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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Thunderstorm destroys kutcha house in Lower Legship

SUMMIT REPORT
GYALSHING, 11 APR:

The thunderstorm of Friday evening destroyed the house of Man Bahadur Chettri at Lower Legship in South Sikkim.

The kutcha house was damaged completely rendering the family homeless.

Fortunately, no one was injured since the family had already moved to a safer location.

SDM-Rabongla visited the affected family and took stock of the damage and assured necessary aid to the family.

SKM party functionaries Kesangla D Lhasungpa and Bishnu Prasad Sharma also reached out to the affected family and delivered necessary relief materials. They also asked the panchayat president of the ward to provide relief to the affected family.

Neighbours have also stepped up and extended aid to the affected family.

Man Bahadur Chettri shared that losing the house built with his hard earned money was very painful and devastating.

Mohun Bagan cancel Bar Puja due to COVID-19 pandemic

KOLKATA, APR 12 (PTI): I-League champions Mohun Bagan on Sunday cancelled their customary 'Bar Puja' this year due to COVID-19 pandemic.

An annual ritual worshipping of the goalposts on either end of the ground, the Bar Puja is held on Poila Boisakh, the Bengali New Year's Day slated for Monday, to officially mark the start of a new football season.

"It's very unfortunate that we need to call off the customary ritual that we follow on Bengali New Year's Day every year," Mohun Bagan general secretary Srinjoy Bose said in a statement. "But in present condition safety of our fans, colleagues is our topmost priority and keeping that in mind, we had to take this hard decision. We sincerely hope that tough time will be over and football will be back in Maidan very soon."

Mohun Bagan have clinched the I-League title with four rounds left in the competition which has been suspended due to the worsening COVID-19 pandemic.

CM chairs high-level meeting to discuss COVID-situation

"WORKING ON ESTABLISHING A TESTING LAB AT THE EARLIEST"

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 12 APR:

Shortly after attending the video-conference with the Prime Minister and all other Chief Ministers of the country, Chief Minister PS Tamang [Golay] chaired a high-level meeting at Samman Bhawan.

In a Facebook post, the CM informs that meeting was attended by Cabinet Ministers, the Lok Sabha MP, MLAs, the Chief Secretary, DGP and heads of departments.

The meeting took stock of the current COVID-19 situation in the state, law & order and actions taken.

"We deliberated on various scenarios that can transpire post lockdown," he adds.

This aspect had also figured in the video-conference earlier during which strategies moving forward depending on



the situation were reportedly discussed.

The CM adds that the high-level meeting discussed topics ranging from Sikkimese students

and people stranded outside the state wishing to come back, distribution of relief materials and other issues concerning different areas of the

state.

"We will look into these and come up with a decision keeping in mind the welfare of our people in compliance with the

directives received from the central government," the CM has assured.

He adds that the Health Minister informed the meeting that

the Health Department will be acquiring Rapid Testing Kits which are one of the quickest ways to check for COVID-19 infection.

"We are working on establishing a testing lab in the state at the earliest," he further assures.

Congratulating the people Sikkim continuing to maintain zero occurrence of COVID-19, the CM has registered gratitude towards frontline workers like doctors, health-workers, police personnel, safai karamcharis, NGOs, volunteers and various departments for their selfless service.

"Our frontline workers have been working tirelessly for our safety and we have been trying our best to provide them with essential equipments so they can work safely and efficiently," he writes.

"The Heads of the departments are frequently

conducting meetings regarding COVID-19 and I went for field visits along with our officials who have been working tirelessly and visiting various areas in the state," he adds.

The CM also thanked everyone present for the meeting for providing valuable information and suggestions and, in his post, also acknowledges the generous contributions made towards the Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

"I once again appeal to everyone to donate through the web portal cmdrf.sikkim.gov.in or their respective area MLA. Our collective efforts have been positive in keeping us safe from the disease and we must continue following social distancing," he concludes.

Services cancelled by COVID-scare, Pastors go online to reach Easter messages

SANDEEP PRASAD
GANGTOK, 12 APR:

With the COVID-19 scare and the ongoing lockdown having convinced churches to cancel their usual congregations, pastors went online today to reach their Easter messages to the devout.

At Sikkim's oldest church, Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Gangtok, Pastor Bijay Chettri conducted the Easter service online.

He said that Christians are abiding by all the government advi-



sories and instructions and practicing social distancing diligently, today's

service was hence conducted on a social media platform. In his message,

he invited the devout to observe the day at their respective homes.

Officer's hand chopped off in lockdown attack; Centre puts focus on plans to ease some restrictions

NEW DELHI, APR 12 (PTI): A police officer's hand was chopped off with a sword in a brutal attack on Sunday by a group of Nihang Sikhs in Punjab on a team enforcing the 21-day coronavirus lockdown even as the Centre focused on plans to ease some restrictions during the likely extension of the unprecedented measure beyond April 14.

The number of confirmed coronavirus cases inched closer to 9,000 with a total of 918 infections reported in the last

24 hours. On Saturday, there was a record increase of over 1,000 cases.

Amid demands for ramping up health surveillance, the Centre said it is expanding the COVID-19 testing capacity in state-run as well as private medical colleges.

The Punjab attack shortly after dawn in which three other men of the state police and a civilian were also injured happened when the Nihangs were asked to show curfew passes at a vegetable market in

Sanaur town in Patiala district, police said.

Eleven persons including five attackers were arrested hours later after an exchange of fire at Nihang Dera complex which also houses Gurdwara Khichdi Sahib at Balbera village, about 25 km from Patiala city, after the group fled from the scene of crime, police said. The incident happened around 6.15 am.

A video clip on social media appears to show Assistant Sub Inspector **turn to pg2**

Helping Others in Tashiding



PRITAM LAMA
GYALSHING, 12 APR:

Help Others, a Tashiding-based NGO of West Sikkim has undertaken a well-received initiative of delivering vegetables, milk, essential commodities and medicines to villagers who cannot do so on their own because of the ongoing lockdown.

Help Others was established in the year 2016 and is committed to work for the upliftment of the society in Yuksam-Tashiding Sub-division. The NGO is also providing lunch to frontline workers on the field, recognizing that meals and snacks for those on duty are difficult to come by since all restaurants and canteens are shut.

President, Help Others, Tashi Namgyal Bhu-

tia, shares that the main focus of the NGO has been to help and support underprivileged children access education and through this intervention, serve the development of the society.

The lockdown created a new challenge and Help Others members resolved to help alleviate the situation and support frontline workers deliver on their responsibilities better and reach services which have gone beyond the reach of villagers.

It has also undertaken disinfection drives at hospitals and governments of-fices.

SDM-Yuksam, Tshering Thendup Bhutia, while recognizing the social service being provided by Help Others, has assured all possible support from the administration.

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CM's relief fund credited from the contribution of the north district

MANGAN, 12 APR (IPR): Minister for Road & Bridges and Culture & Heritage Affairs, Samdup Lepcha called on the Chief Minister, Prem Singh Tamang at Sam-

man Bhawan on 11 April and handed over cheques that are being contributed by the people of north district and other institutions towards Chief Minister's relief fund to com-

bat COVID-19 pandemic. The Chief Minister expressed his gratitude to the Minister, Samdup Lepcha and the people who have generously contributed with their

kind gesture towards government efforts to fight against the global crisis of COVID-19.

Pragati Foundation and Singtam's Muslim community contribute to CM Relief Fund



YOGEN THATAL Singtam, 12 Apr:

A team lead by Pragati Foundation president, Osim Sheikh, handed over a cheque of Rs 51,000,

while a second cheque of Rs 50,000 was donated by the Muslim community of Singtam bazaar towards the CM Relief Fund today.

Mr Sheikh, it may be mentioned

here, recently deployed some of his own vehicles to ferry those in urgent need of transportation.

EAT HEALTHY: Distribution of Paustik Aahar at Aaganwadi Centre of Rangpo Goli Ground.



Lockdown: Bihar BJP media in-charge beaten by police

PATNA, APR 12 (PTI): A senior Bihar BJP leader has said he was badly beaten up by policemen in the state capital on Sunday even after he introduced himself and told them he had stepped out of his residence during lockdown to buy essential items.

Rakesh Kumar Singh, the state media in-charge who lives on Daroga Rai road in central Patna, said the incident hap-

pened near an R-Block temple when he was walking to a neighbourhood shop.

The policemen on patrol stopped Singh and asked why was he outside his home during lockdown.

I told them I am going to buy flour," Singh told PTI.

Policemen then asked him what does he do.

As I introduced myself as Bihar BJP unit me-

dia in-charge, a constable started raining batons on me. In a few seconds, the sub-inspector also started hurling lathi on me. They continue to beat me while I tried to run in my defence, Singh alleged.

He said he was left with bruises on the left thigh and a fractured left thumb.

Asked whether he has filed any police complaint, Singh said he has not done so but narrat-

ed the incident to senior party leaders, who have assured him of action against the policemen.

Kotwali police station SHO Ram Shankar Singh said he talked to Rakesh Singh over phone and police are probing the matter.

Condemning the incident, Bihar BJP spokesman Prem Ranjan Patel urged state police chief Gupta Shwar Pandey to punish the policemen.

Fishing activity resumes along Karnataka coast

Mangaluru, Apr 12 (PTI): Fishing activity along the coastal region in Karnataka resumed on Sunday with traditional fishermen venturing into the sea after the government exempted the sector from the ongoing nationwide lockdown to check coronavirus spread.

Fishermen from Dakshina Kannada, Udupi and Uttara Kannada districts resumed their operations, official sources said.

Around 14,000 fishermen from these districts can resume their operations, bringing huge relief to the community.

The Union Home Ministry had on Friday exempted operations of the fishing or marine



aquaculture industry, including harvesting, sale and marketing activities, from the purview of the lockdown.

However, it has said, as specified in the lockdown measures, social distancing and proper hygiene practices must be ensured.

State Fisheries Minister and Dakshina Kannada district in-charge

Kota Srinivas Poojary welcomed the Centres nod to allow the state government to take decisions on the fisheries sector.

He told reporters in Udupi on Saturday that only five crew will be allowed on a country boat, which can set sail in the morning and should return by evening.

Restrictions on use

of fisheries jetty, fishing ports and mechanised fishing will continue.

Those undertaking fishing activities have been directed to strictly maintain social distancing.

The fishermen have been asked to conclude the auction process by 11 am, officials said.

The minister discussed the regulations to be adopted by fishermen with leaders of fishermen's associations at Udupi on Saturday.

Fisheries Federation president Yashpal Suvarna said he had requested the minister to supply kerosene for fishing activity and to extend the insurance facility for fishermen at the meeting.

Officer's hand chopped off in lockdown attack; Centre puts focus on plans to ease some restrictions

Contd from pg01

tor(ASI) Harjeet Singh seeking help after his left hand was severed in the attack. A man picks up the portion of the hand that was ripped off and gives it to the officer who keeps it with him. He is then taken away from the scene on a two-wheeler.

The ASI was rushed to a nearby local hospital and then referred to PGIMER in Chandigarh where he was undergoing surgery, police said.

With a lockdown in place to contain the spread of COVID-19, barricades were put up outside the wholesale market and entry restricted to those with curfew passes.

The Nihangs -- members of a Sikh sect whose adherents carry traditional arms and wear blue robes -- arrived in an SUV and were told to stop by mandi officials, police said.

"They were asked to show passes. But they rammed the vehicle against the gate and the barricades," said Patiala's Senior Superintendent of Police Mandeep Singh Sidhu.

The group then attacked the police personnel and fled to the Gurdwara managed by them.

The 21-day lockdown announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is in place from March 25 in a bid to halt the spread of COVID-19 and is scheduled to end on Tuesday.

Four states - Telangana, Maharashtra,

Punjab and Odisha - have already extended the coronavirus lockdown in their respective territories till April 30.

The PTI tally of numbers reported by various states at 6.30 pm showed at least 8,933 positive coronavirus cases and 296 deaths. A total of 981 people have been cured and discharged so far.

According to the latest Union Health Ministry update, as many as 918 COVID-19 cases and 34 deaths have been reported in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of such cases to 8,447 and the fatalities to 273. It said 765 people have so far recovered from the infection.

The number of cases crossed 1,000 in Tamil Nadu which now joins Maharashtra and Delhi to have a maximum number of positive COVID-19 infections.

The Health ministry also asserted that the government is "extra prepared" if there is an exponential rise in the number of coronavirus patients.

Addressing a press briefing, Health Ministry's Joint Secretary Lav Agarwal said the government is expanding the COVID-19 testing capacity in state-run as well as private medical colleges.

"We are working on an urgent basis to expand the capacity for COVID-19 testing in government and private medical colleges across the country. Fourteen mentor institutes, including the AIIMS and NIMHANS, have been identified to mentor the medical colleges and expand the coronavirus testing capacity," he added.

According to ICMR officials, a total of 1,86,906 samples have so far been tested across the country, of which 7,953 have been found positive for COVID-19.

"In the last five days, on an average, 15,747 samples were tested per day and 584 of those were found to be positive per day," an Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) official said at the press briefing.

A broad consensus has emerged that the national lockdown should be extended by at least two weeks after a meeting between Prime Minister Modi and state chief ministers on Saturday.

Several chief ministers at the same time have pushed for resumption of some economic activities like in the farming sector in regions with no COVID-19 cases.

The Centre in consultation with states is moving to restart economic activities in a graded manner in what is seen as a nuanced change in strategy from saving lives a month ago to saving lives as well as livelihoods now in the fight against the pandemic.

It has sought inputs related to production, labour and logistics from clusters in five key sectors to ascertain expected output if they are made operational within a fortnight and procedural support required, official sources said.

The five sectors are textiles, chemicals, electronics, steel and pharmaceutical, the sources said.

States are likely to designate districts,

towns and cities as red, orange and green zones depending upon the number of COVID-19 case as part of efforts to allow differentiated restoration of normalcy with conditions like uses of masks and social distancing in public.

Union minister Nitin Gadkari said talks are underway with state governments to re-start highway construction projects where migrant labourers can be gainfully employed.

In a video-conference with PTI, the road transport, highways and MSME minister said efforts are on for facilitating a safe return of migrant labourers, an estimated 20 lakh of whom are in shelters pan-India.

"I had a meeting with road sector officials. Work can be re-started at projects with condition that adequate measures are taken for safeguard against coronavirus. We have to follow guidelines. At some places collectors have given permission, some not. We are doing a follow up along with the chief secretaries of the states," the minister said.

Gadkari's comments come against the backdrop of a report by the World Bank that migrants face a stark choice between potentially starving in urban centres without work or long and potentially fatal journeys over hundreds of miles to their home districts.

In the report titled South Asia Economic Update: Impact of COVID-19, the report at the same time said migrant workers

returning home could become vectors carrying the coronavirus to unaffected states and villages and that preliminary findings indicated in India many out-migration areas are likely to have COVID-19 cases.

The Centre has asked the state and union territories to take welfare measures for the migrant labourers living in camps in different parts of the country that include food, shelter, medicine, mobile and video call facilities.

The Bihar government also reached out and provided relief to over 5 lakh distressed residents of the state stranded in Delhi and other parts of the country, a senior official said in Patna.

The Karnataka government said it is studying in-depth the consequences of possible relaxation of lockdown norms after April 14 and plans to come out with a clear roadmap in a day or two, according to Medical Education Minister Sudhakar K.

Kerala, which was the first state in the country to report a coronavirus infection in late January, has prepared a time table for coming out of the lockdown and there would be district-specific strategies to tackle the situation while the number of cases are on the decline.

Ramping up efforts to "stamp out" coronavirus cases in the state, Kerala Finance Minister Thomas Isaac told PTI that an exit strategy is being prepared and restrictions are being relaxed in certain segments, including agriculture.

Cleanliness drive by youth of Gerethang-Labing GPU

RUDRA KAUSHIK
GYALSHING, 11 APR:

Keeping in view the risk of COVID-19 and the urgency to keep the locality clean, youth of Gerethang-Labing GPU undertook a sanitization in their locality today.

The drive covered areas around Gerethang bazar, the Primary Health Centre premises and other nearby areas.

The selected areas were bleached by the youth and the drains and walls spruced up.

The residents have praised the initiative taken by the local youth and commented that participation of the youth in the battle against COVID-19 was much needed.

Similarly, reports of people helping on-du-



ty personnel in various ways are also coming in from various corners of the district. Many individuals and nongovern-

mental organization are arranging lunch, tea and snacks for police personnel on during during the ongoing lockdown.

"The police personnel are working hard day and night to make the lockdown successful and serving them during this

time is a gesture of our support to them," a person said.

Pest controllers undertake sanitization drives

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 12 APR:

Sikkim Organic Pest Control Sales & Service [SOPCSS], a registered pest control agency, with permission of the District Collector-East, has been carrying out sanitisation drives covering various BACs, Office of the SDM, PHCs, PHSCs, Food godowns, MPCs, Police Stations, Police Outposts, VACs etc since 03 April.

The initiative has been led by proprietor Suraj Gurung and guided by Pankaj Sharma (Chief Consultant) and assisted by Amit Giri and Ganesh Chettri (Senior Operators).

On the first day, SOPCSS covered Sadar Police Station, Titanic Park including Control room of Traffic Police, Deorali Outpost, Tadong Outpost, Ranipool Police Station, Old Age Home Jalipool, Pakyong Police



Station.

The drive has continued since then and SOPCSS has covered areas and spaces across the district.

An SOPCSS press re-

lease informs that it will continue to provide this service "to keep Sikkim safe and secure from COVID-19 until the virus gets eradicated from the nation and the world as a

whole."

SOPCSS is currently providing Prophylactic (Preventive) Treatment against COVID-19. SOPCSS is using Bio-Disinfectants and Bio-San-

itizers which does not cause harm to human beings or the environment, the release details.

Virus mutes Easter celebrations as US deaths top 20,000

Christians celebrated Easter Sunday under coronavirus lockdown in many countries with church pews empty and the pope on live stream, as the US death toll from the disease passed 20,000.

At the climax of Holy Week for the planet's two billion-plus Christians, congregations were shuttered at home to avoid spreading the pathogen that has infected at least 1.7 million worldwide.

Pope Francis was set to break with centuries of tradition by taking his Easter mass online, with Saint Peter's Square -- packed every year with worshippers -- left deserted.

The United States, with around a fifth of the more than 100,000 total COVID-19 deaths, topped the list for both fatalities and numbers of declared cases, according to a tally maintained by Baltimore-based Johns Hopkins University.

Italy, the hardest-hit country in Europe, has recorded more than 19,000 confirmed virus deaths -- second only to the US, which has a population five times its size.

But hopes began to rise in Western Europe and heavily infected parts of America that the pandemic was peaking.

Many were looking to China's Wuhan, where the disease first emerged late last year, as life

began to return to normal while officials lifted stay-inside restrictions.

However for much of the world, from India to France, strict lockdowns were still in force.

A handful of US priests and pastors risked arrest by announcing they would hold public services in their churches on Sunday, snubbing rules and medical advice.

But most were putting services online, and some were innovating with "drive-in" blessings.

President Donald Trump will be among those following Easter services online, tweeting he would log on Sunday morning to watch Robert Jeffress, the leader of a Southern Baptist megachurch in Texas and an ardent supporter of the US leader.

- 'We must hope' -

On Saturday, Pope Francis live-streamed his Easter Vigil to the world's 1.3 billion Catholics from an almost empty St Peter's Basilica.

"Darkness and death do not have the last word," he said.

"As the days go by and fears grow, even the boldest hope can dissipate. Let us not give in to resignation... We can and must hope," said the pontiff.

Francis was praised by Italy's Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte for his "gesture of responsibility" to observe Easter in private.

In Jerusalem, Christians were prevented from gathering for the Easter service and all cultural sites were shuttered, regardless of their religious affiliation.

And at one church in the Philippines, photos of parishioners were taped onto the empty pews.

- Levelling -

The hardest-hit countries of Europe, and the centres of infection in the United States -- New York and New Orleans -- were seeing signs of infection rates levelling off.

Numbers from Spain offered a shred of hope Saturday: 510 new deaths, a dip in fatalities for the third day in a row.

Newly reported coronavirus deaths in France also fell by one-third from Friday to 635.

"A very high plateau for the epidemic appears to have been reached, but the epidemic remains very active," said French health official Jerome Salomon, urging people to remain vigilant.

Italy meanwhile said the number of daily deaths there was starting to level off -- though the government resisted pressure to lift its lockdown, extending confinement measures until May 3.

New York and New Orleans saw a slowdown in the number of new infections, deaths and hospitalisations.

- Resurgence warning -

But Britain on Saturday recorded its second highest dai-

ly toll, as virus-stricken Prime Minister Boris Johnson made "very good progress" after being released from intensive care, a spokeswoman said.

Although global infections stand at 1.75 million, according to an AFP tally of official counts, the real number is thought to be much higher, with many countries only testing the most serious cases.

Many experts and the World Health Organization are cautioning countries against lifting lockdown measures too quickly.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus warned Friday that jumping the gun could lead to a "deadly resurgence" of the novel coronavirus, known as SARS-CoV-2.

From the crowded slums of Mexico City, Nairobi and Mumbai to conflict hotspots in the Middle East, there are fears that the worst is yet to come for the world's poorest.

Trump said this past week that the disease was near its peak in the United States and he was considering ways to re-open the world's biggest economy as soon as possible.

"We look like we'll be coming in on the very, very low side, below the lowest side of the curve of death," Trump said in an interview with Fox News.

CM's Baisakhi Greetings

GANGTOK, 12 APR [IPR]: Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang has extended his warm greetings and best wishes to the people of Sikkim on the auspicious occasion of Baisakhi.

In his message, the Chief Minister observed that this day marks the beginning of the New Year in the Vikram Sam-

vat Calendar.

Baisakhi also marks the commencement of the harvesting season, when farmers reap the fruit of their hard work.

Referring to the current scenario due to COVID-19, the Chief Minister states that the people have greatly helped by abiding by the lockdown regulations for

which he has expressed his deep gratitude to the people of Sikkim. By doing so, he says, we would be ensuring the health and wealth of our state.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister prays for peace, harmony and solidarity during these trying times worldwide.

Mizoram has enough stock of PPEs: Official

AIZAWL, APR 12 (PTI): Mizoram has enough stock of personal protective equipment (PPE) for health workers to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, an official of the state Health department said on Sunday.

State Nodal officer of Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) and epidemiologist Dr Pachuau Lalmsawma told PTI that the state has enough stock of PPEs to meet urgent requirement as of now.

He said that additional procurement has been sought from the Centre and are likely to arrive soon.

He said that PPEs were distributed to Zoram Medical College (ZMC), district hospitals and private hospitals across the state.

Pachuau said that PPEs are also sewn by local manufacturers.

Vakira, a fashion house run by three sisters, students of Women Polytechnic, Aizawl and other groups have volunteered themselves to stitch PPEs for health workers, he said.

He said that the PPEs are being sewn on the basis of guidance from medical experts and met quality standard to be used.

Mizoram received about a consignment of 11,300 PPEs, 10,000 pieces of N-95 mask and other equipment from the Centre, which were ferried by a cargo flight and trucks on March 27.

So far, Mizoram has reported only one positive case.

The patient is undergoing treatment at ZMC.

Pachuau said that the patient is recovering fast since Friday and is stable.

Though he is being treated at intensive care

unit (ICU) and remained on ventilator support, his dose of oxygen has been reduced since Friday, he said.

The official said that the lone patient has pneumonia but no fever on Sunday.

According to Pachuau, doctors and nurses, who treated the patient, are being quarantined at ZMC.

The official said that a total of 87 samples have been collected and tested and 86 of them have tested negative for novel coronavirus.

Mizoram began testing of samples for novel coronavirus at ZMC since April 7.

Earlier, samples were sent to Guwahati Medical College and Hospital (GMCH) and Silchar Medical College and Hospital (SMCH) in Assam for test.

COVID-19 containment zones in Delhi rise to 43

NEW DELHI, APR 12 (PTI): The number of coronavirus containment zones in the national capital rose to 43 on Sunday, with southeast Delhi having the most such zones at 12.

There were 33 COVID-19 hotspots in the city on Monday. With the announcement of 10 more containment zones, the respective district authorities have started to seal those areas to stop the spread of the virus.

According to a Del-

hi government official, Chief Secretary Vijay Dev has directed officers to strictly monitor the containment zones and follow all laid down procedures.

Close on the heels of southeast district, East Delhi has nine coronavirus containment zones, followed by Shahdara at five and West Delhi at four.

While south, southwest and central Delhi have three containment zones each, New Delhi

and North district each have two such zones.

Mansara Apartments in Vasundra Enclave, Street Number 9 in Pandav Nagar and Vardhaman Apartments in Mayur Vihar Phase-1 Extension are among 43 containment zones.

On Friday, the number of coronavirus cases in Delhi mounted to 1069, with 166 fresh cases and five deaths being reported in a day.

After two more COVID-19 deaths, Bengal makes masks mandatory

KOLKATA, APR 12 (PTI): West Bengal reported two more COVID-19 deaths on Sunday, pushing the death toll due to the disease to seven in the state, even as the TMC government made wearing masks mandatory for people visiting public places.

However, no fresh COVID-19 cases were reported in the state on Sunday.

The total number of coronavirus cases stood at 122 in the state, the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress (TMC) government said, even though the Union health ministry put the figure at 134.

According to a health

bulletin released by the state government, the total number of active cases in West Bengal is now 95.

The TMC government, however, did not divulge the details of the deceased persons.

Meanwhile, late in the evening, the state government issued an order, making wearing of masks mandatory for people visiting public places.

The order was issued by Chief Secretary Rajiva Sinha.

"Mouth and nose should be covered by facial masks or any other available piece of cloth which may even include a properly folded or rolled dupatta, gamcha,

handkerchief or any such material that acts as a protective cover," the order said.

"It is hereby directed that it shall be mandatory to use this cover always, especially when in public places," it added.

Meanwhile, at least 22 health workers of the state-run RG Kar Medical College and Hospital were placed under quarantine after two patients admitted to the hospital tested positive for COVID-19, a health department official said.

A two-day drive to disinfect Nabanna, the state secretariat in adjoining Howrah district, began on Sunday, government sources said.

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Now, They Confer *Enough of the enforcing and blundering*

The lockdown is now set to continue for at least two more weeks. Before this extension, the people might have deserved to know how the first round of 21 days helped the country, but for a citizenry of infantilized obedient people, such explanations are perhaps never required. So, we will hunker down for another fortnight and receive only midlevel officials providing COVID-updates in chaste Hindi and claiming that India could have seen 8.2lakh infections against the around 9,000 COVID-19 positive patients it currently has. Don't the people deserve to hear this from their elected representatives instead? Don't the people deserve to be briefed about the plans in place beyond shutting everything down? Of course they do, but no one is telling them anything and all they are receiving is enforcement. Novel Coronavirus has everyone scared, and that should have convinced governments to reassure them instead of playing on their paranoia to cover-up for their lack of planning and empathy. Take for instance the video-conference convened by the Prime Minister with Chief Ministers on Saturday. This meeting, already the third since the lockdown was imposed, is at least a month too late. It would have helped the country, especially its poor and overlooked, if the Centre had thought it necessary to coordinate efforts with the State before springing the lockdown surprise on a 4-hour notice. The science is still unresolved on whether viruses are even living or nonliving things, so the element of surprise is wasted on nCoV. One a more serious note though, if Chief Ministers had been consulted, Nitish Kumar would have told the Pradhan Sevak about the lakhs of Biharis powering development in other states with their sweat; PS Tamang would have reminded the PM about the hundreds, or perhaps even thousands, of Sikkimese studying and working outside the State. Even if they did not inform the Centre about their reservations, they could have worked at an interstate level to look out for their people better and ensured that they did not feel stranded and abandoned. The essential supplies, which continue to be reached to the desperately-in-need despite more than two weeks having passed since the lockdown began could then have been delivered before the lockdown kicked in and ensured that the panic exodus that followed the 8 o'clock announcement 19 days back would not have happened. If there was better planning, the lockdown would have been observed by consensus and not enforced like a curfew; a public health emergency would not have been addressed like a law & order situation.

Agreed, these observations are easy to make in retrospect, but since not enough analysis is being attempted, we put in our two bits here. One hopes that at least some humility has percolated into the corridors of power at the Centre and that the latest series of meetings with CMs was not just an attempt to distribute people's complaints among more leaders and not just the one person. More leaders, including the Prime Minister, need to step up and explain the situation and take questions instead of just issuing orders. And people need to ask more questions, look deeper into announcements and understand consequences of major decisions better. Sure, bang thalis if that makes you feel better, even light candles when told to or celebrate your leaders, but also ask questions. A major disruption has occurred, and although the virus will eventually pose a lesser threat, the decisions taken now and in the coming days will stay us for much longer. Expect economic sops to resuscitate the economy and check whether these benefit big industries and pampered celebrities too lopsidedly against the smaller enterprises and the destitutely underprivileged. The crisis has created an opportunity to revive agriculture and manufacturing, but these remain ignored engagements because services and big investments continue to excite the policy makers. Informed citizens will recognize the need to get the priorities right, but knowing alone is not enough unless people use their agency to demand better of their governments. The process has to begin in your immediate surroundings when people in need continue to either be ignored or short-supplied. These need to be pointed out and more convincing explanations sought. Officers should be told that their inspection drives should focus on the propriety of relief distribution and not enforcement of the lockdown; the latter should be for local organizations to ensure and adapt for it to be observed for any longer than the khaki is out of sight. If you banged plates to thank doctors and other frontline workers, then you should also check in to find out whether they are being provided convenient and safe work schedules. In several countries, Uber is offering free rides to doctors and health workers while restaurants are reaching them free meals at hospitals and offering big discounts on takeaways. In Sikkim, we remain even unable to provide our health workers dedicated transport service.

One could rant more, but suffice to point out here that twenty days since the lockdown was imposed, the concerned authorities should have figured things out much better than their continuing blundering suggests...

The Coronavirus Pandemic is Already Increasing Inequality

STEVE SCHIFFERES
theconversation.com

So far, the impact of the coronavirus crisis has not been felt equally across the UK population in health and economic terms. If it is followed by a major recession, the effect on inequality could worsen dramatically.

The risk of infection has varied depending on where you live. But within cities it is the poorer areas that have the highest infection rates. In London, for example, poorer inner boroughs such as Lambeth and Southwark have triple the per-capita infection rates than the leafy suburbs of Kingston, Sutton and Bexley.

One reason might be that it is more difficult to socially isolate in overcrowded social housing. But it is also the case that those living in the most deprived neighbourhoods are more likely to be in poor health than those living in less deprived areas of the country. On top of that, middle-class people are more likely to have jobs where they can work at home, while those who have to travel to work are more at risk of infection.

Despite the unprecedented effort by the government to support the incomes of those in employment, large numbers are becoming unemployed because their firms, large and small, are going bust before they can get aid. The worst hit are workers in the hospitality, retail, and arts and leisure sectors, who are disproportionately young, female and low-skilled. And many of the five million self-employed workers will not be able to wait until June for the government's promised grant to be paid, or will not qualify.

The harsh reality of the UK's inadequate welfare system is becoming evident for the one million who applied for benefits in the past two weeks alone. As a result it is becoming difficult to even access the over-strained universal credit system. And the low level of benefits means that households on average will have their income reduced by two-thirds.

THE COMING RECESSION

It seems increasingly likely that the immediate economic effects of the pandemic will lead to prolonged global recession that could be as severe as the 2008 financial crisis. The collapse in demand and the freezing up of production will only intensify over the next year if, as health experts predict, we will need to continue social distancing to limit further outbreaks of the disease.

The speed and depth of the economic crisis has

limit by the crisis – and will worsen if it goes on much longer – may not have the firepower to revive the economy.

And if it seeks to reduce the deficit by cutting public spending again, this will place the burden of adjustment on the poor and public sector workers, increasing inequality even more. In the last recession median real incomes did not recover for a decade. This time, many more people might be unemployed, and many more firms might not survive the downturn, further straining the social fabric.

CAN WE RESHAPE THE FUTURE?

The pandemic has already turned upside down much conventional wisdom. Will radical shifts in policy be the result?

One possibility might be that people in the UK will value public services more, and be willing to pay for them, accepting that government spending should rise substantially to Scandinavian levels. A fairer taxation system, including greater taxation of wealth and higher incomes, may become the accepted price of better services.

The crisis has also shed a sharp light on the inadequate nature of the UK's social safety net. This might open the door to considering a more generous system where everyone is guaranteed a minimum income as happened in Spain this week.

The crisis could even lead to a collective rethink of how work and community are valued. Which jobs and voluntary activities are actually most crucial to society, and how should they be better rewarded? And how can we build on the spirit of community in the crisis to build better and more resilient communities, working across government, voluntary sector and business to strengthen social infrastructure?

As the UK begins to plan an exit strategy, it is not too early to start thinking about how government policy can rebuild the economy, repair social and public-sector fabric, and help those ordinary people most affected by the crisis.

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already been unprecedented, even by the standards of previous recessions. Business and consumer confidence is plunging faster than in the 2008 financial crisis, and unemployment is rising faster as well. Economic forecasters are predicting a massive contraction of the economy – up to 30% – in the next quarter.

A global recession, as predicted by the International Monetary Fund could make recovery in any one country more difficult. The UK government, whose finances have already been stretched to the

Regular exercise has long-term benefits for immunity – it's important to stay active



JAMES TURNER & JOHN P CAMPBELL
theconversation.com

People around the world are staying at home as part of social distancing measures to limit the transmission of the novel coronavirus. In some countries people are being encouraged to exercise once a day.

However, there's long been a public misconception that some forms of exercise can suppress the immune system, reducing the body's ability to deal with outside threats, like the novel coronavirus. But there's a substantial body of research that shows exercise actually benefits our immune system. In fact, acute and chronic exercise of almost any type has been found to improve the way people respond to vaccines.

And epidemiological studies show that people who are active get significantly fewer upper respiratory tract infections per year than less-active people. Our research agrees that exercise doesn't suppress immunity – instead, it may help the immune system function better.

At a basic level, the immune system has three main lines of defence. Exercise helps maintain the normal function of each of these.

The first line of defence is comprised of physical barriers, like the skin, which stops pathogens like viruses from entering the body. Research has shown that skin wound healing is faster in people who exer-

cise regularly compared to sedentary people. Faster wound healing reduces the risk of bacteria and virus entry in people who are active.

The second line of defence is comprised of "innate" (or natural) immunity, which is mainly made up of cells like neutrophils and natural killer cells which are the first immune cells to respond to infections.

Exercise has a profound effect on these cells. For example, during a bout of exercise, natural killer cells move into the bloodstream in vast numbers. Following exercise, these cells migrate to sites of inflammation to seek out pathogens, and damaged cells. This process might even help our immune system detect cancerous cells.

The third line of defence is "adaptive" (or memory) immunity, which is mainly comprised of cells called T and B lymphocytes. Exercise also has a profound impact on these cells. It has been shown that lifelong regular exercise may help maintain healthy numbers of young T lymphocytes as we age, which may help the immune system better identify pathogens and cancer as we reach older age.

But for the last four decades, it's been thought that strenuous, prolonged exercise such as marathon or ultra-marathon running temporarily suppresses immune function leading to an "open-window" whereby infection risk is increased. We recently looked at the strengths and weaknesses of the "open-window" theory – and as we discussed in a previous article, there's not

much evidence to support it.

BETTER IMMUNE FUNCTION

To test immune function, many studies have used vaccines. Vaccines are one of the best ways to see how the immune system works because it tests the combined ability of many different immune cells to coordinate and produce antibodies. Research administering vaccines after both prolonged exercise and marathon running shows that antibody responses are not suppressed. There's even evidence that elite athletes who train regularly have higher antibody responses to vaccination than people who do not exercise.

Experts have recently debated whether the immune system can change in a negative or positive way after exercise – and whether events, such as marathons, can increase the likelihood of infections. They concluded that the few confirmed infections that happen in people after heavy exercise are more likely to be linked to inadequate diet, psychological stress, and insufficient sleep.

Exercise, on its own, does not seem to suppress immunity. It's generally agreed that the greatest risk factor for any form of viral or bacterial infection is exposure at mass gatherings. In particular, public transportation increases risk, probably via exposure to crowds or by touching surfaces that have become contaminated. Airline travel over long distances can also lead to sleep disruption which increases infection risk.

These findings reinforce the present guidance about social distancing, minimising travel and exercising at home, if possible. Regular moderate intensity aerobic exercise – such as walking or jogging – is beneficial for maintaining normal immune function. You should aim to do about 150 minutes of these types of exercise a week.

More vigorous aerobic exercise – such as running or cycling – is also beneficial for immune function. However, if your ability to exercise is limited by health conditions or disability, moving more and doing some type of exercise is better than nothing.

Resistance exercise such as weightlifting also has clear benefits for health and wellbeing in general – such as alleviating psychological distress, and reducing the risk of chronic diseases – and in particular maintaining strength, balance and coordination.

Given the current circumstances, it's important to exercise in isolation and maintain good personal hygiene, including thoroughly washing hands following exercise. Using alcohol-based hand gels may also help prevent viral spread, and avoid touching your mouth, eyes, and nose. In addition to regular exercise, you should also pay attention to getting a good night's sleep and maintaining a healthy diet to give the body its best chance at fighting off infections.

[James Turner is Senior Lecturer, Department for Health, University of Bath; John P Campbell is Lecturer, University of Bath]

Odisha to start online education for class 10 students of govt schools

BHUBANESWAR, APR 12 (PTI): With studies getting hampered due to the ongoing lockdown to combat COVID-19, the Odisha government is planning to introduce online education for Class 10 students of government schools.

Though many private educational institutions have started online studies after schools and colleges were closed in the state following the lockdown to combat the spread of COVID-19, government-run schools were unable to do so due to lack of required infrastructure, an official said.

To begin with, students of government schools who are going to

be promoted to Class 10 this year will be imparted online education and they have been advised to be prepared for digital lesions, states School and Mass Education Minister Samir Ranjan Dash told PTI.

Emphasising that the students must remain indoors as part of precautionary steps against COVID-19, he said, they have been asked to pursue online studies as courses remained incomplete due to closure of educational institutions following the coronavirus outbreak.

Moreover, the lockdown has been extended till April 30 while all educational institutions in

the state will remain shut till June 17.

"It is necessary to work out new methods of imparting education to students by connecting them with teachers under this extraordinary situation," Dash said.

Students who have a desktop or laptop with internet facilities in their houses have been advised to download the DIKSHA app for online studies, he said.

The teachers will also be given necessary instruction to guide the students and online education is proposed to be started for those getting promoted to Class 10 in the first phase.

DIKSHA is a national

platform through which teachers, students and parents can interact with each other regarding all school activities.

The teachers can use this platform to access and create high-quality teaching, learning and assessment resources in different subjects. They can also discuss difficult concepts with fellow teachers, view their teaching history and receive official announcements from the education department.

With the help of this platform, the students can revise their lessons, practice academic exercises, find additional materials on difficult topics as well as get immedi-

ate feedback from their teachers, he said.

The government will work out a comprehensive plan for promotion of online education once the lockdown period is over, Dash said.

Such a plan will enable all concerned to deal with similar situations effectively in future, he said.

Meanwhile, delivery of books for the next academic session which was to begin in the first week of April, has been delayed because of the lockdown.

Books are with block level officials and steps are being taken to ensure its distribution among students as soon as the situation turns normal, officials said.

Two Kolkata schools put on hold fee hike, amid lockdown

KOLKATA, APR 12 (PTI): Two prominent schools in the city have put on hold their decision to hike fees for the new session, in response to a plea by the government asking educational institutes to be "sympathetic" towards parents, amid the difficulties faced by them during the lockdown.

South Point School, one of the largest educational institutes in Asia, said in a statement on Saturday that the fee structure proposed by the school for 2020-21 "shall presently be held in abeyance".

"The school, being a private and unaided institution, is completely dependent on the fees paid by the guardians to meet all its expenses and to pay salary to its staff. However, in the prevailing situation...we would like to inform all parents that the fee enhancement proposed by the school for the academic year 2020-21 is presently being held in abeyance.

"The school shall charge from guardians' bank accounts an ad hoc amount against fees for the months of April and May 2020 by a date... We are deferring the collection of other components of fee and other charges that are usually collected in the month of April, for the time being till we are able to reopen the school," the authorities said in a notice.

The notice also gave assurances that guardians, who may not have sufficient money in their accounts, will be given time till May 15 to make the ad hoc payment, with no imposition of fines.

Another private school in the city, DPS North Kolkata, has also announced on its website that it would not increase tuition fees and session charges.

"As you all know we did not increase the fees last session, the enhancement of fee was due this year. However, keeping in mind the current situa-

tion which has caused financial hardships to people, the management has decided not to enhance the tuition and session charges for the new session with regard to the request of West Bengal government," the statement on the website said.

Don Bosco Park Circus, one of the top ICSE schools in the city, has posted on its website that "fee payment gateway has been disabled for a few days. There will be no late fee this month."

The school, however, did not furnish any other detail.

A south Kolkata English-medium school has deferred fee payment for the next two months.

"Keeping in view the hardships faced by students and their parents, Vivekananda Mission School has put off for now the payment of bi-monthly fees for the new academic session," a spokesperson at the institute said.

JSPL gets over 2,000 tonne rails order from Kolkata Metro: MD

NEW DELHI, APR 12 (PTI): Private steel maker JSPL has bagged an order of 2,308 tonne head hardened rails from Kolkata Metro Rail Corporation, a company official has said.

These special rails are used in high-speed freight corridors and metro rail projects.

Head hardened rails are manufactured using the head hardening technology to bear about 50 per cent higher pressure compared to normal rails.

"We have got an order of 2,308 tonne head hardened rails of 1080 HH grade from KMRC. The Research Designs and Standards Organisation (RDSO) (under Ministry of Railways) has also given its approval for manufacturing and supply of 60E1 grade and 1080 HH grade head hardened rail," Jindal Steel and Power Ltd (JSPL) Managing Director V R Sharma said.

Without disclosing the total deal value, he said the order will be supplied once the situation stabilises post lockdown.

About the impact of lockdown on the company's operations, the MD said JSPL had some export orders and it is fulfilling them at the moment.

"The market is down in India, the demand for steel has been affected. We had taken orders from out side India and we are supplying these orders to countries like Vietnam, Saudi Arab, Thailand and Europe. Our production levels are also maintained," Sharma said.

The company's Angul plant in Odisha, he said, is about 210 kilometers from Paradip Port from where it is exporting billets, blooms, plates etc to these countries.

Speaking for the sector, Sharma said his suggestion to the government would be that at least those steel MSMEs

which are not in covid-19 hotspot areas should be allowed to resume operations.

"There are about 3-4 lakh MSMEs of steel in the entire country. I suggest that at least those which are not in the affected and hotspots areas can be allowed to begin work. A lot of people depend on these MSMEs for their livelihood. The government can also think similar move in other sectors as well. This will help in reducing the burden on the people in the entire chain from manufacturing to supplier to consumer," he said.

Part of USD 25 billion OP Jindal group, JSPL is the only player in India manufacturing head hardened rails.

The company's rail mill at its Raigarh plant has capacity of producing over 30,000 tonne of head hardened rail per month.

MSME sector will tide over nCoV crisis: Gadkari

ROOPSHREE NAIR NEW DELHI, APR 12 (PTI): The MSME sector will tide over the huge blow caused by the lockdown, and reduce chinese import dependence by ramping up domestic manufacturing with the government support, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari has said.

In a video-conference with PTI, the MSME minister said the government was working on a "war footing" to resolve issues - like working capital crunch and access to affordable financing - faced by the sector, as millions of units stare at staggering losses.

Gadkari said the committees constituted by the Prime Minister's



Office are continuously monitoring and assessing the situation on the ground and would suggest if and when the lockdown can be lifted in certain sectors for normal operations to resume, and added that "work should begin where possible while keeping the virus at bay".

The MSME Minister said nearly 8-10 lakh units will be restructured

in the coming days, asserting that owners will have to take care of their workers and put in place mechanisms for proper sanitisation as a preventive measure once they return to work.

Gadkari also informed that a Rs 10,000 crore "Fund of Funds" has been approved by the Finance Committee and will be placed before the Union Cabinet for approval. This fund, he said, will facilitate MSMEs to raise money from the capital market, as a portion of their equity will be purchased by the government.

"We will encourage MSMEs to enter the capital market and attract foreign investments, increase exports from the sector

through large-scale production and create jobs," the minister said.

He observed that the government was well aware of the issues faced by micro, small and medium enterprises, and packages announced by the Finance Minister will set in motion a recovery for the sector.

Gadkari said that recommendations of the UK Sinha Committee appointed by the Reserve Bank of India will soon be implemented.

The minister said he has directed district officers to go to banks and facilitate paper work and coordination for loans to be cleared as fast as possible, and a "branch-wise" monitoring was un-

derway to ease the credit woes of the MSME sector.

Referring to reports of nearly 20 lakh migrant labourers living in shelter homes across the country, Gadkari admitted that this was a "serious issue" but said state governments will have to evolve guidelines towards their safe return and factory owners will have to undertake measures to rebuild their confidence.

Highlighting that several nations want to source medical devices, masks and ventilators from India in the wake of the virus outbreak, the minister said this was a "golden opportunity" for the country's MSMEs to enhance their production capabilities for the future.

Ahmed Patel rues spread of hatred on social media

AHMEDABAD, APR 12 (PTI): Senior Congress leader Ahmed Patel on Sunday took a dim view of what he called the spreading of hatred in society by certain groups amid the coronavirus outbreak, and demanded strict action by government.

In a video message posted on Twitter, Patel said it was regrettable that some groups are trying to raise sensitive issues at the time of the spread of the coronavirus pandemic.

"In such a time the administration needs to be very cautious. I feel

that those groups or individuals trying to spread sensitive issues should be identified and action taken against them," Patel said in a message posted in Gujarati.

Though he didn't take any names, the Congress veteran was apparently referring to instances wherein some right wing groups have targetted a particular community over the Tablighi Jamaat meet held at the Nizamuddin Markaz in Delhi last month and its connection to the spread of the novel coronavirus.

"If we are going to

fight with each other then we cannot defeat coronavirus. Many use social media for spreading good messages, but some use it to spread hatred. Government should curb such usage," Patel said.

He also appealed to leaders of various political parties against doing politics over the current crisis triggered by the coronavirus.

Patel, a Rajya Sabha MP from Gujarat, also criticised the government over the alleged shortage of the Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) for frontline health personnel.

"The government has made available PPE for doctors and nurses, but they are not enough. All those fighting on the frontline should be given PPEs," he said.

Patel also demanded PPE kits for conservancy workers.

"It is the duty of the government and us to ensure that sanitation workers get PPE kits," he said.

The Congress leader further said that migrant labourers have been very badly affected due to the lockdown and that it is the duty of the affluent

section of society to help such poor people.

"Migrant workers are stranded at many places. At the start of lockdown they started their journey on foot to reach their homes. Some of them reached their homes, some were stopped mid-way while others remained stuck at their work places," he added.

Baraat stuck in Aligarh for three weeks due to lockdown

ALIGARH, APR12 (PTI): Savitri cannot go to her marital home despite the baraat waiting for three weeks and some baraat members have started to lose patience. But no one is able to do anything and Savitri does not say much but she must be confused. Vidhipur villagers say none of them would ever

forget this marriage.

Savitri's baraat arrived on March 21 and it was to return to Dhanbad district in Jharkhand on March 23, but then the nationwide lockdown was announced and it got stuck, along with the bride and the groom.

Savitri's family has been hosting the guests since and arranging

their meals.

The district administration has pitched in to help the family by providing one meal a day.

The 12 baraat members have been tested for coronavirus and they were found negative for it.

They told mediapersons that they did not have the slightest idea

the trouble they will find themselves into when they left their hometown on March 20.

It's not clear when Savitri and the baraat will leave for Dhanbad.

The lockdown is set to end on April 14 but states have pitched for an extension.

Wear mask in Ahmedabad or face Rs 5000 fine/3-year jail

AHMEDABAD, APR 12 (PTI): In view of the rising number of coronavirus cases in Ahmedabad, the city civic body has made it compulsory for people to wear masks from Monday, failing which they would be fined Rs 5,000 or sentenced to three years in jail, an official said.

The order has been issued under the Epidemic Diseases Act in a bid to contain the spread of the deadly disease, Ahmedabad Municipal Commissioner Vijay Neh-

ra said on Sunday.

"From 6 am on Monday, everybody in Ahmedabad city municipal limits will have to wear mask mandatorily when going out in public places. Those found without masks will be fined Rs 5,000. Those who fail to deposit the fine will be jailed for three years," he said.

People can wear masks available in the market or those made from cloth, or even tie a handkerchief so as to cover the nose and

mouth, he said.

The order will be applicable to all those venturing out in public places, including hawkers, shopkeepers and others, Nehra said, adding that he was hopeful of 100 per cent compliance with the order.

Ahmedabad reported 19 COVID-19 cases on Sunday, taking the total number of such cases in the city to 266, the highest in Gujarat.

So far, 11 people have died of the disease in the city.

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Former UFC star Ronda Rousey says she left WWE due to 'ungrateful' fans

LONDON, 12 APR [THEGUARDIAN]: Former UFC champion Ronda Rousey says her decision to curtail her WWE career is due to her antipathy towards fans and a hectic schedule. "What am I doing it for if I'm not being able to spend my time and energy on my family, but instead spending my time and my energy on a bunch of fucking ungrateful fans that don't even appreciate me?" Rousey said during

an appearance on the Wild Ride podcast. "The thing is, I love performing. I love the girls. I love being out there. "But, at the end of the day, I was just like, 'Fuck these fans, dude.' My family loves me. They appreciate me. I want all of my energy to go into them." The 33-year-old first rose to fame after winning a judo bronze at the 2008 Olympics. She then became one of the biggest names in UFC

before stepping away from mixed martial arts to pursue a career in professional wrestling. Although her contract with WWE runs until April 2021 she told Steve O, the host of the Wild Ride podcast, that she would only return in a part-time role, if at all. "People think you're only wrestling as much as they see you on TV, but they don't realize that there's three or four other days of live shows

during the week," she said. "If I looked at all the live shows, I was only home a day and a half a week. It was just not worth it for my family ... No, I'll never be full time again – over 200 days a year on the road like that ever again." While Rousey's comments angered some WWE fans on Twitter, it may be part of a deliberate ploy to enhance her heel persona.

India footballer Jeje comes to rescue of people in dire need of blood

NEW DELHI, APR 12 (PTI): Indian football team striker Jeje Lalpekhlua has come to the rescue of people in dire need of blood when it is not readily available in Mizoram due to the extraordinary situation arising out of the COVID-19 pandemic. India is under a three-week lockdown enforced to contain the novel coronavirus and given the current situation, it is set for a two-week extension.

"Due to the lockdown blood units are not readily available nowadays. So the hospital connected with the Young Mizo Association is seeking help. The news reached me and I knew immediately what I needed to do," the 29-year-old stated. "You cannot keep quiet and sit idle during such circumstances." He immediately rushed to the Synod Hospital in Durtlang, Mizoram to donate blood. "Upon receiving the information we chalked



out our plan. We headed to the hospital from the Durtlang branch of YMA. Out of 33 who had reported, 27 were deemed fit to donate," Jeje informed. "It's not about me or someone else, it's about the human race that needs to fight together now, more than ever." The Young Mizo Association (YMA) is the largest non-governmental voluntary organisation which operates primarily in Mizoram and some parts

of the other north-eastern states as well. "It is so satisfying that I have been able to play a minor role. I thank the Almighty for giving me the strength." This is not the first time that Jeje has been involved in philanthropic activities. He has time and again rose to the cause in Mizoram whenever the situation has demanded. "Someone had to stand by them. If a hos-

pital is falling short of blood units, we need to help. We all need to play our part during the crisis. The most difficult part, I understand is to stay at home. But it's very necessary. The longer we stay at home, the faster will India heal." Jeje, who last played for India in the AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019, was summoned for the national camp for the World Cup qualifier against Qatar, which was postponed.

Motorsport great Moss dies aged 90

LONDON, APR 12 (AFP): Motorsport great Stirling Moss has died aged 90 following a long illness, the British driver's wife announced Sunday. "It was one lap too many," Susie Moss told Britain's Press Association. "He just closed his eyes." Although Moss never won the Formula One title, he finished runner-up four times. And in an era where it was common for drivers to race in different disciplines, a 14-year career that started in 1948 saw Moss win 212 of the 529 races he entered including the 1955 Mille Miglia, which took place on public roads in Italy.

Pogba 'hungry to come back' from injury



LONDON, APR 12 (AFP): Manchester United star Paul Pogba said he is eager to return from a lengthy spell on the sidelines when football resumes following the coronavirus pandemic. The World Cup winner has been limited to just eight appearances for United this season after battling a nagging ankle injury. "I'm already training and touching the ball," Pogba, who hasn't played since December 26, told the United Podcast. "I've been frustrated, a long time ago. Now I'm almost there, so I'm just thinking about getting back and training fully with the team and every-

thing." "You think bad but I've never had something like this in my career, so I always take it in a good way. It makes me more hungry to come back and do well. And, yeah, it just shows me as well how much I love football." Pogba's agent Mino Raiola has hinted the 27-year-old could leave Old Trafford if he is unhappy at the end of the season. However, the Premier League has been put on hold indefinitely due to the spread of the deadly virus. "You have to be very patient because, well my injury, I don't know if people really know what

happened," Pogba added. "So I had a foot injury, which came in the game against Southampton. It was early this season and so I carried this for a long time, training and trying to be playing with it. After I stopped, I found I had a fracture." "I had a cast on it, a plaster-cast, so it went very well but too well. The bone got bigger and so, when I came back again, I played those two games against Watford and Newcastle, I could feel something again. "So I had to have an operation and now here I am. I don't feel anything and, hopefully, I'll be back very soon.

Dhoni stuck now, should have retired after 2019 World Cup: Shoaib Akhtar

BHARAT SHARMA NEW DELHI, APR 12 (PTI): Former Pakistan pacer Shoaib Akhtar says he cannot fathom why Mahendra Singh Dhoni has "dragged it for so long" as the right time for the maverick ex-India skipper to call it quits was after last year's ODI World Cup. Akhtar said he hopes the 38-year-old Dhoni gets a resounding farewell despite his resolute silence on what the future holds. "This guy has served to the best of his ability. He should leave cricket

with dignity. I don't know why he dragged it for so long. He should have retired after the World Cup," Akhtar told PTI from Islamabad. "If I would have been in his place, I would have hung up my boots. I could have played shorter formats for three-four years but I left (after the 2011 WC) as I wasn't into the game 100 per cent. So why drag?" he asked. Dhoni, who has not played a competitive game since the World Cup semifinal in July, was preparing to make a much-anticipated

comeback with the IPL, which is now unlikely to take place due to the COVID-19 pandemic. If he had done well in the IPL, there was a possibility of him playing the T20 World Cup in October-November. Akhtar believes Dhoni is now in a limbo but deserves a grand send-off despite the anti-climactic turn of events. "As a country, you should let him go with a lot of respect and dignity. Give him a nice send off. He has won you the World Cup and done wonders for India. He is

a wonderful human being at the same time. But right now, he seems to be stuck," he said. Akhtar said Dhoni should have ideally retired after last year's 50-over World Cup. "When he could not finish the game in the semifinal (against New Zealand). I felt he should have retired but he can only answer why he didn't," he said. "He should have played a farewell series after the World Cup may be and then said goodbye in a manner befitting his great stature."

Talking about the Indian team's inability to win a global event since the 2013 Champions Trophy, Akhtar said Virat Kohli's team needs match-winners in the middle-order. "Winning tournaments is one thing but staying at top is another. India is still the top-ranked Test team and is almost among the top teams in the limited-overs format. So, we should not base their performance only on their showing in ICC events. "Of course, they should win ICC events and

they have to. This team, when the top four score, they win more often than not. But if they don't, then it is an issue. Another thing I noticed is that you need a match-winner like Yuvraj (Singh) or Dhoni in the middle-order," he explained. "When we toured India in 1998, we always thought we would run through India after getting the top order. There was no match winner until Yuvraj came in, followed by Dhoni. "Then you started seeing change in results. Right now, the problem is

lack of finishers," opined the 44-year-old. Akhtar doesn't see any cricket happening for the next six to eight months as coronavirus continues to wreak havoc around the world. But if India's tour of Australia takes place, Akhtar sees all four Tests going down the wire. India had won their first ever Test series in Australia early last year. But this time, Australia will be a different kettle of fish in the presence of Steve Smith and David Warner, who were serving ball-tampering bans

when India toured last. "Despite the loss in New Zealand, I think India is a very, very good team and can give a tough time to Australia. But again, India have to prove that like they did the last time. "However, I don't see that series happening. My assessment is there won't be any cricket for next one year. The T20 World Cup is not going to happen. "We are dealing with a pandemic at the moment. Any industry, which requires crowd gathering, is going to suffer," Akhtar added.

Tendulkar interacts with 12,000 docs on sport injuries

MUMBAI, APR 12 (PTI): Always eager to share his vast knowledge and experience, cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar has interacted with 12,000 doctors on sports injuries. In his over two decade long illustrious career, Tendulkar suffered many health issues, the most prominent being the tennis elbow injury. The veteran of 200

Tests and 463 ODIs, got to know through one Dr Sudhir Warrior, an orthopaedic surgeon, that several young doctors across the country were utilising the lockdown time to effectively gain knowledge on sports injuries through live webinars. A session on sports injuries was held on Saturday and Tendulkar, knowing that his expe-

riences will help these doctors, volunteered to be a part of it. Tendulkar, accordingly, interacted with around 12,000 doctors, who attended the session. It is reliably learnt that the 46-year-old legend said he was grateful to the medical fraternity for their service. During the session, the young orthopae-

dic doctors got to know how the requirements and treatment outcomes of athletes are different from regular patients, sources said. Dr Warrior moderated the session with Dr Nitin Patel, physiotherapist, who has worked with Indian cricket team and IPL franchise Mumbai Indians.

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Coronavirus death toll passes 75,000 in Europe: AFP tally

PARIS, APR 12 (AFP): More than 75,000 people have died from the coronavirus in Europe, with 80 percent of the fatalities occurring in Italy, Spain, France and Britain, according to an AFP tally at 0945 GMT Sunday compiled from official sources.

With a total of 75,011 deaths from 909,673 infections, Europe is the hardest-hit continent in the COVID-19 pandemic, which has killed at least 109,133 people worldwide.

Europe's most affected country is Italy with 19,468 deaths, followed by Spain with 16,972, France with 13,832 and Britain with 9,875.

ADITI KHANNA

LONDON, APR 12 (PTI): The UK Opposition parties and some ruling Conservative Party MPs have called on the government to resume Parliament after its Easter recess period on April 21 in a virtual form, given the social distancing measures in place to combat the coronavirus pandemic.

Labour Party Leader Keir Starmer, leading the calls for Parliament's return, has sought a meeting with the House of Commons Speaker and also written to the Leader of the Commons, Tory MP Jacob Rees-Mogg, seeking a confirmation of a virtual

UK Opposition wants Parliament resumed virtually from April 21



Commons sitting.

"Parliament has a responsibility to put questions to ministers at this time of national crisis," he writes.

"The best decisions are those that are challenged and subject to scrutiny. And by that process issues can be resolved, mistakes quickly

rectified and individual concerns addressed, which will help save lives and protect our country. But if Parliament is not sitting or functioning effectively that cannot happen," he said.

All parliamentary business was suspended on March 25, as the UK went into its semi-lock-

down after a speedy passage of the emergency Coronavirus Bill.

The Commons website notes that MPs are set for their official return after what is the usual Easter recess on April 21, but there have been doubts about the possibility of physical sessions resuming amid

the continued lockdown as the death toll from the deadly virus in the country edged close to 10,000.

"My view is that whatever we come up with needs to be comprehensive and temporary," said Rees-Mogg.

According to The Sunday Times newspaper, Britain's spy chiefs have been brought in to advise the government on how a virtual Parliament could function.

The National Cyber-Security Centre (NCSC), a branch of the UK's Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), is reportedly assisting with details on

how to make a video-conferencing app such as Zoom secure so it can be used in Parliament.

Details were discussed at a virtual meeting of the House of Commons Commission last week where Speaker Lindsay Hoyle and others agreed in principle that Parliament should resume virtually. Details of how the virtual Parliament will work will be finalised at another meeting next Thursday, the report said.

UK Home Secretary Priti Patel was asked about Parliament's resumption during the daily Downing Street briefing

on Saturday, when she said that discussions were taking place over the issue but insisted that all focus was currently on dealing with the pandemic.

"I think at this particular time, we have to focus the resources of government, all our energies, every single sinew of government, focusing on saving lives and dealing with this awful disease," she said.

Acting leader of the Liberal Democrats, Ed Davey, said the lack of parliamentary scrutiny at this time was "intolerable" and could not be allowed to continue.



Pope calls for 'immediate' ceasefire in global conflicts

ROME, APR 12 (AFP): Pope Francis called Sunday for an "immediate" ceasefire in global conflict and urged European nations to show "solidarity" in the face of a coronavirus pandemic that has claimed more than 109,000 lives worldwide.

"May Christ our peace enlighten all who have responsibility in conflicts, that they may have the courage to support the appeal for an immediate global ceasefire in all corners of the world," the pope said in a livestreamed Easter message.

Francis added that it was time for Europe, which he described as his "beloved continent", to "rise again, thanks to a concrete spirit of solidarity" similar to that shown after World War II.

Israel tightens quarantine in Jerusalem to halt virus spread

JERUSALEM, APR 12 (AP): The Israeli government approved a tight quarantine of several areas of Jerusalem on Sunday, including the historic Old City, in a bid to slow the spread of the coronavirus in the city's most susceptible neighborhoods.

A ministerial committee gave approved the shutting down of movement in and out of several predominantly ultra-Orthodox areas of the city in order to contain the disease that has already resulted in over 100 deaths in Israel and almost 6,000 around the Middle East, the vast majority in Iran.

The measure, which takes effect at noon on Sunday but had been debated for days, faced resistance from ultra-Orthodox ministers in

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government who rejected singling out their constituency.

Israel's Health Ministry has documented over 10,000 cases of the novel coronavirus and over 100 deaths. Roughly a fifth of all cases in Israel are in Jerusalem, the ministry said.

A large percentage of the COVID-19 cases are in the country's largely insular ultra-Orthodox community, which for weeks did not adhere to government orders to maintain social distancing.

The virus causes mild to moderate symptoms in most patients, who recover within a few weeks. But it is highly contagious and can cause severe illness or death, particularly in elderly patients or those with underlying

health problems.

Starting Sunday, residents of four areas of Jerusalem would not be permitted to leave their neighborhoods for provisioning, and could only move to other areas for essential work and medical care.

Already tight restrictions on public gatherings have limited religious events in Jerusalem this April, which features the Jewish holiday of Passover, the Christian holiday of Easter and the start of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

At Jerusalem's Western Wall, the holiest site where Jews can pray, a limited quorum of some 10 men gathered to perform the Priestly Benediction, the customary prayer held during the weeklong holiday of

Passover.

The blessing normally draws tens of thousands of worshippers, but due to coronavirus restrictions there were only a handful in the large plaza adjacent to the wall.

Among those participating in the prayer was U.S. Ambassador to Israel David Friedman.

At the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, where many Christians believe Jesus was crucified and entombed, the top Roman Catholic cleric in the Holy Land Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa held Easter Mass before a largely empty church.

My message is that despite the sign of death and fear that we are seeing everywhere all over the world we have to look at the good all those

that are giving their lives for the others," he said.

The message of Easter is the life, despite all, will prevail.

UAE launches online weddings amid coronavirus controls

DUBAI, APR 12 (AFP): The United Arab Emirates has launched an online marriage service that allows couples to wed amid restrictions on movement and interaction imposed to counter the deadly coronavirus.

The UAE has taken strict measures to combat the spread of the COVID-19 respiratory disease, which has claimed the lives of well over 100,000 people worldwide.

The justice ministry said on Sunday that citizens and residents can set a date for an online wedding ceremony conducted via video link

with a cleric after their paperwork is submitted and approved -- also online, according to the UAE's official news agency WAM.

The procedure will see a cleric confirm the identity of the couple and witnesses, before a marriage certificate is relayed to a specialised court for validation.

The couple will receive confirmation of their marriage certificate via text message.

The service was launched "to maintain the health of the public and that of people working in courts and to limit the presence of employ-

ees", WAM reported.

This comes after Dubai, one of the seven emirates that make up the UAE, said on Wednesday it suspended "until further notice" marriages and divorces in the emirate. No announcement has been made about divorce proceedings.

Dubai has temporarily restricted the movement of people and vehicles, except for those working in "vital sectors" and with "essential needs" -- such as food or medicine.

The UAE has recorded more than 3,700 coronavirus cases, including 20 deaths.

South Korea continues down trend in new cases

SEOUL, APR 12 (AP): South Korea reported 32 additional cases of the coronavirus over the past 24 hours, a continued downward trend in new infections in the country.

The Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said in a statement Sunday the additional cases increased the country's total to

10,512.

It says 7,368 of them have been recovered and released from quarantine and that 13,788 are under tests to determine whether they've contracted the virus.

The center says that South Korea's death toll from the coronavirus increased by three to 214.

South Korea's case-load has been slowing

recently, compared with early March when it recorded hundreds of new cases every day.

But there are worries about a steady rise in infections linked to those arriving from overseas and recent transmissions at bars and other leisure facilities.



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VIDEO NEWS SECTION

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Iran reports 117 new deaths, raising total to 4,474

TEHRAN, APR 12 (AFP): Iran on Sunday announced 117 new deaths from the novel coronavirus, bringing the overall official toll to 4,474, even as it eased some restrictions that had been imposed to slow the spread of the illness.

Health ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour also told a news conference that 1,657 new infections had been confirmed in the past 24

hours, taking the total to 71,686.

Iran has carried out 263,388 tests for the virus so far, he added.

Of those confirmed to be infected with COVID-19 and admitted to hospitals, 43,894 have recovered and been discharged, while 3,930 are in a critical condition.

Iran announced its first coronavirus cases on February 19 and has so far become the worst-hit

country in the Middle East.

The new tolls come as Iran has started a gradual reopening of its sanctions-hit economy.

On Saturday, it allowed small businesses to reopen outside the capital and this will be extended to the capital Tehran on April 18.

Iran's President Hassan Rouhani also announced in a cabinet meeting that an intercity travel ban in place since last month would be

lifted on April 20.

But he repeated calls on Iranians to limit movements outside to "necessary" tasks and remain vigilant, as it remains difficult to "comment on the future" of Iran's battle with the virus.

Schools and universities are still shut across the Islamic republic, as are cinemas, sports stadiums and revered Shiite Muslim shrines.

Coronavirus will be the back of many films till world sees next crisis: Anurag Basu

KOMAL PANCHAMATIA

MUMBAI, APR 12 (PTI): Film-maker Anurag Basu believes once the COVID-19 crisis ends, the entertainment industry will be defined by pre-corona and post-corona eras.

The director was looking forward to his next, Ludo this month, the release of which was pushed after the pandemic hit India.

Basu said cinema will witness a complete shift in terms of storytelling and mode of entertainment.

The cinema and entertainment world will be defined as pre-corona and post-corona' era. Storytelling will change and there will be some people, who are getting used to watching stuff on OTT, so that may take the front seat now.

I believe now corona will become the backdrop and subject for many films for years to come till the world sees the next big crisis, Basu told PTI in an interview.

The director believes many people will come out as a completely different personality post the lockdown, and it will also influence their choice of content.



For some people, the view on life has changed. It will affect their likes and dislikes and the kind of things they want to watch and not watch. They will see the world through a different prism.

People will not see anything meaningless and that will push people to make more meaningful stuff. This is just a guess. And that's what we do right? I am only guessing the viewer's choices, he added.

Basu said he is also doubtful whether people would be comfortable about returning

to the theatres after the lockdown.

He hopes Bollywood producers would work together to chalk out a release calendar which lures the audiences to come to the cinema halls.

I hope all the producers discuss what works best for each of them and not fight for dates or cut into each other's business. If we are together, we can manage."

From both creative and business points of view, Basu said, like any other sector, the film industry too will be

incurring losses due to the lockdown, but the filmmaker is more concerned about daily wage workers.

My heart goes out to the daily wage workers, who make for 75 per cent in any film unit, as they will be hit the most with all the shoots being stalled.

His next film Ludo, a comedy anthology, was scheduled to hit the theatres on April 24, but the director is still unsure about the new release date.

We were all ready and geared up for the April 24 release. Looking at the current scenario, I'm not expecting Ludo' to hit the theatres soon. As soon as we decide our date we will launch our trailer. Earlier we were supposed to launch it with Sooryavashi' release.

Set in a quintessential Indian metro, "Ludo" follows four different stories with people dealing with unavoidable jeopardies of life.

Produced by T-Series, the film features Abhishek Bachchan, Rajkummar Rao, Fatima Sana Shaikh, Aditya Roy Kapur, Sanya Malhotra, Rohit Saraf and Pankaj Tripathi.

Dwayne Johnson had lost 'Jack Reacher' role to Tom Cruise

Dwayne Johnson has revealed that he had auditioned for the part of popular character Jack Reacher but lost out to Hollywood star Tom Cruise.

During a Q&A session on Instagram, Johnson said he was confident about bagging the part as he believed his physical attributes are perfect for the character, created by author Lee Child.

"In Hollywood, actors are kind of like in-a-box. There are actors that can vie for a particular role because it allows for them to have a certain look, skin colour, size, etc.

"Fortunately, for me, there aren't a lot of guys at all who look like me. So, all of my roles, from the beginning of my career, I've been a lucky son of a b***h that they've been created and designed for me except Jack Reacher," he said.

Johnson said at the time Cruise was "biggest movie



star in the world, and I was not".

"I got the call saying 'Hey, you didn't get the role'. Look, I didn't even know if I had a shot for it, but the people around me at that time made me think that I did. I felt like I did, I felt like 'Why not me?'" he added.

However, the actor later got the chance to play Luke

Hobbs in fifth installment of the "Fast & Furious" franchise. And today, Johnson is one of the highest-paid actors in Hollywood.

"I'm positive that the role of Jack Reacher, because it was an established character, an IP that was well known and beloved around the world, that I wouldn't have had the creative space to do

what I wanted with the character, he said.

"I look back in gratitude that I didn't get Jack Reacher," he added.

Cruise had played the character in two films --2012's "Jack Reacher" and its 2016 sequel "Jack Reacher: Never Go Back".

Hugh Jackman, Deborra-Lee Furness celebrate 24th wedding anniversary



MELBOURNE, APR 12 (PTI):

Hollywood star Hugh Jackman has shared a sweet message for his wife, actor Deborra-Lee Furness on their 24th wedding anniversary, saying that with her as his partner every year is better.

The "Logan" star took to Twitter to share the post on Saturday. "These 24 years have been the best of my life.

And, as far as I can see, we get better every year. Debs, I love you with every fiber of my soul. Happy anniversary. #24," Jackman wrote.

He also shared an old photograph with Furness on the social media platform.

The couple tied the knot on April 11, 1996 and have two adopted children - son Oscar, 19, and daughter Ava, 14.

I'm trying to save the world: Rihanna warns fans to stop asking about new music

LOS ANGELES, APR 12 (PTI):

Pop star Rihanna has asked her fans, who are demanding her to release her new album soon, to back off as her prime focus right now is doing her bit in saving the world from the coronavirus pandemic.

The Grammy winner was one of the first Hollywood personalities who pledged support towards the relief efforts in fighting the COVID-19 outbreak.

Rihanna has been teasing new for quite some time now and eager admirers got an earful from her during an Instagram Live. Her last studio album was 'Anti' which was released in 2016.

Taking a swipe at US President Donald Trump, the Barbadian singer said, "If one of y'all motherf***ers ask me about the album one more time when I'm tryna save



the world, unlike y'all president....on sight."

Rihanna's non-profit organisation Clara Lionel Foundation (CLF) and Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey recently donated USD 2.1 million each to help victims of domestic violence in Los Angeles during the COVID-19 stay-at-home order.

Also CLF and and rapper Jay-Z's Shawn Carter Foundation donated USD 2 million to support undocumented workers, the incarcerated, homeless and elderly popu-

lations, and children of frontline healthcare workers in Los Angeles and New York City amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Earlier, Rihanna, through CLF, also donated USD 5 million to support Direct Relief, Partners In Health, Feeding America, the International Rescue Committee and World Health Organization's COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund as they continue to fight the pandemic in the US, the Caribbean and Africa.

Aries: You can either whine about the lemons life throws at you or make a delicious lemon tart out of it. Aries, you're doing a wonderful job at transmuting the panic and anxiety into creativity. Art is and has always been your secret weapon in this crusade. On the down side, you could find out that somebody close to your heart has been throwing shade at you in private. Not all friendships are meant to last forever. Detach. Disengage. Protect your space but do not stoop down to their level.

Tip: Art is your secret weapon.

Taurus: You didn't think you'd be able to survive the lockdown, but look at you now! You're winning the award of QuarantQueen and embracing the slow life. When you don't have the latest gadget to purchase and hottest restaurant to visit, all you have is your rich interior life. So journey back to yourself, Taurus. Reconnect with you true origins. The truth is, things in your outer reality will never be perfect. But you possess within you the power to transcend.

Tip: You're changing the way you approach life.

Gemini: Understand the law of cause and effect. Every action we take has a reaction. When we plant a seed of goodness, we open the door to love and abundance. When we plant the seeds of misery, that's what we attract into our experience. So be mindful of where you are vibrating at. A karmic cleanse is in order, Gemini. The Universe is also asking you to honour the lessons you are being faced with as an opportunity to evolve. Trust that as long as you act conscientiously, you will be taken care of.

Tip: Know that everything is unfolding for your greatest good.

Cancer: Your love affair with the written word continues, but you're in the mood to challenge yourself a little more. What's on your agenda, Cancer? Is there a skill or subject you've been meaning to learn? Just because you cannot go to the classroom that doesn't mean the classroom cannot come home to you. Some of you may also feel inspired to use poetry and prose as a form of expression. Feel comfortable sharing your gift with the world? Social media is a wonderful tool at your disposal.

Tip: Books over people.

Leo: Not everybody in the room is going to jam at your frequency, and that's just the order of life. If somebody is spreading a vicious rumour about you, throw your head back and laugh. They don't know everything about you. They never will. They're merely acting from a space of their own limitations. Your lower self could get vengeful at this point. But you're so much better than this. Rise above, Leo. Remember who you are and your higher purpose.

Tip: Rise above the drama.

Virgo: This is a big moment in the Virgo HQ. Things are coming around full circle, bringing you the reward and recognition you deserve. All eyes on you. Look out for power-players who are in the mood to sync forces. Use your discretion when it comes to saying yes, though. You want to align yourself with opportunities that are for your highest good. Remember to work through the abundance blocks as you do. Allowing yourself to receive' will be the real game changer here.

Tip: You've got that big goal energy about you.

Libra: Ah, the gift of the gab! It's both a boon and a bane,

Libra. Be aware of how you are using your words today, lest you end up hurting somebody you love. You don't want to jeopardise your relationships just because you woke up on the wrong side of the bed. On the upside, you are learning to up your social media game and use the available tools to your advantage. Use this time to curate your timeline consciously. Think motivational speakers and fitness gurus who inspire you to raise your vibrations.

Tip: Act conscientiously.

Scorpio: Look at you healing old wounds and transmuting the pain into joy, creativity, and love. You're glowing like never before, Scorpio. You're also developing a sense of trust and surrender, an innate understanding that everything transpires for your highest good. Honour and acknowledge the learnings, magical one. Spirituality is also taking centre stage for you. Instead of thinking of meditation as something you "do", think of it as something you are. Raising your vibrations will help you approach everything—the mundane tasks included—with the tranquility of a Zen Master.

Tip: Turn your wounds into wisdom.

Sagittarius: It's true that you've had to let go of certain plans due to the lockdown, but you've also found a way to adapt and adjust. Let reinvention become your magic word. Know that you were born to kiss the stars. What's wonderful about this phase of your life is that it is providing you with a sense of stability despite the uncertainty. You're more sure now than ever before about the chosen path. The cards are also speaking of fame and recognition. Trust that you will find yourself in the spotlight soon.

Tip: The cards speak of reward and recognition.

Capricorn: Like every couple, you've gone through your share of ups and downs, but you've also discovered a way to power through. Remember why you got together in the first place, Capricorn. Love is and will always be your secret weapon. Move past the differences and focus on the similarities. Let the love you speak of take centre stage. For single Saturnians, this is a time of nurturing soul ties. You're becoming aware of who your real people are.

Tip: Love really does make the world go around.

Aquarius: Oh hello, QuarantQueen! You're winning at the things that once intimidated you and that says something. Your professional life is also on fire. Since you're not one to rest on laurels, you're thinking of new ways to up the game. Research is your power word. You will find that there are many people who are vying for your attention right now. But you're not obliged to say yes to everything or settle for less than what you deserve. Call your power back, Aquarius. Most importantly, read the offer document carefully before putting your name on the dotted line.

Tip: You're not obliged to say yes to everything that comes your way, or settle for less.

Pisces: At a time like this, it is your mental prison that you need to be the most careful of, the voice in your head that thrives on self-sabotage, the voice that disempowers you and says, "You cannot". No force in the world can come in your way once you realise your potential, Pisces. This is also a time of endings in your world. Karmic cycles are being completed as you read this. Send out a prayer of gratitude for the lessons learned.

Tip: Move beyond the limitations created by your mind.