer.

And he's got plenty of elite company in the 2020 class, one that may be as glitzy as any.

Bryant, who died in a helicopter crash on Jan. 26, and fellow NBA greats Tim Duncan and Kevin Garnett headlined a nine-person group announced Saturday as this year's class of enshrinees into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame.

"An amazing class," Duncan said.

They all got into the Hall in their first year as finalists, as did WNBA great Tamika Catchings. Others had to wait a bit longer for the good news: Two-time NBA champion coach Rudy Tomjanovich finally got his call, as did longtime Baylor women's coach Kim Mulkey, 1,000-game winner Barbara Stevens of Bentley and three-time Final Four coach Eddie Sutton.

They were the eight finalists who were announced in February, and the panel of 24 voters who were tasked to decide who merited selection wound up choosing them all.

Also headed to the Hall this year: former FIBA Secretary General Patrick Baumann, selected as a direct-elect by the international committee.

"He was the head of FIBA and this was a way to honor him," Hall of Fame Chairman and enshrinee Jerry Colangelo said.

"It was a special thing done through that committee."

Bryant died about three weeks before the Hall of Fame said as if there was going to be any doubt that he was a finalist. Duncan and Garnett were also widely perceived to be locks to be part of this class; they were both 15-time NBA All-Stars, and Bryant was an 18-time selection.

Bryant's death has been part of a jarring start of the year for basketball: Commissioner Emeritus David Stern died on Jan. 1, Bryant and his daughter Gianna were among nine who died in the crash in late January, and the NBA shut down March 11 as the coronavirus pandemic began to grip the U.S.

"Obviously, we wish that he was here with us to celebrate," Vanessa Bryant, Kobe's wife, said on the ESPN broadcast of the class announcement.

"But it's definitely the peak of his NBA career and every accomplishment that he had as an athlete was a stepping-stone to be here. So we're incredibly proud of him."

Bryant was also a five-time champion with the Los Angeles Lakers, just as Duncan was with the San Antonio Spurs.

"This is an incredibly special class, for many reasons," Colangelo said.

Garnett is the only player in NBA history with at least 25,000 points, 10,000 rebounds, 5,000 assists, 1,500 blocks and 1,500 steals. He also was part of Boston's 2008 NBA title.

"This is the culmination," Garnett said.

## Lockdown challenge: Tarundeep builds muscles to maintain shape for third Olympics

**TAPAN MOHANTA**

**KOLKATA, APR 4 (PTI):** Amid the nationwide lockdown, veteran Indian archer Tarundeep Rai is busy building shoulder muscles at the Army Sports Institute in Pune, which he believes will keep him in shape for Tokyo Olympics now postponed to next year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The postponement of the Tokyo Games was a bitter pill to swallow for the two-time World Championship silver medallist as he will get one year older when he takes the field for his third Olympics.

"For me, the postponement of Olympics means I will get older by one year, so it will be a new challenge," the 36-year-old told PTI from Pune on Saturday.

He has been forced to change his training due to the worsening COVID-19 pandemic and the 21-day nationwide lockdown. His daily routine now is to search YouTube for videos on "how to build shoulder muscles" and train at the gym for long hours.

"It's a big risk to go to the trainers, so YouTube is the constant company now. I follow some channels and pick



some videos," Rai, who competed in 2004 Athens Olympics and 2012 London Games, said.

"Now I'm not shooting that much. It's more of dry shooting practice so that the body is tuned to bow and arrows," the 2010 Asian Games individual silver medallist said.

Rai, along with India number one Atanu Das and his Army colleague Pravin Jadhav, had clinched quota place for the men's team while winning a silver at the World Championships at Den Bosch in the Netherlands last year.

The trio was placed in the top-three in the trials

to pick the Indian squad for Tokyo Games when the COVID-19 pandemic brought to a halt to all the sporting activities.

"No doubt I've a bit ahead in terms of experience, but the real challenge will be to stay fit and compete with the rising young talents. In this one year, many 20 to 22-year-olds will come up and compete for a place in the team. I think by building shoulder muscles, I will be able to withstand the challenges ahead," he said.

Rai hopes the current situation will normalise in about three months and when the season resumes, he will again pick

up his bow and arrows.

"I estimate an off-season of minimum six months due to the extraordinary circumstances. So, I will work hard at the gym for three months and then recovery will follow. It would help me personally. I've made my schedule that way."

He said one positive aspect of the postponement of Tokyo Games is that India's chances of winning an elusive Olympic medal in archery will improve.

"But there's a positive side to it (postponement). There will be competition and we will make a strong team for the Olympics and hope-

fully the women's team will also qualify, giving us good hope for a medal next year," he said.

The Sikkim archer could not go to his native place due to the sudden call for a nationwide lockdown. He has not seen his family since August last year.

"I could not return to my home due to the sudden lockdown. I've not seen my family since August last year. But I have no regrets. I talk to my family and my eight-year-old son Nusam Singh Rai everyday. It's about staying safe wherever you're," he concluded.

## India officially submits bid to host AFC Asian Cup



**PHILEM DIPAK SINGH**

**NEW DELHI, APR 5 (PTI):** India has submitted its bid documents for hosting the AFC Asian Cup in 2027, a top official of the national federation confirmed on Sunday.

If India wins the bid, it will be the first time the country will host the continental showpiece event.

"We have already submitted our expression of interest to the AFC (Asian Football Confederation). That is what's required as of now," All India Football Federation General

Secretary Kushal Das told PTI.

Recently, the AFC had extended the deadline to lodge expression of interest by three months from March 31 to June 30 in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The AFC had hoped to announce the tournament hosts as soon as possible to give them more time to prepare for the quadrennial continental championship, which was expanded to 24 teams for the 2019 edition in the United Arab Emirates,"

the AFC said.

The AFC is expected to announce the host country early next year.

Other than India, Saudi Arabia, which has won the continental title three times but never hosted the tournament, is only nation to have publicly announced their intention to launch a bid for 2027 Asian Cup.

India had joined the race for the 2023 AFC Asian Cup, alongside Thailand, Indonesia and South Korea, but pulled out early in October 2018.

Later, Thailand and South Korea also pulled out leaving China the sole country to host the 2023 tournament.

South Korea, which is hosting the 2023 Women's World Cup, is also likely to join India in the bid for the men's 2027 AFC Asian Cup. China will host the 2023 showpiece tournament in 10 cities.

Since successfully staging the men's U-17 World Cup in 2017, India was to host the U-17 women's World Cup this November but has been

postponed to a later date due to the worsening COVID-19 pandemic.

India has also been awarded hosting rights for the 2022 Women's AFC Asian Cup in 2022.

India had featured four times in the AFC Asian Cup and their best performance was a runners-up finish in 1964 when it was a round-robin tournament without a final and competed among just four teams.

They failed to get past the group stage in 1984, 2011 and 2019.

## Liverpool blasted over virus furlough, players in 200m wage cut warning

**LONDON, APR 5 (AFP):** Liverpool were accused of betraying their "morals and values" for their move to furlough non-playing staff during the coronavirus pandemic as Premier League stars warned of a ?200 million ( 245 million) shortfall in government coffers if 30 percent wage cuts were introduced.

Premier League leaders Liverpool said they would top up the public money made available from the government to ensure staff on temporary leave received their full salaries.

It follows similar moves by Newcastle, Tottenham, Bournemouth and Norwich to take advantage of the scheme, under which employers can claim for 80 percent of furloughed employees' wages.

But former Reds players Jamie Carragher and Stan Collymore strongly criticised the move by the European champions, who in February announced pre-tax profits of ?42 million ( 51 million) for 2018/19.

"(Manager) Jurgen Klopp showed compassion for all at the start of this pandemic, senior players heavily involved in @premier-league players taking wage cuts. Then all that respect & goodwill is lost, poor this @LFC," tweeted Carragher.

Collymore was even more forthright, tweeting: "I don't know of any Liverpool fan of any standing that won't be anything other than disgusted at the club for furloughing staff."

Another former Anfield star, Germany's Dietmar Hamann tweeted: "Astonished by the news that @LFC takes advantage of the furlough scheme to claim 80% of non-playing staff wages back off the government."

"That's not what the scheme was designed for. Contrary to the morals and values of the club I got to know," Liverpool said staff would be paid 100 percent of their salaries to ensure nobody was financially disadvantaged.

A statement from the club said: "Even prior to the decision on staff furloughing, there was a collective commitment at senior levels of the club -- on and off the pitch -- with everyone working towards a solution that secures jobs for employees of the club during this unprecedented crisis."

- 'EFFECT ON HEALTH SERVICE' -

Meanwhile, the Professional Footballers' Association warned of a ?200 million shortfall in British government tax revenues if a 30% pay cut was introduced for players.

"All Premier League players want to, and will, play their part in making significant financial contributions in these unprecedented times,"

said a PFA statement after a meeting with the Premier League.

"We welcomed the opportunity to discuss this and we are happy to continue talks." However, the PFA insisted it was too simplistic to criticise multi-millionaire players for not easily agreeing to salary cuts.

"The proposed 30 percent salary deduction over a 12-month period equates to over ?500m in wage reductions and a loss in tax contributions of over ?200m to the government," the PFA statement added.

"What effect does this loss of earning to the government mean for the National Health Service?"

The Premier League has been seen as lagging behind other European leagues in its response to coronavirus and was accused by one British lawmaker of operating in a "moral vacuum".

In Spain, Barcelona and Atletico Madrid players have already agreed to pay cuts of 70% while the stars of Italian champions Juventus will be paid a reduced amount for the next four months.

England defender Danny Rose, on loan at Newcastle from Tottenham, told the BBC players were "keen to make something happen".

"I can only speak for myself but I would have no problems whatsoever contributing some of my wages to people who are fighting this on the front line and to people who have been affected by what's happening at the minute," he said.

On Friday, a hospital in London identified Rose as the individual behind a ?19,000 donation.

Liverpool skipper Jordan Henderson has led talks between Premier League club captains over what action they could take, a move that began before Britain's Health Secretary Matt Hancock on Thursday joined those singling out footballers.

"It was just not needed for people who are not involved in football to tell footballers what they should do with their money," added Rose.

"I found that so bizarre."

- 'SAFE AND APPROPRIATE' -

Burnley issued a stark warning on Saturday about the potential financial fallout from the coronavirus outbreak, claiming they would face a shortfall of up to ?50 million ( 61 million) if it were not possible to complete the season.

The English top-flight said on Friday the 2019/20 season would only return when it was "safe and appropriate to do so".

The league agreed to provide a ?125 million fund for the English Football League and National League and pledged ?20 million in charitable support for the National Health Service and other groups.

## Olympic men's football age limit raised to 24 after Tokyo Games postponement

**PARIS, 05 APR [AP]:** Fifa has extended the age limit for the men's football tournament at the rescheduled Tokyo Olympics to 24 from 23. Following the Games' postponement due to the coronavirus pandemic, the amended rule retains the original stipulation regarding teams being based around players born on or after 1 January 1997, but given the Olympics' move to 2021 this now means older players will be allowed to participate.

It means players el-

igible for the intended under-23 tournament in 2020 can still play in Japan at age 24 next year. The men's football tournament will kick off before the 23 July 2021 opening ceremony in Tokyo

The 16 men's teams can also select three over-age players in their rosters, unlike the women's competition that has no age limit. Due to line up in the men's tournament are Argentina, holders Brazil, France, Germany, Spain, Romania, New Zealand, Egypt,

Ivory Coast, South Africa, Australia, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, and hosts Japan.

Fifa has also postponed two women's age-group World Cups due this year in Central America and India, and confirmed no international games for men and women will be played in the early June dates protected for national team call-ups. The Women's Under-20 World Cup, due to be hosted by Panama and Costa Rica in August and September will be rescheduled, along



with the Under-17s tournament originally ear-

marked for India in November.



## China reports 30 new coronavirus cases; nine districts in Wuhan classified as low-risk'

**KJM VARMA**  
**BEIJING, APR 5 (PTI):** China has reported 30 new cases of the novel coronavirus, including five locally transmitted infections, even as nine of the 13 administrative districts of virus-hit Wuhan city were declared low-risk areas' signifying a gradual return to normalcy, officials said on Sunday.

China's National Health Commission (NHC) in its daily report said other than the 30 new confirmed COVID-19 cases reported in the mainland on Saturday, 47 new asymptomatic cases were also reported.

The NHC said 1,024 asymptomatic cases were still under medical observation, including 244 from abroad.

Asymptomatic coronavirus cases are those who test positive for the virus but do not show any symptom and have the potential to cause sporadic infection clusters.

Three deaths were also reported on Saturday -- all from virus epicentre Hubei Province -- taking the coronavirus death toll in China to 3,329 people.

The overall confirmed cases in the mainland reached 81,669 on Saturday, including 1,376 patients undergoing treatment and 76,964 others discharged from hospitals after recovery.

With another administrative district being classified as low risk' for the infection,

there are nine district in total in Wuhan marked as low risk'.

The other four districts of Wuhan are classified as medium-risk, state run Xinhua news agency reported.

On March 27, Wuhan's coronavirus risk evaluation was downgraded from high risk' to medium risk'. Now, Hubei Province has no cities or counties marked as high risk'.

Hubei province, which has a population of 56 million, was put under lockdown on January 23. Officials say the province is gradually being opened up as the virus has abated with fewer new infection cases in recent weeks.

According to the risk criteria defined by the Chinese government, counties and districts with no newly confirmed cases in the last 14 days are categorised as 'low-risk' areas, those with fewer than 50 cases or those with over 50 but without a concentrated outbreak are classified as 'mid-risk' areas, and those with over 50 cases as well as a concentrated outbreak are classified as 'high-risk' areas.

Signifying the slowdown of the virus in the country, China on Saturday held a nationwide memorial for martyrs and victims of the coronavirus in the country.

Chinese President Xi Jinping led the national mourning from Beijing. Three minutes' silence was observed all over the country and flags flew half-mast.

## 'Shameless': anger as China quarantines freed human rights lawyer 400km from home

**VERNA YU**  
**HONG KONG, 05 APR [THEGUARDIAN]:** Prominent Chinese human rights lawyer Wang Quanzhang, who was jailed for four and a half years for subversion, has been released from prison but barred from reuniting with his wife and son in Beijing amid the coronavirus pandemic.

His wife, Li Wenzu, fears that the authorities are using the pandemic as an excuse to hold him under de facto house arrest indefinitely. She said Wang has been released from prison but authorities had sent him to his home town, Jinan, in the north-eastern province of Shandong (400km south of Beijing) for quarantine.

Chinese authorities have been using compulsory quarantine as a pretext to detain or restrict the movements of government critics.

"The government is continuing to restrict his personal freedoms and forcing us to be separated," Li told the Guardian. "This behaviour is shameless, I'm absolutely opposed to this and am very angry."

"I fear the government is using the pandemic as an excuse to detain him. Would it be just 14 days as they say? I can't trust them. So long as my husband has no freedom, I'll continue to fight until

he comes back."

Wang called his wife from the prison yesterday telling her to refrain from going to meet him in prison. In a recording she posted on Twitter, Wang said he had to be quarantined "for some time" due to the pandemic. When Li, who has been frequently harassed by the authorities, angrily asked whether he was prompted to say that under duress, he said: "We'll be back together, but there'll be a process."

"The Linyi prison... forced Quanzhang to 'persuade' me into accepting the arrangement of sending him to Jinan. I absolutely oppose it," Li said on Twitter: "Wang Quanzhang needs real freedom, our family needs to be reunited."

In a practice dubbed "non-release release" by respected China law expert Jerome Cohen at the New York University, Chinese rights activists are often released from prison into de facto house arrest or enforced restriction to their native village, where they remain for years.

"What will Wang Quanzhang's 'release' on April 5 amount to?" asked Cohen in his blog.

Wang, a lawyer who had taken on politically sensitive cases and defended activists and members of the banned religious group Falun Gong, was sentenced to jail in January 2019 on the blanket charge of "subversion of state power".

**LEXINGTON (US), APR 5 (AP):** No one stands in line to embrace the widow and share memories of her husband of 50 years. No rows of family and friends file toward the flag-draped coffin to pay their last respects. No symphony of sniffles is heard across the room as the minister gives a final prayer.

Instead, a handful of people are scattered across one chapel row as if they're strangers, not blood. White roses are pinned to empty chairs, representing those who couldn't be there. An iPad on a tripod livestreams the service for people stuck at home across state lines.

This is going to be a different experience for all of us, the minister tells the half-dozen people gathered at a South Carolina funeral home

to celebrate the life of J. Robert Coleman, an Army veteran, husband to Gloria, father to three sons and grandfather to three children.

"But one thing that will be common is that as we conduct this service today, we're going to open with a prayer. Unspoken was the reason this funeral, and untold others across the world, is different: The coronavirus outbreak, stay-at-home orders and the rules of social distancing are dramatically altering the way families and communities mourn the passing of loved ones.

It's hard enough to lose a loved one, but then to have the traditions that usually bring comfort at a time like this seemingly not available just kind of compounds the grief that families feel, said Justin Baxley,

of Woodridge Memorial Park & Funeral Home.

Like most funeral homes, Woodridge is limiting the number of people allowed for services. Many families find it hard to choose which loved ones will be invited to the in-person gathering and which will be relegated to watch via livestream, if at all.

But Coleman's family said in their case, travel restrictions due to the virus and the nature of their small, close-knit family made following the fewer-than-10-people mandate simple. John Coleman said those who mattered most to his dad were there - his wife, Gloria, and his sons. The only one missing was his beloved dog, Bandit.

That's the most important," Coleman said. "We weren't brought up to care if we were around

a big group. Robert Coleman died suddenly last week. One of his sons found him at home in Columbia.

The family said he went peacefully, possibly of a heart attack, but because the 69-year-old had complained of chest pain the day before, he was tested for COVID-19.

Days later, the test came back negative. But regardless of the cause of death, funerals still must abide by rules aimed at preventing any possible exposure to the virus.

At Woodridge Memorial Park, a bottle of hand sanitizer and a sign asking guests to kindly refrain from handshaking now sit beside the guest-book.

Chairs are spaced apart. Much of the funeral planning among family and staff is done via video chat. And the demand

for livestreaming services has skyrocketed.

At Coleman's funeral, most of his family chose to sit in the front row, but a sister-in-law, citing social distance, made her way alone to the back. During the service, Gloria Coleman cried and pulled down her sunglasses, hiding her eyes.

With the chairs separated, her sons couldn't reach out to comfort her.

Your husband, your father, a model of faithfulness for you," Pastor Brett DeYoung said in his brief remarks. "Now it's time for you to continue that legacy by modeling that integrity and faithfulness to your family and friends.

The family followed the casket outside, where two uniformed soldiers waited to honor Coleman's service to his country a ritual

usually held inside, but moved to follow guidelines. A bugler played taps, and Gloria Coleman accepted a folded American flag.

John Coleman's wife and kids didn't make the trip from their Florida home. They were able to watch the livestream to say goodbye. Coleman said the family had to plan the funeral while watching headlines about the novel coronavirus, and he doesn't want to live in fear - that's why he invited The Associated Press to document their grieving.

He'll send the recording of the service to his dad's buddies from working for decades in the aerospace industry. And he'll head back home to his family.

We'll say a prayer with them, and it will be what it is for the moment.

# Coronavirus pandemic 'amplifying' poverty in UK

**LONDON, APR 5 (AFP):** The coronavirus pandemic is increasing poverty in Britain, where levels are already high after a decade of austerity triggered by the global financial crisis, according to experts.

Official data shows that more than 14 million people in the UK are classed as living in poverty, or nearly one-quarter of the population.

Some 4.2 million children are poor, or around 30 percent of the total, government figures show.

The situation is worsening with Britons losing jobs en masse as the UK experiences lockdown.

"The risk of poverty is particularly high for workers in sectors like hospitality and retail where people are more likely to be on low wages and in insecure work," said Dave Innes, head of economics at the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, an organisation for social change.

Over the past fortnight, almost one million adults in the UK have applied for Universal Credit, the government's main form of state aid.

That is nearly 10 times the level in an average two-week period.

"If families who were earning decent wages before the pandemic move

on to the Universal Credit, they will very suddenly find themselves living in poverty," said Louisa McGeehan, a director at Child Poverty Action Group UK.

As for families who were already classed as living in poverty prior to the outbreak -- and whose children are stuck at home owing to schools being shut -- the demands of online education add to the problem, she said.

McGeehan noted that "a lot of schools are putting lessons on the Internet for children to do at home.

"If those children are in households who don't have Internet or don't have a computer, they are not able to do that learning," McGeehan told AFP.

"We have a nation where a child poverty crisis has been amplified by the impact of coronavirus." But unlike the after-

math of the 2008 financial crisis when the government slashed public spending, COVID-19 has sparked huge state stimulus, including a boost to Universal Credit.

An adult receiving the benefit who is aged over 25 will receive ?1,000 (1,239, 1,137 euros) extra per year.

However an increase in the monthly amount to ?400 remains far below the level of ?600 considered sufficient for a single-person household to avoid "poverty" in the UK.

"Economically we know there is very likely to be a big recession and it's difficult to recover quickly from a big recession," said Innes.

"We know that recessions tend to hit people in poverty -- or in risk of poverty -- hardest," he told AFP.

Meanwhile food-banks, which help feed



the most vulnerable people including the homeless, are seeing fewer donations amid fallout from the coronavirus.

The Trussell Trust, which has a national network of 1,200 food banks, said it faced an "unprecedented chal-

lenge".

The government is however still providing children who ordinarily received free school meals with lunches.

"In my own school, we provide packed lunch that kids can come and pick up," said teacher

Amanda Martin, who is also president of the National Education Union.

But she added: "In the short term, there is a real worry that some of these people that would be in school, that would be warm and safe and being fed, aren't.



SummitTIMES

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

**DEAR READERS, IF YOU ARE HAVING TROUBLE GETTING YOUR COPY OF THE SUMMIT TIMES IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD, PLEASE MESSAGE OR WHATSAPP US YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS AT 9832556698 AND WE WILL ENSURE THAT THE NEWSPAPER REACHES YOU.**

**VIDEO NEWS SECTION**



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

**SILIGURI:**  
Mr. Mani Rai, K/s. Space Ads, B/R, Ambedkar Building, Room No.7, 1st

**Phone:**  
03592-208498  
+91-9832556698  
+91-9832080753

**floor, Opp. Ganga Hotel, Hill Cart Road, Siliguri - 03. Ph. +91-9832318644/ 9800682989/ 9153035100 or mail at mani\_siliguri@yahoo.co.in.**

**KOLKATA OFFICE:**  
Irshad Ali/ Imteyaz, Synapse, 6, Madan Street, Marine - 2, 2nd floor, Kolkata - 700072. Ph. 033-22124148/ fax 033-22124337/ mob. +91-9830547774/ +91-98308397. E-mail: contact.synapse@gmail.com/irshad\_ali123@rediffmail.com

**www.summittimes.com**  
news@summittimes.com  
summittimes24@gmail.com  
advertise@summittimes.com

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



# Artemis Fowl will skip theatres and go straight to Disney Plus



**LOS ANGELES, APR 4 (PTI):** Disney's upcoming live-action movie Artemis Fowl won't be having a theatrical release as the studio has decided to send it directly to its streaming service Disney Plus.

The film was set to open in the theatres worldwide on May 29 but was expected to be postponed as well due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Many Hollywood studios, including Disney, have been forced to alter their release calendar and find new dates for their big-budget movies.

But unlike Mulan, Black Widow and other Disney titles, which have been given new release dates, the studio has decided to premiere "Artemis Fowl" on Disney Plus.

With audiences largely unable to attend theatres in the

current environment, we are thrilled to offer the premiere of Artemis Fowl on Disney Plus, Ricky Strauss, president of Content and Marketing at Disney Plus, said in a statement.

Artemis Fowl, directed by Kenneth Branagh from a script by Irish playwright Conor McPherson, is an adaptation of Eoin Colfer's book of the same name.

It follows 12-year-old Artemis (Ferdia Shaw), who finds himself in a battle of strength and cunning against a powerful, hidden race of fairies who may be behind his father's disappearance.

The film will also feature Colin Farrell, Josh Gad and veteran actor Judi Dench in pivotal roles. Disney is yet to announce the movie's premiere date on Disney Plus.

## Christopher Cross tests coronavirus positive

**LOS ANGELES, APR 4 (PTI):** Five-time Grammy winner musician Christopher Cross has tested positive of novel coronavirus.

The singer-songwriter shared the news in a lengthy Facebook post.

I'm sorry to report that I am among the growing number of Americans who tested positive for the COVID-19 virus. Although I am fortunate enough to be cared for at home, this is possibly the worst illness I've ever had, he wrote.

Cross urged his fans to take the global pandemic seriously.

"For those of you who still do not believe the COVID-19 virus is real, or think it is a 'hoax' or part of some conspiracy, my advice to you is to understand right now that this is a deadly illness spreading like wildfire throughout the world. Please make every attempt to stall the spread of the virus, he added.

Since COVID-19 emerged late last year from China's Wuhan city, around 1.1 million people have fallen ill. Almost 60,000 people have died.



## It is self-destructive to become confident about acting: Jitendra Kumar

**MUMBAI, APR 4 (PTI):** Actor Jitendra Kumar doesn't take his internet stardom for granted and says he still gets "anxious" when he starts a project, as becoming confident about one's own craft is self-destructive.

Jitendra, widely known as Jeetu, has featured in several comedy sketches and shows of The Viral Fever, including "Permanent Roommates", "TVF Pitchers" and "Kota Factory". He was recently seen opposite Ayushmann Khurrana in "Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan".

The actor says every time he works with a new director, he feels nervous about whether he can live up to the expectations of the people.

"Every new director you work with, brings in something new and has perhaps cast you because your last work

was good. So there's that expectation as well. To get rid of that, there is some nervous energy. Unless I work with all the directors and they get comfortable with how I work, my nervousness will stay," Jitendra told PTI.

The actor believes an artiste's growth in career and in his craft is heavily dependent on the kind of work happening at a particular time.

"It's self-destructive to become confident regarding your own acting. Acting, your entire career depends on a lot of things. What kind of writing is working, the kind of filmmaking which is prevalent, all these factor in. Right now, it's such a good opportunity for all kinds of actors, irrespective of their looks.

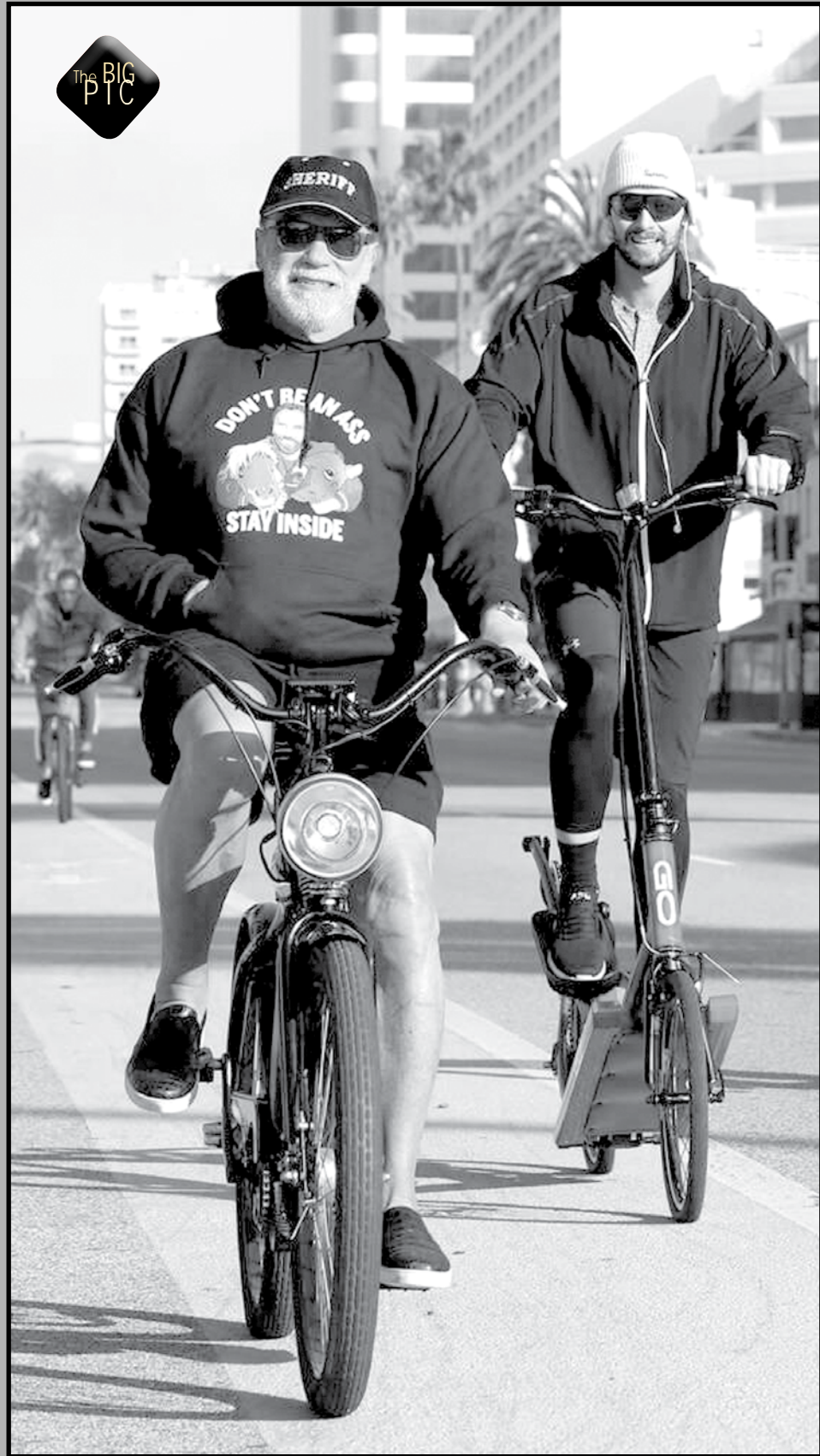
"Audience doesn't necessarily come

only to see a hero with a six-pack abs. They will watch him, but if someone who doesn't have that physique and is playing the protagonist, they'll watch that too. These are exciting times for actors and writers to experiment," he added.

Jitendra's rise mirrors the internet boom in the country, with YouTube and Twitter opening up big time post 2010.

The actor recalls how when he and his friends came to Mumbai in 2012 and they realised the power of making short videos and uploading them on YouTube.

"Thankfully audience accepted what we made. In this field, we don't work for the bosses, we work directly for the audience. Only they decide if we have done a good or a bad job.



**BIKER BOYS! Father-son duo, Arnold Schwarzenegger & Patrick Schwarzenegger, are seen going for a morning bike ride in Santa Monica.**

## Jesse Eisenberg talks about infamous 2013 interview

**LOS ANGELES, APR 4 (PTI):** Actor Jesse Eisenberg says he was wrongly labelled as a rude person after his 2013 interview with a young female journalist.

The Social Network star was widely slammed on social media for the interview in which he came across as arrogant and was seen mocking the journalist's questions. He was promoting his film Now You See Me at the time.

The interviewer, Romina Puga, had later penned a column, describing her experience with the actor, calling him an obnoxious person.

Talking to NME, Eisenberg said he had different memory of the interview as he found it to be quite fun.

I remember she was laughing. Even after she left, I said to the people in the room, what a relief. Like, that was the most fun-

ny, interesting interview I'd had all day, the 36-year-old actor said.

Eisenberg said he later received a call from his publicist saying that the media wants his statement about the interview.

And I said, what interview? I watched the thing and she had written an editorial (saying) I had made her upset.

It was, like, the exact opposite of what my experience was, and I didn't know the appropriate way to handle something that's completely mischaracterised, he added.

Eisenberg said there are people who found the interview quite funny.

Listen, I would never wanna upset somebody, and if I did upset her, obviously I would have acknowledged that, he added.

The actor currently stars in psychological thriller Vivarium, opposite Imogen Poots.

**Aries:** Think of this time as a reprieve from all the noise outside. A chance to retreat into your sanctuary, an opportunity to spend time with yourself. Aries, you have endured so many challenges in the past few months. Take this well-earned break to rejuvenate your mind, body, and soul; to listen to the stirrings of your heart, and realign with your soul purpose. As the mystics say, the magic is in this moment. Tip: Welcome this opportunity to come home to yourself.

**Taurus:** This is a time of major epiphanies. You realise that there were no accidents in your life. Everything has been designed to perfection and has unfolded in accordance with the divine plan. Give thanks, Taurus. Give thanks to mysterious forces above that showed up for you even when you weren't aware of their presence. What you want to focus on this quarantine season: the process of self-inquiry. Your true self has been waiting to have a rendezvous with you for a long, long time. Tip: Look within.

**Gemini:** Why do we resist change when it is the only thing that makes way for a new world order? Let the old structures crumble, Gemini. Witness the transformation that is taking place on an individual and collective level. Letting go of unhealthy attachments is the only way to transcend. No, this isn't going to be easy, but nothing worthwhile ever is. But you don't have to do this alone. If you find yourself struggling with the process, reach out to the people around you—your co-passengers on this journey to enlightenment. Consider a virtual sharing circle where everybody can talk about how the outside is affecting the inside. Rise together as a community, wild one! Tip: Become the eye of the storm.

**Cancer:** As an empath, you feel pain and chaos more intensely than

those around you. Therefore, the need to help is also far greater. But, there's only so much you can pour from an empty cup. So strike a balance between what you give yourself and what you give to the world. This is the time to develop self-care rituals that will help you feel nurtured. Meditation and mindfulness are also taking centre-stage this week. So, breathe in and breathe out. Quarantine season revelations: nothing helps you cancel out the noise like raising your vibrations. Tip: Understand the need of self-care in the time of self-isolation.

**Leo:** The process of self-inquiry is seldom easy. There are demons vying for your attention, unhealed trauma and unprocessed emotions to deal with. But denial is never healthy, Leo. If there's anything this period of isolation is teaching you, it's the importance of bringing light to your shadows and putting a balm to those old wounds. As Eckhart Tolle wisely said, "Awareness is the greatest agent for change." Tip: You are experiencing deep, inner alchemy through the process of isolation.

**Virgo:** This work-from-home scenario is anything but rainbows and sunshine. There are dishes to do and cobwebs to clear and meals to prepare. Not that you can explain any of this at the 10am meeting today. But let's not forget that you are a Virgo! Even if the world is falling apart, you will "always" have a plan in place. So manage your time and organise your schedule better. Make focus and discipline your power words. This is the time to establish new routines that will serve you in the long run. Tip: Establish new routines and learn to manage your time in an effective manner.

**Libra:** The world may be on lockdown, but that doesn't mean

your optimism has to be. This is a time of deep, inner alchemy, Libra. You're having so many epiphanies around the concept of joy, contentment, and happiness; learning to be your own sunshine because there is the only way to survive the dark night. Feeling inspired to connect with your inner child? Replace the idea of productivity with creativity. Respond to the creative urges emanating from deep within you through art and movement. Tip: You're learning to make your own happiness potion.

**Scorpio:** Quarantine season was supposed to be fun. I mean, weren't we going to be parading around in our Sunday best (read: PJs) and OD-ing on our favourite shows? But now, the lockdown has been extended and you're longing for the outside world. At times like these, we have no option but to turn inwards, Scorpio; to find a source of joy and happiness within, to celebrate the simple things that make our lives oh-so-beautiful, like making chai with your sister every morning or listening to your dad narrate anecdotes from his youth! Tip: Find joy in small, simple things.

**Sagittarius:** This period of self-isolation was supposed to be an extended sleepover party but you've re-read all your favourite books, watched every show on Netflix, and learned about seven new languages. Now what? The outdoors look tempting but your longing for sunshine could get you into a lot of trouble. What the cards are urging you to do: consider the art of turning lemons into lemon tarts. Drag your mat to the terrace or the backyard and do your crunches to the sound of Cardi B's tunes. Miss having your crew around to motivate you? Organise a virtual dance-a-thon tonight. Tip: Find new ways to stay motivated.

**Capricorn:** It's either all-in or all-out, Capricorn, because lukewarm just doesn't cut it for you. You're in the mood to take life

by the horns and experience everything fully. As a popular phrase goes, "Rejoice in life, in love, in meditation, in the beauties of the world, in the ecstasy of existence—rejoice in everything! Transform the mundane into the sacred. Transform this shore into the other shore, transform the earth into paradise." For those who are feeling lost and confused: there are big things taking place behind the scenes for you. Perfect the art of trust and surrender. Tip: Experience life fully.

**Aquarius:** Given the current state of affairs, it will be easy to go into a state of panic. One word, Aquarius: boundaries. This is the only way to ensure you don't pick up on the collective hysteria that could potentially lower your vibration. So take the necessary precautionary measures like self-isolation and regularly washing your hands, but also remember to stay centred. Your consumption habits will play an integral role in how you are feeling. Avoid the instant noodles and sugary chai circle. Instead, consume freshly prepared meals with healthy, immunity-boosting ingredients. Meditating and exercising regularly will also help you maintain a state of balance. Tip: Be mindful of your consumption habits.

**Pisces:** Hello, and welcome to the land of your personal demons! Nobody said this was going to be easy. Then again, nothing transformative ever is. Resist the urge to run away from the turmoil. What you want to do instead is unpack, sit down with your thoughts, observe the patterns, and release that which is no longer yours. This is the only way to free yourself from the old story, Pisces. Know that you are rising, moving, shifting, and evolving. The next chapter is going to be fulfilling on so many levels. So, buckle your seatbelt and enjoy every bit of transformation process. Tip: Have a chat with your demons.