



**JAPANESE COMEDIAN KEN SHIMURA
DIES FROM CORONAVIRUS AT 70**
pg 08

When the CM Speaks, It Helps
*Communicate more in times
of crisis and uncertainty*
pg 4

**NOW 'SHAKTIMAAN' RETURNS
AMID LOCKDOWN, CONFIRMS
MUKESH KHANNA**
pg 08



SummitTIMES

Vol 05 | Issue 84 | Gangtok | Tuesday | 31 March 2020

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

RNI No. SIKENG/2016/69420

**Contact established with
10 of the 12 from Sikkim
on board the same flight as
Kalimpong's COVID-19 patient**

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 30 MAR:**

The Novel Coronavirus arrived uncomfortably close to Sikkim when a lady from Kalimpong who had flown in from Chennai tested positive for the virus late on Saturday night. Authorities in Sikkim swung into action immediately upon receiving a passenger list of all who were board the same flight which came in from Chennai and landed in Bagdogra on 19 March.

Director General of Health Services, Dr PT Bhutia, informed today that the process of narrowing down on Sikkimese who were on the flight was arduous given that the passenger manifest carried only names and contact numbers, not residence. With something like 300 on-board that flight, there were many names to go through and eventually, 12 from Sikkim were found to have been on the list.

Dr Bhutia informs that of the 12, contact has been established with 10 and that they were being shifted to facilitated quarantine. It is informed that none of them are displaying any symptoms and that this was a good sign since they had travelled eleven days back. The facilitated quarantine is a precautionary measure in light of the latest development.

Their swab samples have also been collected and will be sent for testing on Tuesday morning, it is informed.

The authorities have however not been able to establish contact with the remaining two people, believed to be hailing from West Sikkim. The local authorities have also been tapped to make contact with them, it is informed.

Sikkim continues to remain untouched by Novel Coronavirus with no one here having tested positive for it yet.

The patient from Kalimpong meanwhile succumbed to nCoV related complications on Sunday night, it is informed.

Nehru, Nizam and the Nepalese ambassador

NEW DELHI, MAR 30

(PTI): During the Hyderabad integration crisis, Jawaharlal Nehru threw a reception for the Nizam but found it difficult to keep him engaged in a conversation before a Nepalese bureaucrat came to his rescue.

Nehru failed in his attempts to take, what he felt, good care of the dour Nizam and finally turned up to Bijay Shamsher Jang Bahadur Rana, the then Nepalese ambassador to India, for help.

After racking his brains, my father came up with Indian classical music as the subject for a tete-a-tete and managed to engage the Nizam in a lively conversation for almost an hour, says Bijay Rana's politician son Pashupati Shamsher Jang Bahadur Rana.

Pashupati Rana mentions this anecdote as recounted by Sardar Bhim Bahadur Pandey, the then Nepalese Deputy Chief of Mission in New Delhi, in the latest issue of The Equator Line magazine.

Pandit Nehru, it goes without saying, was duly grateful. This was a measure of their mutual trust and understanding, writes Rana, a descendant of Nepal's Rana dynasty, and chairman of Rastriya Prajatantra Party (United).

The erstwhile Hyderabad state was annexed to the Indian Union on September 17, 1948.

India's first home minister Sardar Patel requested Mir Osman Ali Khan Asaf Jah VII, the last Nizam of the prince-

ly state of Hyderabad, to join India, but he refused and instead declared Hyderabad as an independent nation on August 15, 1947.

A military operation was launched in 1948 and the Indian armed forces invaded the Nizam-ruled princely state, annexing it into the Indian Union.

Rana hails Nehru's statesmanship saying his view that there should be continuity with change played a pivotal role in the peaceful transition to democracy in Nepal.

Such political safe landings are rare in history and difficult to make, he adds. Nehru and his vision is the topic of this issue of the magazine, which has articles by the likes of economist Bibek Debroy, journalist Harish Khare, writer-TV producer Jad Adams and Sri Lankan writer Daya Disanayake, among others.

With his exposure to international politics, insights into the future, radical ideas in the context of the time and his phenomenal mass appeal, Nehru was the foremost leader of the freedom struggle and well-suited to interpret his country's gloom and aspirations, says magazine's editor-in-chief Bhaskar Roy.

India's success as a democracy could be entirely ascribed to Nehru's visionary leadership of this inchoate land for 17 long years after independence, he adds.

RANGPO, 30 MAR [IPR]: Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang [Golay] made a surprise visit to Rangpo today to take stock of preparedness and assess the situation on ground at the border town.

The Chief Minister, while lauding the efforts of the Medical team and police personnel manning the border check-post, called for heightened vigil to ensure that there was absolutely no thoroughfare to and from the border.

He also issued clear instructions not to allow any cross-border movement of labourers or wage earners, and said that the Government will ensure that necessary arrangements are made for them in the State during the period of the lockdown.

He appreciated the hard

work, dedication and the seriousness with which the frontline workers have served through this adverse situation and assured full cooperation and help from the government.

The Chief Minister also assured the medical team and the doctors that government is fully prepared and stock of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and other logistics are in abundance and they should not worry about anything.

The Chief Minister also visited the quarantine center established at the New Tourist Lodge here and took detailed stock of the arrangements made.

He expressed satisfaction with the facility and advised the doctors and medical staff to ensure that all the required protocols are followed.



The Chief Minister also instructed SP East and SDM Rangpo to ensure that not a

single person crosses the border check post and that only emergency vehicles and vehi-

cles carrying medicines and essential commodities are allowed through.

Bhaichung offers shelter to fleeing migrant workers

**SAGAR CHHETRI
GANGTOK, 30 MAR:**

Former Indian football team skipper, Hamro Sikkim Party's Bhaichung Bhutia, has come forward to help migrant workers stranded in the State.

Mr Bhutia has offered shelter to these workers in his building here at Lumsey, Tadong.

He is taking the initiative along with United Sikkim Football Club to ensure that workers acknowledge the nationwide lockdown and desist from making the strenuous exodus of walking back to their respective homes since all works which employed them have been suspended.

In his official Facebook page, Mr Bhutia writes, "I feel strongly for the migrant workers who hope to reach their homes to survive corona virus and the nationwide lockdown. The mass exodus of migrant workers pouring out to attempt strenuous treks to their home is not only a violation of the curfew but is also a danger to their lives. I and United Sikkim Football Club would like to offer shelter to those in need in my building in Lumsey, Tadong."

Those in need can contact Mr Bhutia on his Facebook page or call Senior manager USFC, Arjun Rai at his number, 9434117465

for any help regarding this issue.

Likewise, in another FB post, Bhaichung Bhutia wrote, "If anyone from Sikkim, Darjeeling, Kalimpong and other North Bengal region that are stuck in Tamil Nadu and are in need of basic assistance like food and accommodations, please contact the phone numbers below. The Alayam Welfare Trust an NGO in Tamil Nadu are actively supporting the people in need. Concerned people kindly reach out to them."

His FB post provides contact details for those in need - Ravindra Banerjee at 9831579972, P Prashant at 9384840307 and BK Raja at 9500244444.

DCs direct employers to continue paying wages to migrant labourers

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 30 MAR:**

Following reports of migrant labourers breaching prohibitory orders as they attempt to return home to their respective states even it requires trudging hundreds of kilometers on foot, DCs of all districts today issued orders directing contractors/employers of migrant labourers to ensure that the labourers do not violate prohibitory orders.

If the labourers are found violating prohibitory orders, the contractors/employers will be held responsible and action under section 188 of the IPC will be taken against them.

Further, the employers have been directed to pay salaries without any deduction to the laborers for the period under lockdown.

Landlords of places where the laborers are staying have also been directed to not demand rent for a period of one month.

Visit Us at : www.summittimes.com

Time for Sikkim to fight heads-up Battle against CV

**VIEWPOINT
JIWAN RAI**

One of Sikkim's worst curses has turned out to be a big blessing. Frustrated about the dysfunctional airport, snail-paced Sevoke-Rangpo rail project and the one and only crumbling highway - the (in)famous NH 10 - we had been sulking about our connectivity woes and administrative apathy. Little did we know that our isolated existence had an unseen blessing. For now, we can say that our immobility has helped us big time to stay safe thus far from the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the truthfulness of this statement is still hanging precariously. So far so good.

Data suggests that most road accidents happen near the homes of victims. Studies have revealed that drivers tend to skimp on paying attention, taking the familiarity of the road for granted. 'Arriving home' gives people a sense of ease and that's

when they become more careless and vulnerable to accidents. Let it sink into our ears that, in terms of fleeing from Covid-19, we are probably nearly home but not home yet. This is when we tend to become overconfident of arriving safe. It would be far too soon to even think of lowering our guard. Our joy of zero positive cases thus far is obviously blighted with fear and anxiety about many more tests still undone. We must reserve our euphoria and ecstasy for a future day.

The shocking news of the first Covid-19 death in North Bengal has given us more than enough reason to fight an extremely heads-up battle against it. Our hearts go out to the family of the deceased who was only in her mid 40s. The Sikkim government has tracked down 10 of the 12 Sikkimese who were her co-passengers and has quarantined them. The authorities must find out if other people had

a high-risk contact with the twelve. I also hope that we have been able to track down all the people who travelled into Sikkim from Covid-19 infected places in and outside the country in the last two weeks. I was wondering if an online 'self-declaration form' could be useful for people to voluntarily declare their travel history.

Those in positions of authority must not dismiss the call for caution as panic mongering. Nor should the government be overconfident and prematurely self-congratulate itself for pre-emptying the infection as yet. The US President Trump was foolishly boasting about the corona virus being under complete control of his government. He went so far as to declare 'it is going to disappear one day' like a miracle. And now the US leads the tally of positive cases with over 142,735 cases and 2,488 deaths. Unnecessary corona-jokes are sending a wrong signal to the general

public. Keep your sense of humour to yourselves. Also, saying that Sikkim is a holy land and therefore we are safe, is an uncalled for statement. We may remain safe at this time - but such an attitude will make us a less alert society, thus making us more susceptible victims to future pandemics.

Call me an alarmist but I will not cease to ask ourselves to not take our eyes off the worst case scenario. When we are up against a formidable enemy like this, we can ill-afford to underestimate its strength and overestimate our strength. The most courageous fighters do fear their enemy. Cautious fear is not vice. The battle is far from being over.

Loose talk has begun to creep in. Presumptuous attitudes can be felt. In a time like this, we need the PROPHET Jeremiahs who warn us of the impending doom as much as we need PRINCES (authorities), PRIESTS and PEOPLE, who take heed and resolutely work towards avoiding the

doom.

We know our responsibility - which is to cooperate with the authorities. We also have mutual responsibilities to our fellow beings. Our questions, reservations, suspicions, suggestions and commendations are worth consideration by those who are in responsible positions.

Epidemiologists and experts have been telling us that lockdown doesn't solve the problem. It only gives us the window period. It is when we need to ramp up our tests.

Make no mistake about it, no human authority is in control, not even the haughty Trump. Let us concede our human finitude and listen to one another. Collective wisdom, folks.

Perhaps, never before did Sikkim need to be reminded more of Robert Frost's legendary lines: "The woods are lovely, dark and deep,

But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep."

NHPC Teesta-V achieves highest ever power generation

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 30 MAR:**

The 510 MW NHPC Teesta Stage-V Power Station located at Balutar in East Sikkim achieved its highest-ever power generation of 2,820 million units (MU) on 29 Mar, surpassing its previous record of 2,818 MU achieved in FY 2017-18, an NHPC press release informs.

Earlier, the Power Station achieved its MOU target of 2,750 MU for FY 2019-20 on 12 Mar, 2020.

The Plant Avail-

ability Factor (PAF) achieved as on 29 Mar is 97.70% against the target of 96% for FY 2019-20.

Teesta-V Power Station achieved its highest power generation with forced outage of about 31hrs, it is informed.

Head of the Power Station, Sahadev Khatua, has congratulated all employees for their untiring efforts and team spirit in attaining this record and appealed to everyone to achieve many more milestones in the future.



Heavenly Nirvana Path donates Rs 1,07,000 towards CM's Relief Fund

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 30 MAR:**

Heavenly Nirvana Path, Sikkim, has contributed Rs 1,07,000 towards the Chief Minister's Relief Fund to support the State government in its fight against COVID-19.

The organization has also appealed to everyone to come forward and contribute towards this fund to support the State's efforts to keep Novel Coronavirus at bay.

A press release from the organization informs that it was an important day not only for devotees but for all the people since today also happens to be the birthday of Master God Angel Guru Harjot of Heavenly Nirvana Path.

On the occasion, the organization has extended wishes for the welfare and good health of everyone and prayed that Sikkim receives the strength and courage to fight COVID-19.



Moscow under lockdown as global virus cases top 700,000

Russia's capital became the latest world city to impose a coronavirus lockdown on Monday as declared cases globally topped 700,000 and the planet braced for a drawn-out battle against the disease.

Worried governments are imposing fresh confinement measures in the face of a spiralling COVID-19 death toll that saw another 800 people die in the last 24 hours in Spain alone.

With leaders everywhere warning it will take months to restore normality, Africa's largest city Lagos was also preparing to join the more than one third of humanity ordered to stay in their homes.

Across the globe, desperate hospitals are filling up with patients despite governments imposing the most dramatic changes to the way people live since World War II in a bid to halt the deadly march of the disease.

The sweeping measures have wiped out millions of jobs, left economies teetering and rendered once-teeming cities eerily empty, yet there remains no real end in sight to the pandemic.

More than 33,000 people have died worldwide and the number of confirmed cases passed 700,000 on Monday, according to an AFP tally. More than 3.38 billion remain under lockdown.

In a sign that the world is in for a long haul, President Donald Trump on Sunday extended emergency virus restrictions until April 30 for the United States, which now has more confirmed cases than any



other nation.

"Nothing would be worse than declaring victory before the victory is won," said Trump, as his top scientist Anthony Fauci warned up to 200,000 people could die there.

A charity began setting up a field hospital in New York's Central Park to help take some of the strain.

"The hospitals all over the city are filling up and they need as much help as they can get," said Elliott Tenpenny, a doctor and team leader for Samaritan's Purse COVID-19 Response Team.

- 'Very long battle' -

In Moscow, Europe's largest city with a population of 12 million, the streets were deserted following the closure of all non-essential shops, including restaurants and cafes, although some traffic was still seen on the roads.

Citizens will only be allowed to leave their homes in a medical emergency, to travel to essential jobs and to shop for food or medicines. They will, however, be allowed to walk their dogs within a 100-metre radius of their homes.

President Vladimir Putin has declared a "non-working" week in

Russia, which on Monday reported 302 new cases -- the biggest daily increase so far -- taking the total tally to 1,835 infections and nine deaths.

Coronavirus is tightening its grip on the rest of Europe, with Britain and hard-hit Italy warning at the weekend that measures to prevent the spread of the disease would be in place for months to come.

"We are in a very long battle," said Italian government medical adviser Luca Richeldi.

Spain, which has the world's second biggest death toll from the disease, announced another 812 virus deaths in 24 hours, although it was the first decline since Thursday.

Locked-down France staged its largest evacuation of coronavirus patients to date from hospitals in the hard-hit east on Sunday, with two specially equipped high-speed trains carrying 36 patients.

"We have to free up beds, it's absolutely crucial," said Francois Brun, head of emergency services at a regional hospital in Metz.

The sheer scale of the economic impact continues to leave governments reeling, with German experts saying the vi-

rus would shrink output there this year by up to 5.4 percent.

- Global divide -

The strains on society imposed by measures that might have seemed unimaginable just weeks ago are gradually starting to show.

Food banks in New York have been inundated with newcomers.

"We need the help now. This is crazy," said Lina Alba, 40, a single mother with five children who worked as a maid in a Manhattan hotel until it closed two weeks ago.

In Sicily, armed police began guarding entrances to supermarkets in Sicily after reports of looting. In New Zealand, a website for people to report their neighbours for breaking coronavirus lockdown rules was so popular that it crashed soon after going live. The crisis is also testing the balance between civil liberties and the need for restrictions to curb the disease.

Hungary's parliament was on Monday expected to endorse a controversial bill giving nationalist Prime Minister Viktor Orban sweeping new powers he says he needs to fight coronavirus.

Meanwhile the phenomenon of virus-strick-

en cruise ships continued with a liner entering the Panama Canal Sunday while it still searched for a port that will allow passengers to disembark.

"Four people are now dead, and that is on the head of all the people along the way who turned us away," US passenger Laura Gabaroni said after she became one of the healthy people allowed to leave the Zaandam liner.

Africa's biggest city, Lagos, was due to join the global stay-at-home from Monday, with Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari ordering a two-week lockdown for its 20 million people.

The measures, in force from 2200 GMT, also apply to the capital Abuja.

Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation with some 190 million people, has so far registered just 97 confirmed infections and one death from COVID-19, but testing has been limited.

Zimbabwe also began enforcing a three-week lockdown, with most shops shut and all flights in and out of the country cancelled.

As in the rest of Africa and much of Asia, enforcing a total lockdown will be a mammoth challenge in a region where tens of millions live in poverty.

Jignesh Dada donates to Gujarat CM's Relief Fund



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 30 MAR:**

Respected litterateur, Jignesh Dada [Radhe Radhe], accompanied by Pankaj Modi, brother of the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, called on Gujarat Chief Minister, Vijay Rupani, today

at Gandhinagar, Gujarat and handed over a cheque of Rs 5,55,555 as a donation towards the Chief Minister's Relief Fund to combat against COVID-19.

During the meeting, Mr Dada appreciated the initiatives of the

Gujarat CM in combating COVID-19 and expressed his belief that the country was safe in hands of the PM.

He also appealed to the people to remain at home to prevent the transmission of Novel Coronavirus.

Rs 2000 grant announced for registered construction workers

GANGTOK, 30 MAR [IPR]:

The State Government has 7,836 registered building & other construction workers (live and active) as on date and the State Government today announced that each one of them will be provided a Rs 2,000 grant to help tide over the nationwide lockdown period.

Taking into consid-

eration the hardships being faced by these construction workers due to the present challenging situation of Covid-19 pandemic and country-wide lock down, the Sikkim State Building & Other Construction Workers Welfare Board under the chairmanship of the Labour Minister, MN Sherpa,

today approved and sanctioned a onetime grant of Rs 2,000 to each registered construction worker to compensate them during the period of lock down due to Covid -19 pandemic.

The compensation will be made out from the Board of Construction Workers Cess Fund.

Social distancing at Poklok-Kamrang GPU

NAMCHI, 30 MAR (IPR):

As World Health Organization has advised maintaining social distancing in order to avoid spreading Novel Coronavirus, Poklok-Kamrang GPU in South Sikkim is doing the same to contain the spread of the virus.



East Bengal promise Rs 30 lakh to fight pandemic

KOLKATA, MAR 30 (PTI): Kolkata heavyweights East Bengal on Monday promised a donation of Rs 30 lakh to the state relief fund to help fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

Various sports bodies from the state have come together in the fight against the virus with their arch-rivals an I-League champions Mohun Bagan contributing Rs 20 lakh.

Despite their ongoing financial crunch, East Bengal, who are desperately looking for a new sponsor to play in the Indian Super League, said they are looking to raise about Rs 35 lakh.

"We have already confirmed a donation of Rs 30 lakh and we are looking to add some more and hand it over to the chief minister (Mamata Banerjee) in a cou-

ple of days," East Bengal top official Nitu Sarkar told PTI.

He further said they have arranged food at their club tent for ground staff, mostly migrants, in the Maidan area.

"As the clubs have shut their doors due to the ongoing pandemic, their livelihoods have come under risk and we have made available food for them," Sarkar added.

CONTACT

**SUMMIT TIMES
REPORTERS**

SINGTAM

8170070813

MANGAN/ DIKCHU

9832612485/

9434011213

GANGTOK

8116388176

9832424750

8016270440

**to hook
advertisements in Sum-
mitTimes, call
03592-208698
9734152541**

**~ 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

Rajyogini Dadi

Hradyamohini made
Brahmakumaris chief

JAIPUR, MAR 30 (PTI): Rajyogini Dadi Hradyamohini, the additional chief administrator of Brahmakumaris, will now head the institution after the demise of Rajyogini Dadi Janaki.

This decision was taken by the management committee of the Brahmakumaris.

With this, the spiritual organisation's joint chief administrator Rajyogini Dadi Ratan Mohini has been made the additional chief administrator and Rajyogini Ishu Dadi has been appointed its joint chief administrator, a statement said.

Rajyogini Dadi Hradyamohini holds the responsibility of the president of the trade and industry division and the cultural division of the institute. She was born on July 1, 1926 in Sindh, Hyderabad of Pakistan.

She came to the institute at the age of nine and since then did not look back. Before coming to Mount Abu, she has also performed divine services in Lucknow and Delhi.

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

Devotees offer Chaiti Chhath prayers at home



GANGTOK, 30 MAR: In view of the nationwide lockdown, devotees offered prayers to the setting Sun from their respective homes on the third day of Chaiti Chhath on Monday. Chaiti Chhath is a festival mainly celebrated in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh and this year it is being celebrated between 28 to 31 March. On the fourth day, Tuesday, devotees will worship the rising sun on Tuesday. Here a family offers prayers from outside of their home in Tadong.

Old Food Godown cleaned up for fresh stock



**YOGEN THATAL
SINGTAM, 30 MAR:**

Bazaar Inspector of Singtam Nagar Panchayat, Biren Rai,

along with supervisor Raju Barde-
wa, accompanied by OFO staff and
the Safai Karmachari undertook
a cleanliness drive at the old food

godown at New Market, Singtam,
preparing it for a fresh supply of
essential commodities and on-
wards distribution.

Be local, shop locally, says Karnataka govt

BENGALURU, MAR 30 (PTI): To control the spread of COVID-19, Karnataka government on Monday decided to give push for localised purchase of essential commodities like vegetables and groceries in the city, where people come by foot to buy things and don't use vehicles.

"We have decided that there should be localised purchase of vegetables and other grocery items, things should be purchased locally and people should go purchase things by foot to a large extent possible and not use by vehicle," Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai said.

Speaking to reporters

after meeting with police, the Corporation and labour department officials, he said new guidelines should be regarding migrant labourers stating that they would have to stay put where they are and should not go anywhere.

"We have decided to take marriage halls and make food arrangements

for migrant labourers in all wards of Bengaluru.

The responsibility of arranging food will be by BBMP (city civic body), while police will take care of law and order," he said.

Moving migrant labourers to their native may create administrative problem in other districts so food and ration

arrangements would be made for those in Bengaluru, Bommai said.

In response to a query, he said the district administrations and Deputy Commissioners in other districts also would make similar arrangements in other districts if the migrant workers there want to stay put in the district.

200-bed quarantine centre to be ready soon: Manipur CM

IMPHAL, MAR 30 (PTI): Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Monday said a 200-bed emergency quarantine centre in the state will soon be ready.

Singh inspected the site where the facility is being constructed at Langthabal in

Imphal West district.

A 23-year-old woman who recently returned from the United Kingdom is the lone COVID-19 patient in Manipur, health officials said.

Meanwhile, state government spokesperson Th Bishwajit said

that the supply of personal protective equipment (PPE), masks, sanitisers and thermal scanners to the government quarantine centres in the state will be increased.

At present, there are 14 government quarantine centres with a total capacity of 629 beds

where 210 persons were quarantined till Sunday, Bishwajit said.

Imphal East and West districts have two such centres each with a total capacity of 174 beds, officials said.

Every other district barring Kamjong, Tamenglong and Jiribam

has one quarantine facility, they said.

Two isolation wards have been set up at the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) and the Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Medical Sciences (JNIMS) for COVID-19 patients, the officials added.

2,000 people attended Nizamuddin congregation

NEW DELHI, MAR 30 (PTI): Over 2,000 delegates, including from Indonesia and Malaysia, attended the Tabligh-e-Jamaat congregation in Nizamuddin West from March 1-15, officials said on Monday as the south Delhi neighbourhood was virtually sealed following fears that some people may have contracted COVID-19.

Delhi Police and CRPF officials and medical teams went to the locality late on Sunday night after reports that a large number of people were

showing symptoms of the disease, the officials said.

At least 100 people were also tested for the disease. The results are expected on Tuesday.

The entire area, which includes residences and the headquarters of the Tabligh-e-Jamaat, a Muslim religious organisation, was virtually cut off.

The joint Delhi Police-CRPF-medical team has been checking people and shifting them to designated hospitals for quarantining, the offi-

cials said.

Alarm bells started ringing after a man in his 60s who had attended the congregation succumbed to COVID-19 in Srinagar last week.

According to officials, there were several smaller congregations culminating in the big meeting at the headquarters of the organisation, which shares its wall with the Nizamuddin police station and is adjacent to the famous shrine of Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya.

The congregation have been announced prior to the imposition of the lockdown.

"The FM's (Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman) FAP (financial assistance plan) was so miserly

was attended by preachers from several countries, including Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Dubai, Uzbekistan and Malaysia. About 600 Indians from different parts of the country also participated.

The Indian members of the group left on trains and flights. Contacts of a few cases that were identified in several parts of the country were traced to the congregation, the officials said.

Buses have been kept in readiness for shifting and inadequate, it actually promoted many to go back to their villages.

"I urge the government to announce a bold FAP II today or tomorrow," he tweeted.

BAJ contributes Rs 25,000 to CM's Relief Fund

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 30 MAR:

Badminton Association of Jorethang [BAJ] contributed Rs 25,000 towards the Chief Minister's Relief Fund to support the State government in its efforts against COVID-19.

A BAJ press release

issued by its president, Jigme Namgyal, states, "In this strenuous time, our government under the able leadership of our Chief Minister, PS Tamang, has taken up all possible initiatives to keep the citizens safe. However, we as the citizens of the

state, also have a duty to perform by strictly following the guidelines given for the lockdown period."

BAJ has also offered its prayers to every person in the world fighting the virus, bedridden by the virus and staying safe from the virus.

Electricity bill and surcharge due date extended to 30 Apr

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 30 MAR:

In view of the lockdown in the State, the Power Department has extended the last due date for payment of electricity bills and surcharge to 30 April.

The notice announcing the new date explains that the department, on receiving many queries and concern from consumers regarding the due date for payment as well

as the surcharge which was earlier pegged for the end of the financial year - 31 March, decided to extend the due date.

The Power Department notice states "The Government of India has imposed a nation-wide lockdown to contain Coronavirus [COVID-19] pandemic. In view of the lockdown in the State of Sikkim, the Power

Department, with the approval of the State Government, is pleased to inform our esteemed consumers that the due date for payment of monthly electricity bill has been extended upto 30 Apr, 2020. Further, the surcharge to be levied on electricity dues remaining unpaid on the closure of the current Financial Year i.e. 31 Mar, 2020 is also extended upto 30 Apr, 2020."

MUSS and EPCS arrange meals for stranded labourers




SUMMIT REPORT

RANGPO, 30 MAR:

Manav Utthan Sewa Samiti [MUSS], Rangpo, and EPCS social wing provided breakfast and lunch to




more than 200 labourers stranded in Rangpo where they were stopped as they attempted to walk their way home to their respective States.

Owing to the lockdown, these migrant labourers are now out of work and keep to get home, but interstate, and now even district borders, have been sealed.



What is Novel Coronavirus - nCoV?

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

Symptoms of nCoV <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fever ● Difficulty in breathing ● Dry Cough ● Severe acute respiratory syndrome ● Pneumonia - like symptoms 	Precautions to Prevent nCoV <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wash your hands often with soap. ● Use an alcohol based hand sanitizer ● Observe good personal hygiene. ● Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands. ● Avoid contact with people with possible symptoms. ● Avoid contact with animals and consumption of undercooked meats. ● Avoid travel to nCoV affected places. ● Wear a mask if you have respiratory syndrome. and cover your mouth while coughing or sneezing.
Treatment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Treatment is symptomatic and supportive, based on the patient's clinical condition. ● No vaccinations available as of now. ● Visit Doctor in case symptoms detected 	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">    </div> <p>If you seek help, you may call :</p> <p>-Toll free no. 104</p> <p>District surveillance Officer</p> <p>EAST : 7028372100</p> <p>WEST : 9593297809</p> <p>NORTH : 9641957468</p> <p>SOUTH : 7407691463</p> <p>New STNM</p> <p>AMS : 9434711402</p>
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM	

**LAND FOR
SALE
(URGENT SALE)**

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

When the CM Speaks, It Helps

Communicate more in times of crisis and uncertainty

Chief Minister PS Tamang [Golay] taking to Facebook for a live communiqué on Sunday evening on nCoV and Sikkim's preparedness for it was a welcome development. The range of topics he covered on the issue was like a detailed FAQ section and answered many of the questions that must have been bothering the people and it helped that the answers and the reassurance came from the Chief Minister himself. It would serve the people well if the CM made time everyday to so address the people because what Sikkim, like any other state or country, needs as much as a resilient healthcare network is reassurance and a reiteration of empathy. The message was posted on Facebook and it is worth considering to have such communications broadcast on wider platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram, even Twitter and definitely on the local cable networks. In these times of crisis, it is important to communicate and if the message comes from the CM himself, it will be the most effective.

The messaging is also important. No one expects the CM to brief the people on the situation, for that, the army of babus and professionals are enough, what the people want from him is direction, a setting of the agenda, a setting of priorities and an appeal to the better instincts of the Sikkimese. This agenda is set by the elected representatives and should not come from officials who are best working in their respective silos, efficiently carrying out what they are tasked to do while the larger picture, the policy approach is spearheaded by the Chief Minister. And Sikkim needs this direction because what it is facing is not a law & order situation but a health-scare and a societal challenge. This, only their Chief Minister should address and direct, and that is something he initiated with his address to the people and should sustain.

This direction is important because the agencies currently calling the shots are either over-stretched, over-worked and not always as empathetic. Take for instance the panic exodus of migrant labourers on Sunday. The nation was already reporting about such movement since Friday, and yet, when workers here started as a trickle on Saturday and then larger masses on Sunday, they were stopped only after they had walked more kilometers that any scared individual or group should have to in these times, and that too after the Centre passed an order. If the officials had been more focused, they would have received reports of such movement the moment these workers stepped out of their tenements with their luggage and directions would have passed to reassure them and convince them to stay back before they had trudged even a kilometer. That did not happen. It is going to be a challenge to reassure them, and that will take collective empathy which should not be very difficult to invest since these are the hands that make development, whether private or public, possible in Sikkim. This is where the CM's leadership will be required and all it will take is for him to prioritise empathy and reassurance over what is the normal bureaucratic or police instinct of commanding and enforcing.

These are also times of uncertainty, and it is in situations like this that fake news and paranoia become rampant. While no one expects the Chief Minister to dispel every piece of fake news everyday, and appeal from him asking people to verify and await official word will be enough. When people know that their elected representative looks out for them and will talk to them and not talk down at them, they will behave much better than what the threat of lathis or even imprisonment can achieve. Mr Tamang has begun the process, here's hoping that the initiative continues.

PS: It might also be a good idea for the State Government to arrange for all the MLAs to be briefed on the situation. This is advisable because even if the government can be omnipresent in Sikkim, the MLAs too have a right to know and a responsibility towards their constituencies. It will also be a good gesture, and who knows, some political animosity can be shelved for the time-being and a wider collaboration established to combat the virus that has everyone scared. This can be done via video-conferencing since social-distancing is the norm at present.

Lockdown will hit women and migrant workers hardest

NITYA RAO

THECONVERSATION.COM

In Chennai, the capital of Tamil Nadu, I woke up to an eerie silence yesterday. The night before, India's prime minister, Narendra Modi, announced a 21-day national lockdown would start at midnight.

The next morning there was no one on the street and the local tea shop where factory workers, security guards and auto-rickshaw drivers congregate was closed. Several van loads of workers had been moved out of the factory premises nearby before the lockdown started. Street vendors selling fruit, tea and snacks had all left. All I could see were the police barricades, with officers stopping and questioning any passer-by.

While schools and other educational and recreational institutions across India had already closed the previous week, the scale of the country's coronavirus lockdown — of 1.3 billion people — is unprecedented.

India's finance minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, has now announced a range of measures including cash payment of ₹500 (£5) per month for three months to all women members of self-help groups and an increase in wages as part of India's employment guarantee programme.

State governments in Tamil Nadu, alongside Kerala, Delhi, Rajasthan and West Bengal, have also expanded social protection measures during the crisis. In Tamil Nadu, factory workers — many of them migrants from other states, especially northern India — will receive rice, dal, oil and sugar free of charge, along with cash support of ₹1,000 (£11) to meet other urgent expenses for the next two months. Rickshaw and taxi drivers and construction workers will also have access to these measures.

Half of India's 1.3 billion people are food insecure which means they lack access to sufficient safe and nutritious food. Around 60% of the poorest people from India's scheduled tribes and scheduled castes, are also anaemic. This means that a total lockdown, while it may help stop the spread of coronavirus, is likely to have a significant impact on food and nutrition. And while the initial reporting on the lockdown has been on cities and urban centres, where cases have been reported, little is known about the rural context.

WOMEN ON THE FRONTLINE

In a forthcoming paper in Nature Food, I argue that while women form an integral part of the agricultural sector across South Asia, and often make up a majority of the agricultural workforce, they are often compelled to work for low or no wages and in poor conditions to meet their families' basic needs.

While their contributions are seen as cen-

tral to the food and nutrition security of households and communities, the work they do is rarely recognised by those in charge. For example, women's agricultural work during peak planting and harvesting seasons makes them particularly time poor. This leaves them little time for domestic and care work, leading to inadequate childcare and poor health.

With this in mind, I have three main concerns about the lockdown and its possible impact on women in India.

First, women will continue to carry the primary responsibility for purchasing food, as well as preparing it for their households. It will be the responsibility of women to procure supplies from designated shops that supply rations. While it's unclear what the practical difficulties will be in distributing free supplies, there is also a need for cooking fuel, some vegetables and spices, and money to pay household rents and bills.

Devi*, who cooks and cares for my elderly parents, asked urgently for a part of the monthly salary to be transferred to her son's account. She wanted to purchase an LPG cylinder for cooking and some provisions before the lockdown. Both her sons, working as drivers, now have no work and no income, so she has become the sole provider, a cause for increased mental stress.

BURDEN FOR MIGRANT WORKERS

Second, in rural areas in the poorer states of northern and eastern India, most men migrate from around August to May after the monsoon planting season to earn a living in factories, construction sites and other businesses. They tend to head for the more developed states of southern and western India, including Kerala and Maharashtra, the two states worst affected by the pandemic so far. Apart from contributing to household food security, they try to save money to invest in their family farms.

In the Koraput district of the eastern state of Odisha, where my colleagues and I are conducting research with tribal groups on sustainable food supplies and agriculture, the local project coordinator, Vikas*, told me that truckloads of people have returned in the past week from the neighbouring states of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka and Kerala. Many of them were not paid their dues and will also not earn anything for the next few months. They could also be potential carriers of the virus.

Vikas and his group of youth volunteers are working to raise awareness, asking these returnee men to reduce interactions with other people in the village. But many of them live in one-room huts with their families and there are few places to self-quarantine.

How to address coronavirus misinformation spreading through messaging apps and email

SHANDELL HOULDEN

THECONVERSATION.COM

During times of crisis, like the current COVID-19 pandemic, people need access to reliable information in order to keep themselves safe, manage risk and avoid becoming a burden on others or health-care systems. However, ensuring that people have access to the right information when they need it has become a major challenge due to widespread digital misinformation.

Not only are people bombarded by misleading or outright dangerous misinformation, but this information is often shared on platforms where it cannot be corrected, such as on private messaging services and email. Providing health information to the public via a broadcast model of communication should not be the only solution to dealing with misinformation.

Or to put it another way: if you build it, they will not (necessarily) come.

LEVELS OF COMMUNICATION

Our past research has shown that different influences and relationships guide people's use of online platforms and how they experience information they come across on these platforms.

These influences occur at three basic levels: first, the micro level, or relationships with family and friends; second, the meso level or organizational and community-related influences; and third, the macro level, or societal, political and cultural influences.

At the micro level, people choose which platforms to use and how they use them in part based on close relationships with family and

friends. For example, some individuals may use Facebook to maintain friendships, while younger people are more likely to use Facebook to connect mainly with older contacts like their college instructors, and use more private or ephemeral tools like Snapchat or WhatsApp to connect with friends.

At the meso level, organizational forces guide what platforms people will use and how they use them. These connections include both pressures at work to use email and collaborative tools like Slack, as well as organizational choices that shape what we see, like the algorithms on Facebook or Twitter that determine which content shows up in our social media feeds.

At the macro level, broader policy, norms and culture shape what information people are willing to engage with and trust. For example, policies on the spread of online information or content moderation, policies related to freedom of speech or libel, as well as health-care access and cultural norms related to trust in government or medical experts will influence whether people engage with a public health message. When people feel the health system cannot or will not serve them, they become less likely to trust in it as a source of information.

INTERRUPTING THE SPREAD OF MISINFORMATION

Health information communication that only addresses one level of the ecology of influence will not effectively address the challenge of COVID-19 health messaging. For example, if a social media platform takes down misinformation related to COVID-19,

but people are still sharing it on email, private messaging platforms or around the water cooler at work, then removing it from Facebook or Twitter only goes so far to respond to the problem.

Similarly, if verified and trustworthy information about COVID-19 is only shared by health communicators on Facebook or Twitter, there may be entire groups that are not receiving the information because they do not use those platforms for their primary communication. This is why Prime Minister Justin Trudeau invited citizens and celebrities alike to share his health information message with others.

This means that in order to adequately inform the public about an important public health issue, we must aim to use multiple approaches that address as many of the levels of the ecological framework above as possible: micro-level approaches target individuals with compelling content and the right community influencers. Meso-level approaches target organizations with changes to content moderation practices at social media companies, or organization-based digital literacy programs. Finally, macro-level approaches address policies regarding health care and penalties for companies who willingly facilitate the spread of misinformation during a crisis.

COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

Public health communication is much more complicated than it used to be in the era of one-to-many communication, but there is hope.

How can public health communicators effectively communicate

It's too soon to say what the extent of infection is likely to be. However, my previous research in this area showed that due to strenuous work conditions, especially in brick kilns and construction sites in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh, migrant men often return sick. Despite bringing home some money, women's tasks as carers for them and their families get stretched. This is now likely to be further intensified.

For those men stuck in cities and unable to return home, there is a risk to their own food and health security. Ration cards are registered in their permanent rural residences and are usually in women's names. Out of work and without an income, in the absence of these ration cards, humanitarian social assistance is their only hope.

FOOD SECURITY THREAT

Third, the general poverty and lack of income for many Indian women could hinder food and nutrition security during the lockdown, particularly for those whose partners have lost work. Kerala has sought to involve women's self-help groups in food provisioning, especially the delivery of fresh, cooked meals, as part of its relief package.

But as well as ensuring food entitlements, it's critical the authorities strengthen care services. Unfortunately, as my colleagues doing ongoing research in southern Bihar have found, the primary health centres there are closed as a result of coronavirus and referral hospitals are ill-equipped. With childcare centres and schools also closed, there are no midday meals being served. As of March 25, take-home rations were not yet being distributed.

On the positive side, in the Koraput district of Odisha, our team did find some school authorities distributing the rations they held for midday meals to the households of children. The state has also begun paying state pensions for widows and disabled persons for three months in advance.

While these may be small measures, such innovations in state social protection need to be further strengthened to help women look after their families in rural areas, and to bear the new challenges posed by potentially infected men and institutional lockdown. Quick and effective delivery of support measures is now of utmost importance. The longer-term effects of the coronavirus pandemic in India could otherwise be even more severe and worsen food and nutrition insecurity for the poorest and most vulnerable.

* Names have been changed to protect anonymity.

[the writer is Professor of Gender & Development, University of East Anglia]

Now you can whatsapp

Summit TIMES @

9832556698

9832080753

2,506 people home quarantined in Assam's Kamrup district

RANGIA, MAR 30 (PTI): A total of 2,506 people of different age groups have been advised home quarantine in lower Assam's Kamrup district adjoining capital city Guwahati in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, officials said.

No COVID-19 positive case has been reported in Assam so far, an official said on Monday.

According to district Joint Director Health Dr N S Tishya, 381 people under the jurisdiction of Rangia Block Public Health Centre (BPHC), 322 under Kamalapur BPHC and 122 under Bihdia

BPHC have been home quarantined.

A total of 159 beds have been kept ready in five model hospitals in Kamrup district, including 20 beds at Rangia Railway Polyclinic, in case of any eventuality, the health official said.

Meanwhile, the district administration has taken all measures to ensure that the lockdown protocol is followed.

Medical and paramedical staff are on high alert and they are visiting all the wards of the municipal area here, a district administration official said, adding that as per gov-

ernment directive, grocery stores and pharmacies are open for the general public during fixed hours.

Irrigation Minister and local MLA Bhabesh Kalita monitored street sanitisation programmes undertaken by the Rangia civil administration.

He also lent a helping hand to the SDRF team in disinfecting the premises of Rangia PWD inspection Bungalow.

The minister has appealed to the people to strictly observe the lockdown and follow all government instructions in connection with it and remain indoors.

Community kitchen in Mathura feeding the needy

LUCKNOW, MAR 29 (PTI): Congress leader Pradeep Mathur and other social activists in Uttar Pradesh's Mathura district have transformed a food service organisation into a community kitchen amid the lockdown over the novel coronavirus pandemic.

A group of Congress workers have converted 'Maa ki Rasoi', a food service organisation, into a community kitchen.

"As soon as the nationwide lockdown was announced, we promptly converted it to a com-

munity kitchen," Mathur told PTI on Sunday.

The Congress leader said a food packet consists of rice, roti and vegetables. "So far, we have distributed 1500 packets in Mathura," he added.

Food packets are also being distributed to those stranded in various parts of city, the daily-wage labourers, Mathur said, adding that social distancing was strictly adhered to while distributing the packets.

"Now, we will also try to provide ration to the needy," he said.

Social activists Prashant Agarwal (who runs Maa ki Rasoi along with Mathur), Prahlad Khandelwal, Vipin Singh and Umesh Sharma are also involved in the community kitchen, said Mathur, who is the former Congress legislative party leader in Assembly.

He urged the state government to allow entry of wheat-harvesting machines in the state from other states, adding that farmers should apply for the machine at the office of the district magistrate.

SC seeks status report from Centre on steps taken to prevent migration of workers

NEW DELHI, MAR 30 (PTI): The Supreme Court on Monday sought a status report from the Centre by Tuesday on the measures taken in view of the large-scale migration of labourers from cities to their native villages amid the coronavirus outbreak and the consequent lockdown across the country.

The top court observed that the migration of labourers out of panic and fear is becoming a bigger problem than the coronavirus.

It said the court would not create more confusion by issuing directions on measures that the government is already taking to deal with the issue.

A bench of Chief

Justice SA Bobde and Justice L Nageswara Rao, which took up two separate PILs filed by advocates Alakh Alok Srivastava and Rashmi Bansal on the issue of migration of labourers through video-conferencing, said before passing any direction, it would like to wait for the status report from the Centre.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, said the migration of labourers needs to be stopped to prevent the spread of the virus and the Centre as well as the states concerned have taken the requisite steps to deal with it.

The bench posted the matters for hearing on Tuesday.

Woman arrested for posting fake news on WhatsApp group

KOLKATA, MAR 30 (PTI): A woman has been arrested here for allegedly sharing fake information pertaining to COVID-19 on WhatsApp, a senior police officer said on Monday.

She had apparently

claimed in her post that 15 people have tested positive for novel coronavirus in New Alipore area of the city and that the state government was suppressing the information, the officer said.

The woman, in her early 30s, was arrested on Sunday after a few people in the locality, who had received the message on a WhatsApp group, lodged a complaint with the New Alipore police station, he said.

A resident of Jyotish Roy Road in the area, she failed to provide any proof to justify her claim, the officer said, adding that the WhatsApp group admin has been asked to delete the post.

JM Coetzee comes out with final book of Jesus trilogy

NEW DELHI, MAR 30 (PTI): Nobel laureate JM Coetzee has completed his Jesus trilogy with the final book, exploring the meaning of a world empty of memory but brimming with questions.

In the first book The Childhood of Jesus, published in 2014, a refugee named Simon found an orphan boy David and they began life in a new land, together with a woman named Ines.

He got separated from his mother as a passenger on a boat bound for a new land. Simon was a fellow passenger and vowed to look after David.

In The Schooldays of Jesus, written four years later, the small family searched for a home in which David could thrive. Simon and Ines take care of David in their new town, Estrella.

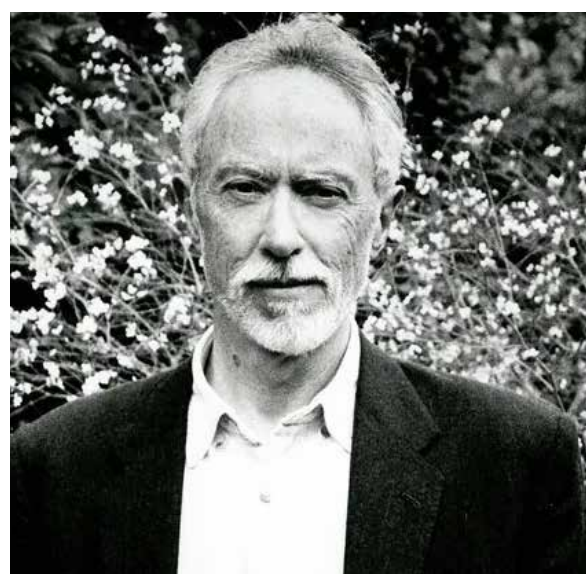
In The Death of Jesus, David, now a tall

10-year-old, shows unusual talent in football. He asks Simon and Ines many questions. In dancing class at the Academy of Music he dances as he chooses. He refuses to do sums and will not read any books except Don Quixote.

In fact he knows Don Quixote by heart, in an abbreviated version for children; he treats it not as a made-up story but as a veritable history.

One day David is spotted by Julio Fabricante, director of a local orphanage Las Manos, playing football with his friends in the street.

David, with the ball at his feet, feints left and goes right, making the move so fluidly that the defender is left stranded. He passes the ball to a teammate and watches as the teammate lobs the ball tamely into the goal-



keeper's arms.

Julio is impressed by David's skills and he tells his father, who was also watching his son play, He is very good, your son. A natural.

Simon tells Julio that because David takes dancing lessons, he has good balance and an advantage over his friends.

Julio invites David and his friends to form

a proper soccer team. When David announces that he wants to go and live with Julio and the children in his care, Simon and Ines are stunned. David leaves with Julio, but before long he succumbs to a mysterious illness.

All the books in the trilogy have been published by Penguin Random House.

Lack of money, food drove migrants back to home

LUCKNOW, MAR 29 (PTI): Labourers reaching Lucknow from Delhi and other states had a similar tale to narrate that they had no money and food, forcing them to return to their homes.

The state government has decided not to charge any ticket amount to any labourers, workers and families who are travelling in state-run buses, said Raj Shekhar, the managing director of the Uttar Pradesh State Roadways Transport Corporation.

He added that the conductor need to maintain the way bill details for further necessary action, and the expenditure will be reimbursed by the government.

"This will be implemented with immediate effect," he said.

After covering several kilometres on foot along with their families, the labourers, who reached Charbagh bus station in Lucknow on Saturday and Sunday, said there was no point staying in Delhi as they have exhaust-



ed their funds and it would be better for them to return to their homes.

Pankaj Chauhan, who returned to Lucknow from Hazrat Nizamuddin, had his face covered with a handkerchief as a precautionary measure.

"I have to go to Kanpur and I am waiting for my bus," Chauhan said.

Asked whether any arrangement had been made in Delhi for them or not, Chauhan said "our ration stock has exhausted, and funds too have been exhausted".

A state government officer had on

Saturday said transport officers, drivers and conductors were called in the night from their homes and around 1,000 buses were arranged.

"UP chief minister himself monitored the situation and more than 1,000 buses were pressed into action to bring stranded people in Noida, Ghaziabad, Bulandshahr, Aligarh and Hapur to their respective destinations," the officer said.

Those arriving at Charbagh bus station in Lucknow were then sent to Kanpur, Ballia, Varanasi, Gorakhpur, Azamgarh, Ayodhya, Basti, Pratapgarh, Sultanpur, Amethi, Rae

Bareilly, Gonda, Etawah, Bahraich and Shravasti.

State police chief HC Awasthi and Lucknow police commissioner Sujit Pandey arranged food and water for the stranded people.

In a statement, Lucknow District Magistrate Abhishek Prakash said: "Around 70,000 food packets have been prepared to cater to huge number of people coming from the National Capital Region."

A large number of people from other states reached the expressway toll plaza in Lucknow. The district administration is providing them lunch and drinking water.

At the toll plaza, Prakash instructed the people to sit at a distance of two metres and strictly follow social-distancing norms.

In Aligarh, hundreds of stranded migrant workers from the NCR are desperately searching for means of transport to reach their native towns and villages. These migrants, including and children, are concentrated on the outskirts of the city.

Most of these stranded people are heading to Agra, Etah and Kasganj. Some of the stranded are also from distant locations in eastern Uttar Pradesh.

"The police is sparing no efforts in arranging transport for these stranded passengers. More than 65 buses of the UPSRTC were yesterday pressed into service for this task," Senior Superintendent of Police Muniraj G said.

On the other hand, police have intensified stringent measures against residents in the city who are wilfully violating the lockdown.

Another COVID-19 patient dies in Bengal, death count 2

KOLKATA, MAR 30 (PTI): A woman infected with the coronavirus died at a state-run hospital in north Bengal on Monday, taking the total number of COVID-19 deaths in West Bengal to two, hospital sources said.

The 44-year-old woman from Kalimpong in Darjeeling district breathed her last around 2 am at the North Bengal Medical College and Hospital, where she was admitted.

She had recently re-

turned from Chennai, where she had gone for the treatment of her daughter.

Her daughter and the doctor, who was treating the woman, have been quarantined at a centre, a health department of-

ficial said.

Earlier, an elderly man from Kolkata had died from COVID-19 last week.

The total number of COVID-19 cases has risen to 21 in West Bengal, including the two deaths.

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

SummitTIMES

IOA promises support, contribution to fight COVID-19 pandemic

NEW DELHI, MAR 30 (PTI): The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) on Monday promised “support and contribution” towards the country’s battle to contain the deadly COVID-19 pandemic, saying its member national federations and state affiliates will also step in to aid the cause.

In a statement posted on the body’s Twitter handle, IOA Secretary General Rajeev Mehra said “we are deeply grateful to all the front-line workers who are risking their lives to fight this pandemic.”

In another tweet, the IOA said the cycling federation and the Indian Golf Union have already promised monetary contributions to fight the outbreak, which has led to a nationwide lockdown till April 14.

“The #Cycling fraternity is committed to the need of the nation in fighting the severity of COVID-19 crisis. @

OfficialCFI Chairman Mr Onkar Singh pledged a support of 1 Lac Rupees on behalf of Cycling Federation of India for this noble cause,” the IOA tweeted.

“In the fight against COVID-19 pandemic, IGU President Lt.Gen D Anbu (Retd), has pledged to commit a sum of 10 lac Rupees on behalf of the @IndianGolfUnion and the #Golf community to support the nation in its fight against the current crisis,” it added.

In India, the number of COVID-19 cases has crossed 1,000 and led to 27 deaths. Globally, the pandemic has killed more than 34,000, besides infecting over 700,000.

“...the Indian Olympic Association and its member national sports federations and state Olympic associations pledge our support and contribution towards the cause of India’s fight against this crisis,” Mehta said.

to book advertisements in SummitTimes call 03592-208698, 9734152541, 9647102692, advertise@summittimes.com,

Oil prices at 17-year lows as virus ravages world

SINGAPORE, MAR 30 (AFP): Oil prices extended losses in Asian trade Monday and languished at 17-year lows, with the coronavirus crisis escalating around the world and no end in sight to a vicious price war.

US benchmark West Texas Intermediate fell 5.3 percent to trade at 20 a barrel, while international benchmark Brent crude was off 6.5 percent at 23.

The falls came after the death toll from the pandemic surged past 30,000 at the weekend as cases in hard-hit Europe and the United States showed no sign of letting up.

Senior US scientist Anthony Fauci estimated the virus could possibly result in 100,000

to 200,000 deaths in the United States, while President Donald Trump extended “social distancing” guidelines until April 30.

The president also said he expected the country to “be well on our way to recovery” by June 1 -- dropping his previous target of mid-April.

The virus has infected more than 140,000 in the world’s top economy and left more than 2,400 dead.

Oil markets have been plunging for weeks as lockdowns and travel restrictions imposed by governments worldwide to fight the virus strangle demand.

Even as demand falls, supply has increased dramatically after top

producers Saudi Arabia and Russia engage in a price war following a row about whether to cut output to support prices.

At the end of last week, Riyadh said it had not been in touch with Moscow about potential output cuts while Russia’s deputy energy minister said oil at 25 a barrel was not a catastrophe for the country’s producers -- signalling the two sides are still far apart.

“Demand concerns are critical but well known, what really took the market down were the signals we got from Saudi Arabia and Russia that they intend to continue their current path,” Vivek Dhar, a commodities analyst at Commonwealth Bank of Australia, told Bloomberg News.

“Market hopes of a deal have come undone.” There are fears the commodity could fall further as storage tanks around the globe approach full capacity.

“When the storage capacity is filled, we should probably expect a response from Saudi Arabia, Russia, and other essential oil producers,” AxiCorp’s Stephen Innes said, though he warned “the longer their response takes, the higher the risk of another steep decline in oil prices”.

The retreat on oil markets comes after a bounce with equities last week that came after policymakers worldwide unleashed massive stimulus measures to prop up the virus-hit global economy.

Turkish World Cup hero Reber hospitalised with coronavirus



ANKARA, MAR 30 (AFP): Former Turkish national team and ex-Barcelona goalkeeper Rustu Reber is in hospital after testing positive for coronavirus, his wife said.

Reber took on hero status in Turkey as he kept goal at the 2002 World Cup,

anchoring his team to the semi-finals and ultimately third place, their greatest ever performance in the tournament.

The powerfully built and poney-tailed goalkeeper was easily recognisable at the World Cup due to the black, anti-reflection product he smeared beneath

his eyes like some NFL players.

“Rustu is in hospital with a COVID-19 diagnosis,” Isil Reber said on Instagram.

“We are in a state of shock after the symptoms developed rapidly while everything was normal. These are critical times and it’s very difficult.”

Last week, Galatasaray manager Fatih Terim said he also tested positive for the virus.

Turkey has officially recorded 9,217 cases of the new coronavirus while 131 people have died, according to the health minister Sunday.

CONTACT SUMMIT TIMES REPORTERS

NAMCHI 9832048410, 9775736596 SINGTAM 7699771651

MANGAN/ DIKCHU 9832612485/ 9434011213

GANGTOK 8016270440, 9832082664, 9832424750, 8768664251 9832470000

Rugby Australia posts big losses, warns of ‘significant cuts’

SYDNEY, MAR 30 (AFP): Rugby Australia’s alarming financial state heading into the coronavirus shutdown was revealed Monday with the organisation posting a near Aus 10 million (US 6.0 million) deficit, not helped by a hefty payment to the sacked Israel Folau.

The 2019 numbers were released as the governing body struggles to navigate a way through the COVID-19-enforced halt to sport, and with players complaining of being locked out of critical talks about their future.

RA said it was unable to produce a set of audited financial accounts due to uncertainty surrounding its business into the 2020 season and beyond as revenues dry up because of the pandemic.

But after its annual general meeting it reported a provisional Aus 9.4 million operating deficit, compared to a Aus 5.4 million profit in 2018.

Revenues are ordinarily hit in a World Cup year, with fewer home Tests, but expenditure also increased by Aus 6.6

million.

Part of the extra spend was the undisclosed settlement with Folau, an ardent Christian and former poster boy of Australian rugby who was fired over homophobic social media posts.

The two parties avoided a costly court battle over the legality of the sacking by reaching a mediated agreement in December.

The governing body’s perilous position comes with rugby on hold indefinitely after the Australian government put tough restrictions on public gatherings as it battles to contain the coronavirus.

The country has so far confirmed more than 4,000 coronavirus cases, with 18 fatalities.

Rugby Australia chairman Paul McLean said “significant cuts across the business” would be needed to keep the sport financially viable in the short term.

Specific action was not outlined, although talks are underway to tap funds from the government and World Rugby.



- EXECUTIVE PAY SLASHED -

Whether players will need to take pay cuts has yet to be decided, but chief executive Raelene Castle’s salary has been halved and other senior executives are taking a 30 percent cut.

“To put it simply, there is no way of

knowing what damage this crisis will have on our game, or for how long it will continue to impact us,” said McLean.

“It has forced us to make some extremely difficult decisions, and there will be even harder decisions to come as we continue to navigate the implications of the

virus on the game’s finances.”

The organisation is set to lose broadcast rights money imminently with a proposed domestic tournament to replace the suspended Super Rugby competition shelved, and serious doubts about whether home Tests against Ire-

land and Fiji in July will take place.

Ahead of the AGM, the Rugby Union Players’ Association (RUPA) slammed the governing body for sidelining it on discussions about the future, complaining about “a vacuum of information”.

“While our colleagues in the other major football codes across Australia have been meeting with their governing bodies for weeks, RA has refused to share any information about the future financial direction of the game,” said RUPA chief Justin Harrison.

Castle said talks would begin with players on Tuesday.

“I understand from their point of view that there is a level of frustration that they haven’t had a deeper engagement earlier,” she said.

“But the reality is Rugby Australia didn’t want to enter into those conversations until it had the chance to give them accurate information so we could enter into a solution-based scenario for the next three months.

K’taka govt gets tough on educational institutions

BENGALURU, MAR 30 (PTI): Karnataka government has warned private educational institutions of legal action if they do not postpone the admission process and collection of fees for the next academic year, in the wake of the lockdown to fight COVID-19.

“It has been reported that some of the private educational institutions are demanding parents to pay fees for the next academic year in the month of April or May.

Schools have been fixing deadlines,” Primary and Secondary Education Minister Suresh Kumar said in a video re-

leased to the media.

In view of COVID-19 and lockdown that is in place, the education department issued a circular stating that admission process and collection of fees for 2020-21, including payment of fees by students continuing in same school, shall be postponed till the next government order, the Minister noted.

“I’m making it clear, any institution violating the said government order will be held accountable under the Education Act, including cancellation of recognition of school or educational institution,” he said.

“Also, a criminal case under section 3 of the Epidemic Diseases Act of 1897, also CrPC can be booked,” he said, and requested all private educational institutions to postpone admission and fee collection process for the academic year 2020-21 till further orders.

The Minister also asked schools that have sent in circulars to parents asking payment for fees to withdraw them and keep them suspended till the next government order or else face legal consequences, including a criminal case.

Also, Kumar declared that the ongoing leave/

work from home for teachers in the wake of lockdown has been extended till April 11.

“For teachers of primary and high schools of Karnataka given leave till March 31 and asked to work from home, the leave has been extended till April 11, in view of the lockdown declared by the Prime Minister,” he said.

“During this period, I request all the teachers to act upon the schedule of programmes given by the department and work from home, and fully prepare yourselves for the coming academic year,” he added.

Mentally at Wankhede, physically home: Surya

MUMBAI, MAR 30 (PTI): He had been in red hot form in white ball leg of domestic cricket and no wonder Suryakumar Yadav like many others was physically in his Mumbai home but mentally at the Wankhede Stadium where Mumbai Indians would have played CSK in IPL opener on Sunday.

The IPL, which has been postponed till April 15 due to the

COVID-19 outbreak, in all likelihood will be cancelled as the government fights to bring the current pandemic under control with a 21-day lockdown.

“Mentally at Wankhede stadium. But physically at home. This too shall pass. #stayhome #staysafe,” tweeted Surya on late Sunday night along with two of his pictures, one at Wankhede and the other at home.

Currently, there are more than 1000 positive



cases for novel coronavirus in India with death toll already crossing 25.

US regulator approves limited use of malaria drugs for virus

WASHINGTON, MAR 30 (AFP): A limited emergency-use authorisation for two antimalarial drugs touted as game-changers by President Donald Trump has been issued by the US Food and Drug Administration to treat coronavirus patients.

In a statement published Sunday, the US Department of Health and Human Services detailed recent donations of medicine to a national stockpile -- including chloroquine

and hydroxychloroquine, both being investigated as potential COVID-19 treatments.

It said the FDA had allowed them “to be distributed and prescribed by doctors to hospitalized teen and adult patients with COVID-19, as appropriate, when a clinical trial is not available or feasible.”

Trump said last week that the two drugs could be a “gift from God,” despite scientists warning

against the dangers of overhyping unproven treatments.

Many researchers including Anthony Fauci, the United States’ leading infectious disease expert, have urged the public to remain cautious until larger clinical trials validate smaller studies.

Two US medical bodies -- the National Institutes of Health and the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority -- are current-

ly working to plan such trials.

Some in the scientific community fear Trump’s endorsement of the medicines could create shortages for patients who need them to treat lupus and rheumatoid arthritis, diseases for which they are approved.

The US has more than 140,000 novel coronavirus cases and 2,489 deaths, according to a tracker maintained by Johns Hopkins University.

Coronavirus: China reports 4 deaths, 31 new cases

K J M VARMA

BEIJING, MAR 30 (PTI): China has reported 31 new cases of coronavirus including 30 imported ones while the death toll reached 3,304 with four more fatalities, health officials said on Monday.

The country's National Health Commission (NHC) in its daily report said 31 new confirmed COVID-19 cases on the Chinese mainland were reported on Sunday, of which 30 were imported, taking their total number to 723.

A new domestic case was reported in Gansu province, it said.

The four deaths were reported from the virus epicentre Hubei province, it said.

The overall confirmed cases on the mainland has reached 81,470 by the end of Sunday. This included 3,304 people died of the disease, 2,396 patients still being treated and 75,770 patients discharged after recovery, the NHC said.

It said that 168 people were still suspected of being infected with the virus, 165 of whom were from abroad.

By the end of Sunday, 641 confirmed cases including four deaths have

been reported from Hong Kong, 38 confirmed cases in Macao and 298 in Taiwan including three deaths.

A total of 118 patients in Hong Kong, 10 in Macao and 39 in Taiwan have been discharged from the hospital after recovery.

China on Sunday resumed domestic flights in the coronavirus epicentre Hubei province, except for its capital Wuhan, as part of a plan to ease the lockdown in the region following a steep decline in the number of confirmed cases.

Hubei's capital Wuhan, which bore the brunt of the vicious virus for over two months, would begin its air services from April 8.

China began to ease its lockdown of Hubei province, home for over 56 million people, from March 25 by resuming local transport services followed by relaxation of travel for people tested negative for coronavirus.

According to Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Centre, more than 32,000 people have died of coronavirus and 684,652 have been infected globally.

China slashes rate, pumps USD 7 bn into market to counter virus

BEIJING, MAR 30 (AFP): China's central bank on Monday cut an interest rate on loans to banks by the largest margin in five years and injected 50 billion yuan (USD 7 billion) into the financial system to help the world's second-largest economy weather the coronavirus impact.

The People's Bank of China (PBoC) said it launched a 50-billion-yuan reverse repurchase operation on Monday and lowered the seven-day reverse repurchase rate from 2.40 percent to 2.20 per cent.

It was the "largest cut since 2015 and takes the 7-day reverse repo rate to its lowest on record", said Julian Evans-Pritchard, senior China economist at Capital Economics.

"By offering funds at a lower rate, the PBoC will be able to keep market interbank rates low even as the liquidity from the RRR (reserve requirement ratio) cuts is absorbed by the banking system," he said, referring to an earlier lowering of the amount of cash lenders must keep in reserve.

The deadly pathogen has claimed almost 40,000 lives worldwide, hitting businesses and consumers, and its global spread has dampened hope of a quick recovery in export-dependent China, where the pandemic first erupted in December.

The latest move comes as governments and central banks around the world ease monetary policy and unveil titanic stimulus measures worth around USD 5 trillion to counter the economic impact of the pandemic,

which forecasters warn will cause a deep recession.

The Communist Party's decision-making polituro also called last Friday for stronger counter-cyclical policy measures and a step-up in stimulus.

The politburo said where appropriate, the fiscal deficit ratio should be raised, special treasury bonds should be issued, and that there should be an increased quota of local government special bond issuance, China's official Xinhua News Agency reported.

Effective loan rates should also be guided down, "maintaining reasonable and sufficient liquidity", officials added.

Monday's move appears to have had little impact on market sentiment, with Shanghai's key stock index about one percent lower in the afternoon.

As COVID-19 ravages the global economy, analysts have cut growth forecasts for China, which was the first to see the effects from containment measures aimed at halting its spread.

S&P Global Ratings said its revised economic growth estimate for China in 2020 is now almost half its pre-outbreak growth assumption of 5.7 percent.

ANZ Research economists Xing Zhaopeng and Raymond Yeung said in a note that the PBoC's rate cut "is intended to lower Chinese corporates' funding costs".

They expect it will be followed by cuts in the medium term lending facility rates and loan prime rate.

Hungary's Orban seeks sweeping new powers in virus fight



Hungary's parliament was expected to endorse a bill on Monday giving nationalist premier Viktor Orban sweeping new powers he says he needs to fight the new coronavirus pandemic.

Critics at home and abroad have condemned the "anti-coronavirus defence law", saying it gives Orban unnecessary and unlimited power in a ruse to cement his leadership rather than battle the virus.

After declaring a state of emergency on March 11, Orban expects parliament to allow him to extend it indefinitely beyond an initial 15-day period and largely rule by decree in order to fight COVID-19 and its impacts.

According to the draft posted on the parliament website on March 20, the bill would enable the government to indefinitely extend powers of decree until it decides when the state of emergency is over, removing the current requirement for MPs to approve any extension.

It also introduces jail terms of up to five years

for anyone spreading "falsehoods" about the virus or the measures against it, stoking new worries for press freedom.

Since taking power in 2010, the self-styled "illiberal" nationalist has transformed Hungary's political, judicial and constitutional landscape.

The 56-year-old has frequently clashed with European institutions, NGOs and rights groups with Brussels suing Hungary for "breaching" EU values -- charges fiercely denied by Budapest.

Orban has given crit-

icism of the coronavirus law short shrift, accusing critics of alarmism and appealing to "European nit-pickers" to let Hungary defend itself against COVID-19.

- 'Imaginary demons' -

"If they can't help, then at least don't stop the Hungarians from defending (against the virus)," he said Friday.

His justice minister, Judit Varga, told foreign reporters Friday that parliament could revoke the decrees at any time, and that the opposition were "fighting imaginary demons and not dealing with reality".

She also said decrees could be sent to the constitutional court for review.

A government spokesperson Zoltan Kovacs insisted on Twitter Monday that the bill is time limited by the parliament's powers of revoke, and by the pandemic itself which "hopefully ends one day".

He added that "72 per cent of Hungarians support this measure", referring to a recent poll about the provision on spreading falsehoods.

Last week, opposition MPs said however they do not trust Orban

not to abuse unlimited special powers and refused to back the bill unless a time deadline is imposed on the decrees.

But it is almost certain to be made law when it comes before MPs as Orban's Fidesz party enjoys a two-thirds majority.

A government minister, Gergely Gulyas, said it could come into force Monday midnight if the house speaker and Hungarian president sign it immediately.

Agnes Kunhalmi, a lawmaker for socialist opposition party MSZP, urged Orban to "not perpetrate political games against the opposition" and add a three-month expiration date to the bill.

- 'Principles of democracy' -

Akos Hadhazy, an independent MP, told AFP that Orban did not need any "extraordinary empowerment" as his party already controls parliament and had instead set up a "trap for the opposition" with pro-government media accusing it of being on the side of the virus by opposing the bill.

Criticism of the bill

has also come from abroad with the UN human rights office saying it was following the Hungarian developments "with concern".

The Council of Europe also wrote a letter to Orban last week, warning that an "indefinite and uncontrolled state of emergency cannot guarantee that the basic principles of democracy will be observed".

The fiercely anti-immigration Orban has blamed migration for bringing the virus to Hungary, saying "primarily foreigners brought in the disease".

The first two confirmed coronavirus cases in the EU member state of 10 million involved Iranian students.

Hungary has since reported a total of 447 cases with 15 deaths. More than 13,300 tests have been carried out, the government said Monday.

Orban's latest move will also strain already difficult relations between Fidesz and the European Parliament's conservative EPP grouping which has dithered over expelling the party from their ranks.

New York state passes grim milestone of 1,000 deaths due to COVID-19

YOSHITA SINGH

NEW YORK, MAR 30 (PTI): The number of deaths in New York state due to the coronavirus outbreak has crossed the 1,000 mark, with Governor Andrew Cuomo warning that thousands of people will pass away before the crisis ends in America's current COVID-19 epicentre.

Cuomo, addressing his daily press conference on the pandemic on Sunday, said the deaths due to the massive virus outbreak in the state sharply rose from 728 to 965 in just one day. At 237, this was the largest one-day increase in number of deaths since the coronavirus outbreak began. By the end of the day, the death toll in the state crossed the 1,000-mark.

The number of coronavirus deaths in New York city increased by 161 from Saturday night to Sunday morning, pushing the statewide total to over 1,000 fatalities, The New York Times said.

Cuomo warned that things will get worse as the state could see thousands of deaths before the COVID-19 crisis subsides.

"I don't see how you look at those numbers and conclude anything less than thousands of people will pass away. Because remember who it's attacking, it's attacking the vulnerable, (with) underlying illness among other. And I don't see how you get past that curve without seeing thousands of people pass away. I hope it's wrong.

"And we will continue to see the number of deaths increase. In terms of most impacted states, again, New York is still

number one," he said.

The grim figure of over a 1,000 deaths comes less than a month after the first known coronavirus infection was identified in the state on March 1.

A healthcare worker, who had recently returned from Iran, was the first confirmed coronavirus case in the state.

Just days later, a lawyer in the New York suburb of New Rochelle tested positive for the virus and was at the centre of one of the earliest US coronavirus clusters. Cuomo announced that the lawyer recovered sufficiently and has now gone home from the hospital.

The total number of confirmed coronavirus cases in the US stood at 143,025 and 2,509 people have died in the country, according to data from Johns Hopkins University.

Over 7,000 additional coronavirus cases in New York state were recorded, bringing the statewide total to 59,513, Cuomo said.

New York city Mayor Bill de Blasio said that the number of coronavirus cases in the city alone were 32,308, "a stunning number. And we have lost, and this is so painful, 678 of our fellow New Yorkers. That means in the last 24 hours from this morning to Saturday morning, we lost 161 more people in this city. People of all walks of life, every kind of New Yorker".

The mayor said New York City remains the epicenter of the crisis nationally.

"A day will come when I will be able to no longer use that word and we all look forward to

that word. But right now, we are the epicenter and the numbers are staggering," he said.

A total of about 8,000 people are currently hospitalised in New York state, including 2,000 ICU patients.

Cuomo also pointed out that 3,500 patients have been discharged.

"We know - nobody really points to these numbers but this is good news. 846 people came out of hospitals yesterday, discharged after being treated for COVID-19," he said.

He told reporters that initially the hospitalisation rate in the state was

doubling every two days, then it doubled every three days, then every four days.

"Now it's doubling every six days. So you have almost a dichotomy: The doubling rate is slowing, and that is good news but the number of cases are still going up. So you're still going up towards an apex, but the rate of the doubling is slowing, which is good news.

Earlier in the day, the Governor said in an e-mail that "tragically we have now lost almost a thousand New Yorkers to this vicious virus. We mourn them deeply. Every life lost is one too

many. We are fighting to save every life we can. You can help us by staying home and slowing the spread".

Cuomo said he is extending the "New York on PAUSE" policy until April 15, which means non-essential businesses and schools will continue to stay closed.

Gatherings of any size for any reason remain cancelled and all New Yorkers continue to be directed to practice social distancing -- by staying home and keeping six feet of space from others when in public. The state will re-evaluate after this additional two-

week period. He said "the increase on the trajectory of cases continues to climb". Cuomo notes as the state tries to reduce the spread of the virus, it is also preparing for the worst.

He said a 1,000 bed temporary hospital is opening at the sprawling Javits convention center on Monday, and other temporary hospitals are being built.

Three COVID-only facilities are also planned. The USNS Comfort, a Navy hospital ship, will arrive in New York Harbor on Monday, staffed with 1,200 medical professionals.

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

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

To book ad-space, contact SummitTIMES at

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

SILIGURI:
Mr. Mani Rai, M/s. Space Ads, B.R. Ambedkar Building, Room No.7, 1st floor, Opp. Banga Hotel, Hill Cart Road, Siliguri - 735007. Ph. 033-22124348 / fax 033-22124337 / mob. +91-9830547774 / +91-9831083977. E-mail: contact.synapse@gmail.com / irshad_al123@rediffmail.com

KOLKATA OFFICE:
Irshad Ali / Inteqayaz Synapse, 6, Modan Street, Mezzine - 2, 2nd floor, Kolkata - 700072. Ph. 033-22124348 / fax 033-22124337 / mob. +91-9830547774 / +91-9831083977. E-mail: contact.synapse@gmail.com / irshad_al123@rediffmail.com

VIDEO NEWS SECTION

facebook.com/SummitTimesOnline

SummitTIMES

to book advertisements in SummitTimes, call 03592-208698 9734152541



FUN IN THE SUN! Author, Kelly Killoren Bensimon was smiles while posing with her dog in West Palm Beach, Florida.

Now ‘Shaktimaan’ returns amid lockdown, confirms Mukesh Khanna

MUMBAI, MAR 30 (PTI): Joining the list of reruns on Doordarshan is another cult classic from the golden era of Indian television, superhero show “Shaktimaan”, veteran actor Mukesh Khanna, who featured in the titled role, has revealed.

Earlier, it was announced the cult hit mythological series “Ramayana”, “Mahabharat”, Shah Rukh Khan-starrer “Circus” and “Byomkesh Bakshi”, featuring Rajit Kapur, will be re-telecast on the national broadcaster and its sister channels during the 21-day lockdown to combat the spread of coronavirus.

Khanna took to Twitter on Sunday to share the news.

“Getting to watch two epics of our country ‘Ramayan’ and ‘Mahabharat’ in one day was a matter of great happiness for the 135 crore people who are under lockdown. Sit at home and enjoy. There could not have been a bigger good news.

“But I’d like to add something to this happy news for my ‘Shaktimaan’ fans, that ‘Shaktimaan’ is also going to come very soon,” he said in the video clip.



However, the actor-producer didn’t disclose the date and time of the show’s re-run, he asked fans to wait for the announcement.

Khanna, who was already a household name thanks to his role as the duty-bound Bhishma in BR Chopra’s “Mahabharat”, found another fan base among children in the late 1990s as Shaktimaan and his alter ego “Pandit Gangadhar Vidhyadhar Mayadhar Omkarnath Shastri”, a photographer for the newspaper Aaj Ki Awaz.

“Shaktimaan” aired on DD 1 from 1997 to 2005.

It was later translated into different languages and aired on different channels.

The show was followed by “Shaktimaan: The Animated Series” in 2011, and a television film titled “Hamara Hero Shaktimaan” in 2013.

There are reports that Khanna is working on a sequel to the show and will start working on a follow-up after the lockdown.

Why Jesse Eisenberg started playing ‘nasty people’ on screen

LOS ANGELES, MAR 30 (PTI): Actor Jesse Eisenberg says he started taking up “nasty” characters as he was fed up with playing the good guy.

In an interview with Dazed magazine, the 36-year-old actor said initially in his career, he was only offered “sweet” and “virginal” characters.

“When I started doing movies, I kept getting sweet, virginal characters. And I didn’t want to do that anymore, so I started only taking parts that were confident, nasty people,” Eisenberg said.

He next features in sci-fi thriller “Vivarium”, opposite Imogen Poots.

The actor said, unlike his recent roles, his character of Tom is not an “eccentric protagonist”.

“Essentially, I’m playing the masculine presence in ‘Vivarium’. He’s not an eccentric protagonist, which is the part I’m usually interested in playing. It’s not the kind of thing I want to do a lot, but it was interesting,” Eisenberg said.

“Vivarium”, which had its world premiere at the 2019 Cannes Film Festival, was released in the US on March 27.

Aries:

This self-isolation business hasn’t been easy. You’ve had your share of ups and downs. You’ve had your share of yearning to be outside. But there’s a deep inner alchemy within you in the beginning of this week, a sense of peace and calm that comes from accepting the things you cannot change. Focus on inspiring those around you to dig deeper and find a reservoir of strength within themselves. You could also find yourself creatively charged or looking at existing projects through a brand new perspective.

Taurus:

The world may be on lockdown, but that doesn’t mean joy, creativity, art, and poetry have to be. As a descendant of Venus, you’ve taken it upon yourself to bring beauty into this world in whatever way you can. No contribution is too big or small, Taurus. Your energies are playing an integral role in harmonising the Universe. But in order to dig into this creative reserve, you’re going to have to do a little bit of inner work. Unprocessed emotions from your past could resurface, throwing you off.

Gemini:

Monday morning revelations: multitasking isn’t all that it’s cracked up to be. There are meals to prepare, dishes to wash, and cobwebs to clear. Housework keeps coming in the way of professional and creative endeavours. You can either complain about your to-do list and make everything seem like an uphill task or you can perfect the art of balance. Remember, meditation is not just something you practice for a few minutes every

morning

Cancer:

The world may be on lockdown, but that doesn’t mean your plans have to be. This week, you’re showing up for your early morning meetings in a crisp white shirt and a look of invincibility on your face. Lead by example, Cancer. Your actions will speak louder than your words and inspire others to up their game simultaneously. The project you’re working on right now is a significant one.

Leo:

You may feel like the world is weighing you down with unrealistic demands, but you don’t have to meet these expectations or give into the pressure of virtual meetings and deadlines. Slow down. Listen to what your body and mind are telling you. It’s okay to step back and focus on your mental health, now more than ever. Consider online therapy, turn to your family, or get your best friend on the phone. There are so many ways to get out of this funk.

Virgo:

“Don’t get angry, get money. Choose yourself, focus on improving your life and get committed to your goals. You are in control here.” A BossBabe quote to help to stay motivated despite the chaos. You’re a visionary, Virgo. Don’t sweat the small stuff. Learn to adapt and adjust. Know that this too shall pass. Some of you may be experiencing massive revelations on the interpersonal front.

Libra:

We get so attached to labels, Libra. We got so attached to an

idea of how we are supposed to be, that we limit ourselves from having fun. But you are not this or that. You are infinite potential in human form. Allow yourself to discover newer aspects of your personality. Allow yourself to be transformed. Trust that the next phase of your life is going to be fulfilling in more ways than one.

Scorpio:

The pandemic is a major wake up call that’s making us all realise the transient nature of everything and the value of our own lives. So, how do *you* want to live the rest of your life, Scorpio? Do you want to make space for joy, love, and creativity or vibrate at the frequency of anger and resentment? Truth is, they didn’t treat you in a manner that you would have liked. But holding on to the negative emotions isn’t going to change a thing. So breathe. Breathe in the goodness and breathe out all that is blocking your flow.

Sagittarius:

There’s no time like the present to forgive, forget, and let go. It’s true that they’ve wronged you in the past, but holding onto the negative emotions is just going to block the flow of love. So commit to the inner work and raise your vibrations like never before. Know that everything you put into the Universe will come back to you manifold. Some of you may feel inspired to connect with virtual communities that are dedicated to spreading the light. How

Capricorn:

The world may be on hold, but that doesn’t mean your plans have to be. You’re using your time away from the matrix

to work on your big goals and tweak the plan of action. The mysterious smile on your face reveals that you can’t wait for showtime! But that doesn’t mean it’s all work and no play in the Capricorn headquarters. You’re finding joy in small simple things, like getting your hands dirty in the garden or experimenting with a new pasta recipe.

Aquarius:

Here’s the thing, Aquarius: we are responsible for our reality. If you’re experiencing joy, it’s because of you. If you’re feeling weighed down by your circumstances, it shows that you’re unwilling to move. Assess the things that are blocking the flow of goodness into your life and strategically move them out of your way (without harming anybody else, of course). Step #2: realign yourself with the things that make you feel alive! Remember you are not alone in this even though you may feel so at certain times. Lean on your soul crew when you begin to feel vulnerable.

Pisces:

Monday morning plans: reassessing your work-from-home situation. How do you maximise productivity? What’s the best way to stay focused on your larger-than-life plans? Step #1: Keep your work space separate from your ‘chill’ space. A simple, clutter-free approach will help keep the distractions at bay. Step #2: Follow a strictly no-PJs policy, even when you have no meetings. Looking presentable equals feeling presentable, which in turn will help you bring your A-game. Step #3: Remember to keep your immunity-boosting teas and vitamins handy. A healthy body equals a healthy mind.

Japanese comedian Ken Shimura dies from coronavirus at 70



LOS ANGELES, MAR 30 (PTI): Veteran Japanese comic Ken Shimura, who tested positive for the novel coronavirus last week, has died at the age of 70.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, the actor was hospitalised in Tokyo on March 20 after developing a fever and being diagnosed with severe pneumonia. Shimura tested positive for COVID-19 on March 23.

The condition of Shimura, best known for Japanese variety show “Shimura Ken no Bakatono-sama”, was said not to be critical.

A household name in Japan since the 1970s, Shimura was the first prominent entertainment world figure in Japan to test positive for the virus.

The actor was set to star in his first feature film “God of Cinema”, directed by Yoji Yamada.

The film, which marks the 100th year anniversary of studio Shochiku, has been put on

hold indefinitely.

Shimura grew up in the west Tokyo neighbourhood of Higashimurayama and he started his career in showbiz when he joined the Japanese rock band and comedy group The Drifters, famous for opening for The Beatles during their early tours of Japan.

He shot to fame with the group’s prime time comedy show “Hachijidayo Zeninshugo!” (“It’s 8 o’clock, assemble everyone!”), where he developed his signature brand of slapstick caricature, wacky bits and deadpan delivery.

American comedian Jerry Lewis was an initial influence on him, Shimura wrote in a late-career memoir.

On hit variety shows of the 1980s, he would go on to become a bigger name recognised for satirical characters like “Baka Tonosama” (foolish lord) and “Henna Ojisan” (weirdo uncle).

Ronan Keating welcomes second child with wife Storm

LONDON, MAR 30 (PTI):

Singer Ronan Keating and his wife, fashion designer Storm Keating have become proud parents to a baby girl.

The former Boyzone member said their second child, Coco was born on March 27.

“Hello world... Spreading some good cheer at this time with the announcement of the safe delivery of our little girl Coco Knox Keating. Calmly arrived on 27/3/20. Mama & Baba are rocking,” Keating wrote on Instagram on Sunday.

The 43-year-old singer also shared a black-and-white selfie with his wife and newborn, whose face was blurred for privacy.

Posting the same picture, Storm said, “A beautiful calm birth thanks to Claire Mellon and all the wonderful team at @theportland-hosp Thank you so much for taking such great care of us. Coco Knox Keating, born 27.03.20.”



The couple revealed last November that they were expecting their second child together.

Keating and Storm, 38, are already parents to two-year-old son Cooper.

The “When you say nothing at all” hitmaker is also a father to son Jack, 21 and daughters Missy, 19, and Ali, 14, whom he shares with former wife Yvonne Connolly.

Country music star Joe Diffie dies of coronavirus

WASHINGTON, MAR 30 (AFP): Joe Diffie, a Grammy award-winning country music singer who had several chart-topping hits in the 1990s, has died of coronavirus. He was 61.

Diffie’s death was announced on his Facebook page, which said he died on Sunday “from complications of coronavirus.” His death came just two days after he had announced that he had tested positive for the virus and was receiving medical care.

“My family and I are asking for privacy at this time,” he said. “We want to remind the

public and all my fans to be vigilant, cautious and careful during this pandemic.”

Diffie, who was from Oklahoma, had several hit songs during the 1990s including “Pickup Man,” “Prop Me Up Beside the Jukebox (If I Die)” and “John Deere Green.”

His first album, “A Thousand Winding Roads,” was released in 1990 and including his hit song “Home.” Nearly 137,000 people have tested positive for coronavirus in the United States and there have been more than 2,400 deaths.