



AMERICA UNITED AGAINST COVID-19

KEEP SAFE

- Follow President Trump's Guidelines on Coronavirus
- Observe Social Distancing
- Wash Hands Frequently
- No Panic Buying
- No Price Gouging

KEEP AMERICA SAFE

NY Governor Cuomo Mandates 100% Workforce to Stay Home, excluding Essential Services



Governor Andrew Cuomo speaks at a coronavirus press conference at the governor's Manhattan office in New York
Photo / Courtesy Daily News

NEW YORK (TIP): New York Governor Andrew Cuomo on Friday, March 20 ordered that all employees of all non-essential businesses must stay at home and urged residents to stay indoors as much as possible as the coronavirus cases in the state reached over 6,800, with fatalities standing at 22. The rapidly rising number of coronavirus cases forced the governor to announce the extreme measures which he has been resisting despite of requests from the New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio.

"I will sign an Executive Order mandating that 100% of workforce must stay home, excluding essential services. This order excludes pharmacies, grocery stores, and others," Cuomo said.

contd on Page 28

Trump Administration's 1 Trillion Economic Stimulus Package

Most Americans to get 2 installments of \$1200.00 checks, based on their income
Large part of stimulus money to go to businesses

WASHINGTON (TIP): The proposed legislation the details of which remain in flux, could exceed \$1 trillion. It may include direct payments to individuals, small-business lending, payroll tax cuts, and credit facilities for larger businesses and commercial paper facilities.

The "phase three" bill unveiled by Senate Republicans on Thursday, March 19 includes rebates of \$1,200 for most individuals who reported less than \$75,000 on their 2018 tax returns, or \$2,400 per couple who filed their taxes jointly and made less than \$150,000.

Another \$500 would be added for every dependent child. Low-income Americans with at least \$2,500 of qualified income, but who do not earn enough to pay income tax, get a smaller benefit of \$600, or \$1,200 for couples.

contd on Page 28



President Trump speaks during a Corona Task Force briefing at the White House March 19

4 Nirbhaya convicts executed in Tihar Jail

NEW DELHI (TIP): The four men convicted of the gang-rape and murder of a Delhi woman on December 16, 2012 were hanged in the darkness of pre-dawn on Friday, March 20, ending a horrific chapter in India's long history of sexual assault that had seared the nation's soul.

Mukesh Singh (32), Pawan Gupta (25), Vinay Sharma (26) and Akshay Kumar Singh (31) were executed at 5.30 am for the savage assault in an empty moving bus on the 23-year-old physiotherapy intern who came to be known the world over as Nirbhaya, the fearless one.

"The doctor has examined the bodies and declared all four dead," Director General of Tihar Jail Sandeep Goel said.

Jail officials said the bodies were kept hanging for half an hour, a mandatory procedure after execution as per the prison manual.

This is the first time that four men



The four were convicted of gang-rape and murder of 23-year-old physiotherapy intern

have been hanged together in Tihar Jail, South Asia's largest prison complex that houses more than 16,000 inmates. The executions were carried out after the men exhausted every possible legal avenue to escape the gallows. Their desperate attempts only postponed the inevitable by less than two months after the first date of execution was set for January 22.

contd on Page 28

Madhya Pradesh Congress Government Falls as Chief Minister Kamal Nath Resigns Ahead of Floor Test

After hoping against hope for a couple of days, Kamal Nath faced with ground realities, tendered his resignation ahead of the Supreme Court mandated floor test



BHOPAL (TIP): Kamal Nath on Friday, March 20, announced his decision to resign as Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister, thereby putting an end to the ongoing political drama and crisis in the state, thereby paving the way for the Opposition BJP to take over.

Recounting the works and accomplishments of his government during its short tenure, while berating the BJP and turncoats for "engineering" the crisis, Nath said he would submit the resignation to the Governor shortly. Making the announcement minutes before the floor test,

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Countries ramping up efforts to contain epidemic

The Latest on the coronavirus pandemic, which has infected more than 244,500 people and killed more than 10,000. The COVID-19 illness causes mild or moderate symptoms in most people, but severe symptoms are more likely in the elderly or those with existing health problems. More than 86,000 people have recovered so far, mostly in China.

Belgium receives order of masks from China

Belgium has received an order of 5 million protective masks from China amid fears of shortages in hospitals.

The shipment was delivered early Friday at the Liege airport and placed under military surveillance.

A total of 1,795 confirmed cases of COVID-19 have been recorded by Belgian authorities, including 21 deaths.

A previous order of 5 million masks placed by Belgium was expected last week but was canceled because of a fraud investigation targeting the Turkish provider.

Southeast Asia's largest mosque cancels prayers

The largest mosque in Southeast Asia canceled mass prayers for the next two weeks to avoid spreading the coronavirus.

The Istiqlal grand mosque in Indonesia's capital, Jakarta, is usually packed with thousands of Muslims during Friday prayers.

Imam Nasaruddin Umar says the decision was made after the Indonesian Ulema Council, the country's highest religious authority, issued a fatwa or ruling on Monday, allowing Muslims to skip mass prayers in regions where the virus has spread "uncontrollably" until the situation returns to normal.

Indonesia has had 25 deaths from COVID-19, the most in Southeast Asia, and has 309 cases.

Voters to use masks and disposable gloves in South Korea's elections



South Korea's election commission says all voters will be required to wear masks and use disposable gloves at ballot booths during next month's national parliamentary elections as preventive measures against the coronavirus.

An official from the National Election Commission also said Friday that election workers will conduct temperature checks and provide separate polling places for voters with fever or respiratory symptoms.

Voters will be required to stand at least a meter apart when waiting in lines and sanitize their hands and wear plastic gloves provided by election workers before entering booths.

The commission will establish voting stations at hospitals and other treatment centers for COVID-19 patients who are medically isolated.

Japan, China, South Korea hold video conference

Foreign ministers from Japan, China and South Korea held a video conference Friday and agreed to continue cooperating in their effort to fight against the coronavirus outbreak.

Japanese foreign minister Toshimitsu Motegi and his counterparts, China's Wang Yi and South Korea's Kang Keung-wha, ensured cooperation among the three countries in their effort and agreed to hold a three-way meeting of health authorities at an early date.

Number of COVID-19 cases exceeds 234,000 worldwide



The COVID-19 outbreak was first reported in the city of Wuhan, central China's Hubei Province, in December 2019. Experts have attributed the outbreak to a novel coronavirus that has since spread across China and abroad with confirmed cases exceeding 234,000 globally.

Here is what we know so far:

IN CHINA: 81,416 confirmed cases; 3,261 deaths (including four in Hong Kong and two in Taiwan); 71,876 recovered.

For the last three days, central China's Hubei Province has reported no new COVID-19 cases.

OUTSIDE CHINA: Over 164,000 confirmed cases; over 8,000 deaths.

EUROPEAN UNION has closed its borders for 30 days.

THE U.S. has confirmed over 18,500 cases, with over 220 deaths; New York, California, Illinois and Connecticut announced stay-at-home order over rapid virus spread.

ITALY ON FRIDAY saw the biggest day-to-day rise in deaths with 627 new deaths reported, bringing the total number of deaths to 4,032, surpassing China. The lockdown will be extended.

No trains, metros, buses: Here is how India is gearing up for Janta Curfew on March 22

NEW DELHI (TIP): Government and private organisations have announced stopping their services to follow a Janta Curfew on Sunday in fighting the Covid-19 pandemic after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal to the people of the country to stay at home for a day.

The Prime Minister had in his address to the nation asked people to stay off the roads and public places during the Janta Curfew, which will be in place for 14 hours from 7am to 9pm on Sunday.

Essential services like police, media, medical services etc will not come under the purview of the curfew.

Here is what government and private organisations are doing:

- The Indian Railways has said it will not operate any passenger train from any railway station in the country from midnight on Saturday to 10pm on Sunday.
- Mail and express trains will also stop services from 4am on Sunday, the transporter has said. All intercity trains will also remain cancelled till 10pm on Sunday.
- All suburban train services in Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai



and Secunderabad will be reduced to a bare minimum as well.

- Budget airline GoAir has announced to voluntarily suspend all flights on Sunday when Janta curfew will be in force.
- Indigo, India's largest flight carrier, has said it will operate only 60% of its domestic flights on Sunday.
- Air Vistara also announced it will be

curtailing its domestic operations on Sunday when Janta Curfew' would be in force.

- The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) has announced the closure of its services in the national capital on Sunday, for the first time in 18 years, keeping in mind the 'Janta Curfew'.
- Mobile app-based cab aggregator

services such as Uber and Ola are encouraging drivers to stay off-road on Sunday. The app services will, however, be functional for anyone who needs to avail of cabs in an emergency situation.

- More than 95,000 auto-rickshaw drivers have also extended their support to the PM's call. Rajendra Soni, general secretary of Delhi Autorickshaw Sangh, said all drivers, irrespective of political affiliation, have decided to cooperate with the government.
- Nearly 15 lakh traders in the national capital will be downing shutters on Sunday. While all markets, both retail and wholesale, will remain shut Sunday, some will extend this curfew for three days—from March 21 to March 23—as a voluntary measure in a bid to contain the community spread of the virus.
- The Noida Metro Rail Corporation (NMRC) will suspend Aqua Line services and the city bus service on Sunday in the wake of Janta Curfew.

No new local coronavirus cases for third day in a row in China

BEIJING (TIP): China reported no domestically transmitted coronavirus cases for the third consecutive day even as seven more fatalities have been confirmed, taking the death toll in the country to 3,255.

No new domestically transmitted cases of COVID-19 were reported on the Chinese mainland for the third day in a row on Friday, China's National Health Commission (NHC) said on Saturday.

On Friday, seven deaths and 36 new suspected cases were reported on the mainland, with all the deaths reported from virus epicentre Hubei Province and its capital Wuhan, it said.

The overall confirmed cases on the mainland had reached 81,008 by the end of Friday, which included 3,255 who died, 6,013 patients still undergoing treatment, and 71,740 patients who had been discharged after recovery, the NHC said.

The commission said 106 people were still suspected of being infected with the virus. The NHC said 41 new confirmed COVID-19 cases were reported on the Chinese mainland on Friday from the people arriving from



abroad, taking the total number of imported cases to 269.

While reporting about a steady increase in imported cases, the NHC did not specify whether the infected persons were foreigners or Chinese nationals returning from abroad.

China has imposed strict quarantine measures for all those returning from other countries.

Of the imported cases on Friday, 14 were reported in Beijing, nine in

Shanghai, seven in the Guangdong Province and four in the Fujian Province.

Provinces of Zhejiang, Shandong and Shaanxi each reported two cases and Sichuan reported one.

By the end of Friday, 256 confirmed cases, including four deaths, had been reported in Hong Kong, 17 confirmed cases in Macao and 135 in Taiwan including two deaths, the NHC said.

SRI LANKA IMPOSES NATIONWIDE CURFEW

COLOMBO (TIP): Sri Lanka has imposed a nationwide curfew from Friday until Monday to combat the fast-spreading coronavirus pandemic that has claimed over 9,000 lives globally, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's office has announced.

The curfew announcement comes a day after the country's Election Commission announced the postponement of the parliamentary election which was scheduled for April 25. The Commission said a decision on the new date would be taken after March 25. The country is to be placed under a curfew with effect from 6 pm (local time) tonight until 6 am (local time) on Monday, President Rajapaksa's office said.

Although there were no reasons given for the announcement, it is believed that the government is keen to see restricted movement of the people in order to promote social distancing in the face of a looming threat posed by the COVID-19 outbreak.

The national center tasked to prevent COVID-19 infections said out of the 66 confirmed cases so far, 25 were returnees from overseas.

It said 22 of them were from Italy while 2 from the UK and one from India.

Over 2,400 people are going through quarantine which includes 27 foreign nationals, it added.

President Rajapaksa has refused to lockdown the entire country, citing economic hardships for the poor.

Sri Lanka police had previously restricted the curfew to night time in the western coastal areas, a move aimed at tracking down Italy returnees who were avoiding compulsory quarantine process.

The police said despite the curfew people were engaging in social activities, defying the need to maintain social distancing.

Australia hunts 2,700 cruise passengers over corona fears

SYDNEY (TIP): Australia issued an urgent call for 2,700 cruise ship passengers who disembarked in central Sydney to isolate themselves and contact authorities Friday, after four travellers tested positive for COVID-19.

New South Wales authorities said they had deemed the New Zealand-bound Ruby Princess "low risk" and let passengers spill into the centre of the country's most populous city on Thursday.

They later discovered that three passengers and one of the 1,100 crew members had tested positive.

The ship was on a cruise from Sydney to New Zealand when passengers fell sick and 13 were tested for flu mid-voyage.

The swabs were later tested for coronavirus and four came back positive.

"That obviously is a cause for us to have some concern," said New South Wales state health minister Brad Hazzard.

"There may be the possibility -- not by any means confirmed -- there may be other passengers on board that ship who could have had the COVID virus."

Passengers had "provided their emails and their phone numbers" he added, "we're making every effort to contact" them.

The ship is currently far off the coast of Sydney with the 1,100 crew aboard, including the one member of staff who tested positive.

"The company that owns that Ruby Princess is managing the issue," said Hazzard.



The ship is currently far off the coast of Sydney with the 1,100 crew aboard, including the one staff member who is Covid19 positive.

Latin America paralyzed with Argentina lockdown, Rio beach closures

Brazil on Thursday announced it was closing land borders and prohibiting entry to people from European and many Pacific Asian countries to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, as Mexico and Peru reported their first virus deaths.

And Argentina said it would go on a "preventative and compulsory" lockdown from Friday until March 31 in an effort to contain the virus.

Brazil's Rio de Janeiro state also said it would bar people from its world famous beaches including Copacabana and Ipanema.

Chile, rocked by months of social protests, unveiled an \$11.75 billion economic stimulus package to cope with the effects of the virus on the giant copper producer, but also announced it was postponing a referendum on changing its constitution.

Meanwhile, a plane operated by Spanish carrier Iberia sent to Ecuador to pick up stranded foreigners was prevented from landing at an airport in Guayaquil, which is under lockdown.

Brazil said its two-week border closure would affect all neighboring countries, with the exception of Uruguay to the south, after shutting its border with Venezuela on Tuesday.

Its new restrictions against travelers from Europe and the Asia Pacific are set to last 30 days, according to a ministerial decree.

They apply to people coming from the European Union, Britain,



Iceland, Norway and Switzerland, as well as China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and Malaysia who are not Brazilian residents or do not have valid work or family reasons to travel.

Latin America's largest country, with a population of 210 million, has so far registered 621 cases of the coronavirus, with six deaths.

Rio state governor Wilson Witzel said from Saturday he would close all beaches, bars and restaurants. He also announced a measure to cut transport links with other Brazilian states with reported virus cases, although that needs to be ratified by federal authorities.

Mexico reported its first coronavirus death -- a 41-year-old man with diabetes who died on

Wednesday in Mexico City. Mexico has recorded 118 virus cases.

A Mexican federal judge meanwhile ordered President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador to take all preventative measures and necessary actions in order to detect infected persons in the country.

Peru, which has a total of 234 confirmed cases, reported its first three deaths.

Chile stimulus plan

Chile's stimulus plan "will strengthen our ability to face the health, economic and social needs that the coronavirus pandemic is signifying and that will probably tend to worsen in the future," President Sebastian Pinera told a press conference.

Indian American Aditya Bamzai Re-nominated by Trump to Key Administrative Post



As a Board Member of the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board, Bamzai's current term ended on January 29, 2020

WASHINGTON (TIP): US President Donald Trump has re-nominated Indian American Aditya Bamzai, of Virginia, to be a Member of the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board for a term expiring January 29, 2026. His nomination along with seven others was sent to the senate March 18.

As a Board Member of the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board, Bamzai's current term ended on January 29, 2020. He also teaches and writes about civil procedure, administrative law, federal courts, national security law and computer crime. He joined the University of Virginia School of Law's faculty as an associate professor in June 2016. His work has been published or is forthcoming in the Yale Law Journal, the University of Chicago Law Review, the George Washington University Law Review and the Missouri Law Review, among other journals. He has argued cases relating to the separation of powers and national security in the U.S. Supreme Court, Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court of Review, D.C. Circuit and other federal courts of appeals.

Before entering the academy, Bamzai served as an attorney-adviser in the Office of Legal Counsel of the U.S. Department of Justice, and as an appellate attorney in both private practice and for the National Security Division of the Department of Justice. Earlier in his career, he was a law clerk to Justice Antonin Scalia of the U.S. Supreme Court and to Judge Jeffrey Sutton of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit. He is a graduate of Yale University and of the University of Chicago Law School, where he was the editor-in-chief of the law review.

Indian Origin Pennsylvania Man Gets 7 Years for Rape

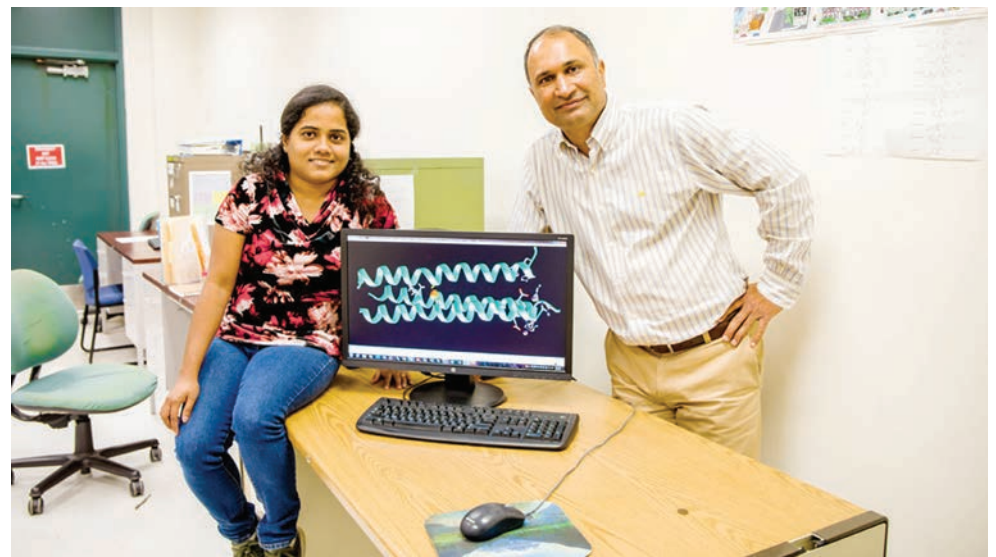
NEW YORK (TIP): Ashok Singh, 59, of West Milton Street in Easton, Pennsylvania, has been sentenced to 7 years in prison after a jury found the defendant guilty of rape. The defendant helped the victim find a place to live, aided her in moving in and then forcibly raped her in a Richmond Hill basement apartment in December of 2015, Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced. In November 2019, Singh was found guilty of rape in the first and third degree and unlawful imprisonment in the second degree. Queens Supreme Court Justice Gia L. Morris sentenced Singh to a determinate sentence of 7 years in prison to be followed by 5 years' post release supervision. (Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Indian American Chemist Creates New Artificial Enzyme

MIAMI, FL (TIP): Rajeev Prabhakar, a computational chemist at the University of Miami, and his collaborators at the University of Michigan have created a novel, synthetic, three-stranded molecule that functions just like a natural metalloenzyme, or an enzyme that contains metal ions.

For their groundbreaking study published in Nature Chemistry last week, Prabhakar and graduate student Vindi M. Jayasinghe-Arachchige joined forces with Vincent L. Pecoraro, a University of Michigan chemistry professor, to improve the performance of the artificial enzymes Pecoraro's lab pioneered over the years. The Michigan researchers had previously created simpler synthetic metalloenzymes that successfully catalyzed a number of chemical reactions. But those artificial macromolecules were designed with three identical, or symmetrical "homotrimeric" strands, which, Prabhakar said, limited their catalytic abilities.

In the new molecule, which Jayasinghe-Arachchige designed on the University of Miami's supercomputer with Prabhakar's guidance, the third strand differs in structure from the other two strands. Her



Rajeev Prabhakar a computational chemist at the University of Miami with graduate student Vindi M. Jayasinghe-Arachchige

quantum mechanical calculations showed that the more complex, non-symmetrical, three-stranded structure, known as a "heterotrimeric" coil, expanded the catalytic performance of homotrimeric artificial metalloenzymes—a finding that Pecoraro and his team confirmed with experiments in his Michigan lab.

In addition to Pecoraro, Prabhakar, and

Jayasinghe-Arachchige, other co-authors of the study include Prabhakar's former graduate student, Thomas J. Paul, now at the University of Michigan; Audrey E. Tolbert, Catherine S. Ervin, and Kosh P. Neupane, also from the University of Michigan; and Leela Ruckthong, from King Mongkut's University of Technology, in Thailand.

(Source : University of Miami)

Indian Origin Researcher in Canada Plays Key Role in Isolating COVID-19 Virus



Arinjay Banerjee, a postdoctoral researcher at McMaster's Institute for Infectious Disease Research, specializes in coronaviruses and in bats

TORONTO (TIP): A McMaster researcher from India has played a critical role on a small team that has successfully isolated and grown copies of the virus responsible for COVID-19, enabling urgent Canadian research into how it behaves and how it might be controlled. Arinjay Banerjee, a postdoctoral researcher at McMaster's Institute for Infectious Disease Research, specializes in coronaviruses and in bats, a rare combination that gave him the ideal qualifications to collaborate with colleagues from Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre and the University of Toronto on the project.

The team isolated severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), the agent responsible for the ongoing outbreak of COVID-19, believed to have jumped to humans from bats. Working at a secure containment facility at the University of Toronto and using samples taken recently from two patients in Canada.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Indian American UIC Student Honored as Newman Civic Fellow



Wasan Kumar, a third year UIC Honors College student majoring in neuroscience and minoring in Global Asian studies
Picture/ courtesy UIC

CHICAGO (TIP): University of Illinois at Chicago student Wasan Kumar has earned an honor from Campus Compact, a national nonprofit coalition of more than 1,000 colleges and universities, which named him among 290 students nationwide to its 2020-2021 Newman Civic Fellowship cohort.

UIC Chancellor Michael Amiridis nominated Kumar for the fellowship, which provides a variety of learning and networking opportunities, including a national conference of Newman Civic Fellows. It also offers fellows with pathways to apply for exclusive scholarship and post-graduate opportunities.

The native of Skokie, Illinois, serves as a health educator and leadership council member for UIC's chapter of the Peer Health Exchange, a nonprofit organization that teaches health education to first-year high school students in Chicago Public Schools. He also has been involved with health policy work as an intern in the office of state Rep. Theresa Mah.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Indian American Plastic Surgeon Accused of Drugging, Raping Unconscious Women for Years



Dr. Manish Raj Gupta is accused of drugging, raping escorts, recording sex on video
Picture/ courtesy Lucas County Corrections Center

TOLEDO, OH (TIP): An Indian origin plastic surgeon registered in the state of Michigan is accused of slipping drugs into the drinks of high-end escorts in order to rape them and record himself having sex with them in hotel rooms, officials said.

Dr. Manish Raj Gupta, 49, of Sylvania, Ohio, is a board-certified plastic surgeon and medical doctor licensed by the states of Michigan and Ohio. He owns three medical offices -- in Toledo, Ohio, Oregon, Ohio, and one in Michigan. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Dr. Manish Raj Gupta, 49, is charged with causing his victims to become unconscious with drugs and then committing sex acts on them. Investigators said Gupta administered narcotics to women, who were not his patients, without their consent or knowledge and then recorded sex acts he committed on them in various hotel rooms across the United States.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Pennsylvania Joins New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut's Regional Coalition to Combat Covid-19

TRENTON (TIP): New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy, New York Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, and Connecticut Governor Ned Lamont announced that Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf has joined their coalition to implement a regional approach to combatting COVID-19.

The four governors announced indoor portions of retail shopping malls, amusement parks and bowling alleys in the four states will close by 8 PM Thursday March 19- an expansion of the guidance that the three governors from the tri-state area issued March 16.

The guidance issued March 16- which Pennsylvania also adopted - limits crowd capacity for social and recreational gatherings to 50 people. The governors also announced restaurants and bars would close for on premise service and move to take-out and delivery services only. The governors also temporarily closed movie theaters, gyms and casinos.

Governor Murphy said, "Given the population density of the Northeast, a coordinated response effort to encourage social distancing benefits all of our residents and strengthens our greater regional



Governor Murphy, Governor Cuomo, Governor Lamont, and Governor Wolf Announced Temporary Closure of All Indoor Portions of Retail Shopping Malls, Amusement Parks & Bowling Alleys - Effective by 8 PM Thursday, March 19

preparedness. By working together to identify and enact these measures, we can potentially slow the spread of coronavirus and save thousands of lives."

"We are doing everything we can as states to reduce density and contain the spread of the virus," Governor Cuomo said. "It is critical that we remain on the same page as our neighboring states, and so far, we are the only region in the country partnering to create uniform, regional density reduction policies that

prevent 'state shopping.' We will continue working together to update our regulations and guidance as the situation evolves while keeping a consistent standard across the region."

Governor Lamont said, "This is a fast moving and quickly evolving public health emergency and making these kinds of important decisions as a region makes more sense than a patchwork approach. We will combat this virus by working together and remaining consistent across our borders and I'm proud to work with my fellow governors in this effort."

Governor Wolf said, "Pennsylvania is working aggressively to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. A regional approach to this threat is smart, and I am grateful for all of the work by my colleagues in neighboring states. Joining these leaders will help Pennsylvania mitigate the spread of COVID-19 with a coordinated approach."

Businesses and individuals in Pennsylvania should continue to refer to the Wolf administration's existing guidance for detailed closure information and other recommendations.

TRIBUTE

Salute to a Stalwart : Professor Harkishan Singh, Padma Shri Awardee

(25th November 1928 - 20th March 2020)



Padma Shri Prof. Harkishan Singh

Dr. Harkishan Singh, Emeritus Professor at the Panjab University, born on November 25, 1928, chose to bid farewell to the mundane world on March 20, 2020.

Till yesterday he was the Emeritus Professor at the Panjab University (Chandigarh, India). He was a well-recognized pharmaceutical academic, medicinal chemistry researcher and a science historian. He had experience of over half a century to his credit. He worked at the Banaras Hindu University, University of Saugar, and the Panjab University in India, and abroad at the University of Maryland, University of Mississippi and the University of London.

His scientific research has been in organic chemistry, medicinal chemistry and natural products. Nearly 50 master and doctoral theses have been completed

under his supervision. Dr. Singh has to his credit 125 published original scientific research papers and 14 patents. His research group has been successful in designing a clinically useful drug candocuronium iodide (INN) (chandonium iodide, HS-310), which is a synthetic azasteroid.

Dr. Singh lectured on his research at several of the institutions and conferences in India, United States of America, Canada, United Kingdom, Switzerland and China. He delivered invited lectures at the Harvard School of Medicine and at the International Symposium on Molecular Structure sponsored by the International Union of Crystallography at Beijing.

As a science historian Professor Singh examined the history of pharmaceutical developments in India of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. His history research studies have been on pharmacopoeias and formularies, pharmaceutical education, pharmacy practice, biographies of pharmaceutical luminaries, and pharmaceutical journalism. He published over eighty articles. In addition to his scientific and history research papers, Dr. Singh authored and/or coauthored many books and review articles, including several book chapters. He wrote extensively on educational, scientific, historical and professional issues. All told his total publications come to well over 350, including eighteen books.

Professor Singh sat on many academic, scientific, professional and governmental bodies. He was a member of the Committee on International

Education of Medicinal Chemists of the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry, which prepared the Report on the International Education of Medicinal Chemists (IUPAC Technical Reports Number 13; 1974).

His affiliations with several scientific and professional organizations include emeritus membership of the American Chemical Society, life memberships of the Indian Pharmaceutical Association and Association of Pharmaceutical Teachers of India, and memberships of the American Institute of History of Pharmacy and British Society for History of Pharmacy.

Professor Harkishan Singh is recipient of several scientific and professional awards and recognitions. He was a National Fellow of the University Grants Commission, New Delhi. He was General President of the Indian Pharmaceutical Congress. He received Eminent Pharmacist Award of the Indian Pharmaceutical Association. Lifetime achievement awards were conferred on him by several bodies; the recent one was the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Punjab Academy of Sciences.

Dr. Singh's standing as historian was recognized through his election to the Academie Internationale d'Histoire de la Pharmacie. The University of the Sciences in Philadelphia conferred upon Professor Harkishan Singh the degree of Doctor of Science (Honoris Causa) in recognition of his distinguished academic career and outstanding contributions to scientific research in organic and medicinal chemistry and



By H.S. Panaser

the history of pharmacy in 2014, followed by Punjab University, Chandigarh in 2016.

He was the only Indian Professor who researched a Drug which reached for marketing since Independence. Imagine since 1947 no research from any university in pharmaceutical leading county in the world with billions of dollars in trade globally-an example of "Make in India". His library at home was evaluated to be called as a National Archives which will serve as the only research and educational reference library for many generations to come and is evaluated to be worth multimillion dollars if is put on sale. With limited resources via his salary he had paid for this entire archive himself. He did proudly not for himself, not for selling it tomorrow, even when the world is ready to pay millions. He has dedicated the archive to be placed in The National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research in Mohali, Punjab, India, including his Padma Shri. This archival collection has been documented in 120 pages.

The National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research, Mohali, Punjab, India was Prof. Harkishan Singh's dream. He worked into its being, along with Late Dr. Parminder Singh, Chairman and CEO, Ranbaxy, and it is now a reality. Indian Pharmaceutical world calls him the "Father of Modern Pharmacy in India".

More information on Dr. Singh can be found on Wikipedia and his website profharkishansingh.com and in his two-volume Autobiography "Witness to an Era"

Mayor De Blasio Demands Help From Federal Government

NEW YORK (TIP): Mayor de Blasio on March 19 updated New Yorkers on the City's response efforts to COVID-19. To ensure the City's frontline healthcare workers are able to adequately treat COVID-19, the Mayor has demanded the federal government replenish the City's critical medical supplies and personal protective equipment (PPEs).

"From the very beginning, New York City has been fighting COVID-19 with one hand tied behind our back," said Mayor de Blasio. "We cannot leave our healthcare workers vulnerable, and we need the federal government to step up and give our frontline workers the tools they need to save lives all across our City."

Citywide, there are 3,954 positive cases of COVID-19 and 26 fatalities. Currently there are 1,042 cases in Queens, 1,038 in Manhattan, 1,195 in Brooklyn, 496 in the Bronx, and 179 in Staten Island.

Critical Medical Supplies for Frontline Workers

Mayor de Blasio has sent two formal

requests to the Secretary for the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Alex Azar, calling upon him to take certain actions to increase New York City's supply of critical medical equipment. The requests are:

- A full activation of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs in fighting COVID-19 by providing available beds, staffing support, and medical and safety supplies.
- A replenished stock of personal protective equipment and medical supplies by April:
- 3 million N95 masks
- 50 million surgical masks
- 15 thousand ventilators
- 45 million of each of the following: surgical gowns, coveralls, gloves, and face shields.'

Update on the City Jail Population

To ensure the health and safety of the City's jail population, Mayor de Blasio, in partnership with the NYPD and the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, has compiled a list of 40 detainees for release

who are high risk for COVID-19 related complications and low risk for re-offending. The list is currently pending the approval of the five City District Attorneys.

City Workforce

DCAS will implement an order today to direct agencies to have all employees who are not assigned to perform essential services to work from home. This will allow up to an estimated 250,000 city employees to telecommute. These employees may be called on to perform essential services as needed.

Every agency will take immediate steps to further determine and refine which services it provides that are essential. Essential services generally include responding to the COVID-19 emergency; lifesaving services; life-protecting services that relate to transportation, utility and other critical infrastructure; and workforce and internal service continuity.

Update on Healthcare Worker Recruitment



New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio has demanded from Federal government protective equipment for frontline workers

After the announcement of nyc.gov/helpnyc earlier this week, over 1,700 medical providers have signed up to aid the City's response efforts to COVID-19.

Nearly 700,000 New Yorkers have signed up for the City's COVID text notification system to get regular updates on the latest developments with coronavirus in New York City text COVID to 692-692. New Yorkers can text COVIDESP to 692-692 for updates in Spanish. You will receive regular SMS texts with the latest news and developments. If you have any questions on finding medical care call 311.

India Association of Long Island elected body members sworn in



Mrs. Shashi Malik, elected President, being sworn in by Joseph Saladino, the Supervisor of the Town of Oyster Bay. Seen sitting in the rear center is Indu Jaiswal



The IALI team with Joseph Saladino

LONG ISLAND, NY (TIP): According to a delayed report, Oath Taking Ceremony for all elected and nominated members of the IALI Executive Council took place on Friday, 6th March 2020 at Hicksville Community Center Hicksville NY 11801.

This year there were many firsts in the election of the EC of IALI. The President Mrs. Shashi Malik got the highest number of votes in the history of IALI Elections and it was the first time all the members of her team were elected.

The oath was administered by Joseph Saladino, the Supervisor of the Town of Oyster Bay in Nassau County, Long Island.

The oath was taken to support and defend the US Constitution, its laws; NY State Constitution and its laws; and the IALI Constitution, and its Laws and Bye-Laws.

Mrs. Shashi Malik, elected President of IALI was the first to be sworn in.

The next to be sworn in together were the three remaining officers Mr. Jasbir 'Jay' Singh Vice President, Ms. Kuljeet 'Karishma' Ahluwalia Secretary, and Mr. Sushil Khanna Treasurer.

The next batch was the eight elected Executive Councilmen and Executive Councilwomen of the Executive Committee. The following are the eight Executive Members:

1. Dr. Neeru Bhambri
 2. Mrs. Deepa Goyal
 3. Dr. Ramesh Gupta
 4. Mrs. Harsha Padmanabhan
 5. Mr. Gary Sikka
 6. Mrs. Neelima Srivastava
 7. Mr. Pradeep Tandon
 8. Mrs. Ravi Kanta Verma
- Dr. Ramesh Gupta could not attend the Oath Taking Ceremony because of prior commitment elsewhere.
- After oath taken by Elected executive committee members, three nominated voting members of the three Standing Committee Chairs took the oath together: These were:
1. Anju Sharma - Cultural Chair
 2. Suresh Bansal - Membership Chair
 3. Sumit Rajpal - Finance Chair
- Each elected executive introduced themselves and told in brief about the responsibilities that were assigned to them according to their expertise and experience.
- All the above members after taking the oath were given the Citation by Mr. Joseph Saladino,
- Next batch of oath taking was by all members who were nominated by the President to various committees.
- After the oath taking was over, Mrs. Shashi Malik, President of IALI gave her remarks and a road map of all the activities that are planned for the year.

3 Die from Coronavirus at LI Retirement Home in 48 Hours

GREENPORT, NY TIP): Three people in their 90s living at Peconic Landing retirement community have died in connection with the new coronavirus, the facility reported Friday - with 12 others testing positive.

"As Peconic Landing works to combat the spread of COVID-19 on our campus, we sadly report the deaths of three members in connection with this disease over the past 48 hours," a release said.

Those who died include a woman, 96, who lived at The Shores for Skilled Nursing; she died on Wednesday and received the COVID-19 diagnosis Thursday, officials said.

A second woman, 97, who lived at The Shores for Skilled Nursing, died on Thursday and a man, 96, of Harbor South for Memory Support, died Thursday in the hospital, the release said.

All three members had underlying medical conditions and two were receiving comfort support at the time of diagnosis, officials said. The three members were residents of the Health Center, where COVID-19 was first detected on campus March 10th in a per-diem employee who had unknowingly been exposed to the virus, Peconic Landing said.

Peconic Landing's Health Center is home to 86 individuals residing in four care neighborhoods: 37 in The Shores for Skilled Nursing, 13 in Harbor South for Memory Support, 24 in Harbor North for Assisted Living, and 12 in The Bluffs for Short-Term Rehabilitation.

There are currently 12 members in the Health Center who have tested positive for the virus: 10 are in stable condition, 1 is in the hospital due to COVID 19 symptoms as of Friday morning, and 1 has been on hospice care since prior to diagnosis and all are being monitored



Peconic Landing

closely, official said. To date, positive diagnoses have been reported in The Shores for Skilled Nursing and Harbor South for Memory Support; Harbor North for Assisted Living and The Bluffs for Short-Term Rehabilitation are currently unaffected. The COVID-19 virus has not been detected among Peconic Landing's independent living residents, which includes 301 members.

"On behalf of the entire Peconic Landing community, we offer our deepest thoughts and condolences to the families and loved ones these members leave behind," said Carol Hance, chair of Peconic Landing's Board of Trustees. "The detection and spread of COVID-19 on our campus has been unprecedented. Our team has acted swiftly, beginning planning for a possible response in February and implementing these enhanced precautions starting March 2. We will continue to implement and enhance all guidelines offered by officials at county, state, and federal

levels to secure and provide our members with the best response possible."

The New York State Department of Health has managed oversight and testing of all individuals at Peconic Landing, determining who meets the criteria for testing. They will continue to manage testing. The Suffolk County Health Department has assisted with quarantine best practices to help manage the containment of the illness on our campus.

Senator Ken LaValle, Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone, officials with Stony Brook Hospital, and PBMC Northwell Health have reached out to lend their support in helping Peconic Landing to secure necessary resources, with Stony Brook Eastern Long Island Hospital assisting with care as needed," the release said.

"Circumstances are changing day by day, minute by minute. Just yesterday we learned of the 9 new cases and the three

deaths being associated with the virus. Our focus remains on the health and well-being of our members. We ask you to provide us with the ability to focus our time on our members and the challenges that lie ahead," said Robert J. Syron, [resident of Peconic Landing. "One of the largest challenges we are facing is securing personal protective equipment and we have been working on this for days. I am pleased that after speaking with Steve Bellone, our county executive, last evening that he said we have his full support in getting the supplies that we need. We must recognize our team for the dedication they have shown to our members during this challenging time. Our mission has never been more meaningful."

Peconic Landing asked that neighbors and friends do all that they can to support their area seniors and healthcare professionals by following the recommendations set forth by the CDC.

An update to Peconic Landing's website said that as of Tuesday, March 17, "Peconic Landing has been notified by the New York State Health Department that members of our community have tested positive for COVID-19. Affected members are in stable condition at this time."

New York State Health Department is providing testing for members believed to be in close contact with the confirmed members and precautionary quarantines are being instituted to assist with the containment of the illness on the campus, the update read.

Visitation to the campus remains suspended until further notice, the update added. "We will continue to provide general community updates and assist our members with family connections through Skype calls," Peconic Landing said.

To get more information or to schedule a Skype call with a family member, call the numbers below:

Health Center Members: 631-593-8288
Independent Living Members: 631-593-8210
(Source: Patch)

Coronavirus in Nassau: Cases Nearly Double as Testing Increases

Governor urges calm as state takes measures to stop spread, increase hospital capacity. "This is New York. There's nothing we can't do."

NASSAU COUNTY, NY (TIP): The number of confirmed cases of the new coronavirus nearly doubled overnight as testing for the new virus increased across the state. No new deaths were reported in the county.

Nassau County Executive Laura Curran announced Wednesday, March 18 morning that there were 278 confirmed cases in the county - up from 139 on Tuesday. The sharp increase in cases was due to more tests being conducted, Curran said. Drive-through testing facilities have opened in Jericho and Jones Beach, increasing residents' access to the tests.

Curran also asked residents to watch

out for each other, especially those who were dealing with mental health and substance abuse problems before social distancing and self-isolation procedures began.

"I don't want to sugarcoat it: for people who are dealing with depression, who are dealing with addiction, they can go to a very dark place right now," Curran said.

Because of gatherings being banned and institutions closed, many of the support services that people relied on are unavailable. There are no support groups meeting, and it may be difficult to schedule time with a therapist.

If Nassau residents need help, they can call the county's help line at 516-227-TALK to get support and have questions about services answered.

To keep up to date with coronavirus developments in New York, sign up for Patch's news alerts and newsletter.

In a later press conference, Gov. Andrew Cuomo stressed the importance of people isolating themselves and stopping the spread of the disease. If the

current rate of infection holds, the state will need 110,000 hospital beds and 37,000 ventilators in 45 days. But the state only has 53,000 beds and 3,000 ventilators.

Cuomo said the state is working on converting facilities into healthcare facilities and is also contacting retired nurses and doctors to create a reserve staff of healthcare professionals.

"This is New York," he said. "There's nothing we can't do."

Cuomo also said he is working with the federal government to get more done. President Donald Trump authorized a hospital ship, the USNS Comfort, to sail to New York Harbor and dock there. It has 1,000 rooms on it and will increase the state's capacity and will treat patients not infected with coronavirus. There are also mobile hospitals that can be set up, each of which has the capacity for 200 to 250 people.

To contain the spread, Cuomo ordered that all non-essential businesses could not have more than 50 percent of their workforce working outside of their homes. It is a mandatory requirement



Nassau County Executive Laura Curran announced Wednesday, March 18 morning that there were 278 confirmed cases in the county - up from 139 on Tuesday.

statewide. Essential businesses that wouldn't be affected include food stores, pharmacies, healthcare facilities, shipping and delivery companies.

"I understand this is a burden to businesses," Cuomo said. "I understand the impact to the economy. But in truth, we're past that point as a nation."

(Read full story on www.theindianpanorama.news)



By Simmi Waraich

Novel Coronavirus is triggering the re-emergence of obsessive-compulsive disorder. Anxiety is a fear of the unknown, so start with limiting Internet use. Shun WhatsApp and social media sites as there is a lot of misinformation. Trust and visit only World Health Organization and government websites and avoid others. If you cannot switch off, limit use to 30 minutes per day.

With cases of novel coronavirus rising across the world, we have been introduced to a situation unlike any in the recent past. Though the mortality rate is just 1-2 per cent, the fact is that the virus spreads rapidly and even this mortality rate translates into enormous numbers. This is something Europe and the US are realizing now. In addition, the reason countries are imposing 'safe social distancing' and limiting people-to-people contact is to curtail the spread of this virus. The fear is that most hospitals will be inundated with patients and the ICUs may run out of ventilators and beds to treat the patients who become critical.

While most infections will be mild, the ones that do escalate will become difficult to handle because of their sheer numbers.

As warnings go out to keep a social distance of one meter, use sanitizers or wash hands and avoid touching one's mouth and eyes, the novel coronavirus is also setting off a flood of anxiety and the re-emergence of OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder) in people already prone to this disorder.

People with OCD often have fears of contamination, and with safety measures for coronavirus including washing hands for 20 seconds, these steps can set off a chain of fears that the hands are not washed correctly or a doubt that the time spent washing hands may have been less than 20 seconds, leading to people with OCD repeatedly washing their hands. A 30-year-old man had been doing well for the past six months, but now has a re-emergence of panic attacks and fears which he tries to assuage by repeatedly checking Google about coronavirus do's and don'ts. That has ended up increasing his fears as Google gives too much information and one is unable to separate correct information from the rumors.

Similarly, health anxiety or hypochondriasis, closely related to OCD, may relapse, leading to fears that a person may have developed coronavirus even though they have had no exposure to it.

People with anxiety fear that something bad may happen. This occurs as their limbic system, including the amygdala, is hyperreactive or more sensitive and tends to activate adrenaline and noradrenaline which set off physical symptoms of anxiety such as palpitations, sweating, dry mouth, dizziness etc.

So, what are the steps one can take to prevent one's anxiety from spiraling out of control?

Anxiety is a fear of the unknown, so start with limiting Internet use. Shun WhatsApp messages and social media sites as there is a lot of misinformation. Trust and visit only WHO and government websites and avoid others. If you cannot switch off the Net, limit its use to only 30 minutes per day.

Remember the three healthy habits - adequate sleep, good nutrition (50-70 gm of proteins, vitamins, fiber and water in one's diet) and regular exercise (walking for 45 minutes, yoga, aerobics etc.).

Do simple deep-breathing exercises such as square breathing or abdominal breathing daily. Pranayama, including anulom vilom and bhramari, are useful. Lie down and do yoga nidra daily.

AS I SEE IT

DON'T LET COVID FEARS GET THE BETTER OF YOU



A simple exercise is to focus on your body at that time - become aware of your body, how you are sitting, be aware of your feet on the ground, your back, arms, neck, and be aware of your regular rhythmic breathing as the air enters your nose and then exits. Take 10 breaths like this. If your thoughts wander, gently bring them back. Imagine your anxieties and fears floating away in a bubble.

Do some simple activities - gardening, cook something, a slow dance, draw (order adult coloring books and color them), talk to an important person in your life who you have been meaning to call but have not had the time for). Think of some more such activities and plan them out for each day of the week. Throw away things that have been collecting for years and are of no use. Become a minimalist. Give things away that are of some use to others. Call on your neighbor.

Write down how you have coped with situations in the past and remind yourself to 'take things one step at a time'.

Write a letter to yourself of your inner strengths and things that you are grateful for. Write unhelpful thoughts and learn to change them into more realistic

thoughts. 'Things are uncertain. One doesn't know what will happen' could be changed to 'It's uncertain for most people. Take it one day at a time and take it in your stride.'

Allow yourself social media use only if you do your 45 minutes of daily exercise and deep breathing.

If fears overwhelm you, tell yourself, 'I'll think of all this at 7 pm'. Get up, do 10 Jumping Jacks, hold some ice in your hands and eat some raw garlic or ginger to change your focus.

A good grounding technique is using the five senses. See five things of different colors around you. Touch four different textures around you. Hear three different sounds - people talking, vehicles, birds etc. Smell two strong smells. And taste a strong flavor - garlic, clove etc.

Write your worst fears down, read them aloud to yourself daily. It helps the thoughts to subside.

Remember the acronym, STOPP - Stop; Take a deep breath; Observe the bigger picture; Pull back; Practice what is best i.e. the above guidelines.

(The author is a psychiatrist)

GUEST COMMENT

The independence and impartiality of the judiciary hinge on whether it can keep the executive at arm's length. Though the Constitution says that the State shall take steps to separate the judiciary from the executive, successive Union governments have chosen to disregard this Directive Principle. In February last year, the government, in reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha, had ruled out a cooling-off period for retired judges before their appointment to tribunals or commissions. This stand was diametrically opposite to the view expressed by senior BJP leader Arun Jaitley in 2012, when the UPA-II was in

Gogoi in Rajya Sabha: Need to insulate judiciary from executive's influences

power. Backed by then party chief Nitin Gadkari, Jaitley had claimed that pre-retirement judgments were influenced by the desire for a post-retirement job. Both had sought a two-year gap between a judge's retirement and his subsequent appointment by the government.

Since a political party usually has one opinion when it's in the Opposition and a contrasting one when it's at the helm, it's hardly surprising that Justice Ranjan Gogoi has been nominated to the Rajya Sabha, just four months after he retired as the Chief Justice of India (CJI). In

fact, there is an air of inevitability about post-retirement sinecures for those holding constitutional positions.

The Congress, which is raising a hue and cry over Justice Gogoi's nomination, is in no position to take the moral high ground as it had itself sent former CJI Ranganath Misra to the Upper House on the party ticket in 1998. It was the Justice Misra Commission of Inquiry, set up by the Congress government months after the 1984 anti-Sikh riots, that had given the clean chit to the party and dubbed the violence as a 'spontaneous reaction of

the people at large.' Less than two years after he retired as the CJI, Justice Misra had been appointed the first chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission by the Narasimha Rao-led Congress dispensation. A cooling-off period alone, however, can't make the judiciary impervious to the executive's pulls and pressures. It all boils down to following the Constitution - invoked these days at the drop of a hat - in letter and spirit.

(Tribune, India)

THE FALL OF THE 'LAST CITADEL' OF JUSTICE: SUPREME COURT OF INDIA



By George Abraham

“ Since independence, the Supreme Court remained a firewall against abuse of power by the Executive branch or the elites in the ruling class. The integrity of judges has been a critical component in rendering impartial decisions that have far-reaching effects on every segment of society. Judicial independence is vital in reassuring the public that judges would dispense cases with honesty and impartiality only in accordance with the law and evidence presented to them. The Supreme court must be free of fear and favor from the Executive, then only it would be trusted by the public.”

I am surprised as to how Justice Ranjan Gogoi, who once exhibited such courage of conviction to uphold the independence of the judiciary, has compromised the noble principles on the independence and impartiality of the judiciary," said retired Justice Kurian Thomas. He was reacting to the appointment of recently retired Chief Justice of the Supreme Court to the Rajya Sabha by the Modi Administration. "Mr. Gogoi's decision to accept the nomination to Rajya Sabha has certainly shaken the confidence of the common man on the independence of the judiciary," Mr. Joseph added.

It is to be noted that not so long ago, on January 12, 2018, to be exact, Mr. Gogoi was part of the four-member Supreme Court Justices along with Justice Kurian Joseph, who held an unprecedented news conference to warn about dangers of political interference in the judiciary. "The four of us are convinced that unless this institution is preserved and it maintains its equanimity, democracy will not survive in this country," Justice Jasti Chelameswar said during the press conference held at his home.

Since independence, the Supreme Court remained a firewall against abuse of power by the Executive branch or the elites in the ruling class. The integrity of judges has been a critical component in rendering impartial decisions that have far-reaching effects on every segment of society. Judicial independence is vital in reassuring the public that judges would dispense cases with honesty and impartiality only in accordance with the law and evidence presented to them. The Supreme court must be free of fear and favor from the Executive, then only it would be trusted by the public.



If we look at the record of Gogoi as the Chief Justice, he has headed a five-member constitution bench that delivered a historical and unanimous judgment deciding the fate of the Babri Masjid land in Ayodhya in favor of Hindus and also headed the bench that put SC's stamp of approval on the Rafale fighter jet deal between India and France clearing the BJP government of serious corruption charges from the Opposition. Moreover, Supreme Court headed by Gogoi appeared to have dragged its feet in setting up a quick hearing on the violations of the civil rights of Indian citizens in Kashmir after the abrogation of Article 370 by the Modi Administration.

Therefore, his nomination to the Rajya Sabha raises a serious question of quid pro quo that would have a diminishing effect on the judges who serve in the Court and debilitating impact on the Institution and its Independence the public have come to rely on for its final word. One may argue that Mr. Ranjan Gogoi's nomination to Rajya Sabha is not unprecedented as it has happened under the rule of the Congress Party as well. When Justice Rangnath Mishra, the former Chief Justice of India, was nominated to Rajya Sabha in 1998, most observers also saw it as a case of quid pro quo. Two wrongs don't make it right.

There are indeed widespread criticisms around this nomination, and some of the prominent citizens have spoken out loud. "What concerns me is that Justice Gogoi had relinquished charge as the CJI as recently as on November 17, 2019, exactly four months ago. In my view, offering the higher members of the judiciary nominated positions such as the Governor of a State or a Membership in the Rajya Sabha undoubtedly sets an unhealthy precedent, as it tends to weaken the institution of the judiciary," wrote E.A.S Sarma, a former IAS officer of 1965 batch in a letter written to President Ram Nath Kovind.

Some others are also wondering about the evolution of Ranjan Gogoi from an

independent justice who has spoken out against the tyranny of the executive interference in the judiciary to a vassal of a Machiavellian ruling hierarchy that is hellbent on controlling the judicial process promoting their political agenda. As soon as Mr. Gogoi was nominated to the position of CJI, a 35-year-old junior court assistant wrote to 22 Justices in the Supreme Court, accusing him of sexual harassment. Later, a three-member Supreme Court panel investigating the allegations gave a clean chit to Gogoi in the matter. The woman who filed the charges was fired, and her family was said to be harassed. In a statement, the complainant said, "Today, my worst fears have come true, and all hopes of justice and redress from the highest Court of the land have been shattered. "However, in a curious and shocking twist and turn to the whole story, the woman was magically reinstated after Gogoi has vacated his office. One indeed wonders who is behind this entire drama and how the justice may have been compromised!

When those four justices, including Gogoi, conducted that famous 2018 press conference, they were expressing their disapproval about how then Chief Justice Dipak Misra was assigning the cases, especially the one pertaining to a petition seeking an independent investigation into the mysterious circumstances surrounding the death of BH Loya in 2014. At the time of death, Loya was presiding over the Sohrabuddin encounter case, in which the current Home Minister was a prime accused. In November 2017, the caravan reported the shocking claims raised by the family of Judge Loya.

In Expressing their strong disapproval of the process, on behalf of the four Justices, Mr. Chelameswar said "they don't want another twenty years later some very wise men in the country to say that Chelameswar, Ranjan Gogoi, Madan Lokur and Kurian Joseph sold their souls; they didn't take care of their institution; they didn't think of the interest of the nation. So, we place it before the people of the country,"



Mr. Ranjan Gogoi takes oath as a Member of Rajya Sabha on March 19

Photo / Courtesy PTI

When those four justices, including Gogoi, conducted that famous 2018 press conference, they were expressing their disapproval about how then Chief Justice Dipak Misra was assigning the cases, especially the one pertaining to a petition seeking an independent investigation into the mysterious circumstances surrounding the death of BH Loya in 2014. At the time of death, Loya was presiding over the Sohrabuddin encounter case, in which the current Home Minister was a prime accused. In November 2017, The Caravan reported the shocking claims raised by the family of Judge Loya.

Only time will tell whether Mr. Ranjan Gogoi has sold his soul or compromised the noble principles. Still, his actions during his tenure as CJI and now his acceptance of Rajya Sabha seat from BJP has indeed cast a cloud suspicion around him and may have irreparably damaged the independence of the institution he was sworn to protect and proclaimed to defend. Moreover, for the people of India, it is a steep and tragic fall of the 'last citadel' of justice and a threat to freedom itself!

(Writer is a former Chief Technology Officer of the United Nations and Vice-Chairman of the Indian Overseas Congress, USA)

Coronavirus: Nepal suspends international flights, long bus journeys

KATHMANDU (TIP): Nepal on Friday suspended all international flights from March 22 to 31 to tackle the coronavirus outbreak, which has claimed over 10,000 lives globally.

In his address to the nation, Prime Minister KP Oli announced the suspension of all long-distance bus journeys indefinitely from March 23, apart from the closing of airports for international flights.

Except essential services all government offices will be closed from March 22 to April 3. All schools and colleges have been closed and examinations postponed.

Nepal has had just one confirmed case of coronavirus, but it is at risk due to its location between China and India. — PTI

Bangladesh reports first coronavirus death, total cases rise to 14

DHAKA (TIP): Bangladesh on Wednesday reported its first death due to the novel coronavirus pandemic while four new infections were detected, taking the number of cases in the country to 14, a senior health official said. The 70-year-old man was suffering from diabetes, kidney ailments and hypertension and had contracted the virus after meeting an overseas returnee.

"The patient had been in intensive care where he died," Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) director Meerjady Sabrina Flora told reporters. She said the patient was highly vulnerable. The health official also confirmed the detection of four more COVID-19 cases, taking the total tally in the country to 14. Of the new cases, three are men and the fourth is a woman, Flora said, adding that two recently had returned from Italy, one from Kuwait while the fourth was a family member of one of the returnees.

Flora said 10 patients were being treated in isolation in a hospital while the first three patients reported on March 8 were sent home after recovery.

The IEDCR chief said her facility had tested 341 samples and 49 people in the last 24 hours.

Administrative officials said one of the newly detected persons was kept in quarantine along with dozens of others at a facility in Gazipur on the outskirts of the capital.

Bangladesh authorities, meanwhile, ordered a travel restriction in southeastern beach town of Cox's Bazar and a ban on gatherings at another beach in southeastern port city of Chattagram, a day after closing schools and other education institutions until March 31.

The country earlier also banned entry of people from Europe and several other coronavirus-hit countries, including India.

PTI

PAKISTAN'S CORONAVIRUS CASES RISE TO 448

ISLAMABAD (TIP): Pakistan's coronavirus cases sharply rose to 448 on Thursday, as the military said measures are being taken to make the armed forces' medical facilities available for an "extreme emergency" situation.

Pakistan on Wednesday reported its first two casualties due to the coronavirus that has spread to more than 160 countries, killing over 9,000 people.

On Thursday, maximum new cases were recorded in Balochistan where the number of infected people rose to 76 from 23. Punjab was next where the number rose from 33 to 78, Dawn reported.

But the worst-hit Sindh province was still on the top with 245 confirmed cases, while Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa had 23, Islamabad 2 and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan 24, the paper said.

Army spokesman Major General Babar Iftikhar told the media that army was fully geared up to support the civil administration in fighting coronavirus.

"Medical facilities of armed forces will be available in case of emergency," he said.

Pakistan also announced on Thursday to close down Wagah border with India for two weeks. The interior ministry through a notification said that it closed the key border point with India "for an initial period of two weeks (14 days) with immediate effect".

It said the measure was taken to "prevent the spread of COVID-19, in the best interest of both countries".

Pakistan's western border with Iran and Afghanistan had already been closed to curb the spread of the deadly virus.

"Pakistan was taking measures to stop the spread of the infection," the Prime



Minister's Advisor on Health Dr Zafar Mirza told the media.

He said that Pakistan would learn from China's experience. "Our doctors will be trained by Chinese doctors through video conferences," he said.

Mirza asked people to practice social distancing which will help to reduce the infections. Religious affairs minister Noor ul Haq Qadri said that training programs for Haj pilgrims were suspended as part of the preventive measure. In Karachi, which is one of worst-hit areas, Christian leaders suspended Church services.

The Foreign Office announced to hold indirect press conference as a precautionary measure to control the spread of coronavirus.

Foreign Office spokesperson Aisha Farooqui said that reporters can submit questions through email and answers will be published on the ministry's

website.

Majority of Pakistan's COVID-19 cases are linked to those who went on pilgrimage to Iran, one of the countries hardest-hit by the disease, while less than half a dozen are locally transmitted. Pakistan shares a 960-kilometre border with Iran, with the main crossing point at Taftan in Balochistan province.

The Taftan border has been closed since March 16, but thousands of Pakistan Shia pilgrims who were visiting religious sites in Iran have been allowed to return subject to two weeks' quarantine.

The federal government has banned public gatherings, closed all educational institutions until April 5 and cancelled Pakistan Day parade on March 23. It also limited international flights operations to Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi. — PTI

Eight people arrested for black marketing face mask in Nepal

KATHMANDU (TIP): At least eight people have been arrested in Kathmandu on Sunday for their involvement in black marketing of face masks and sanitisers in the wake of the deadly coronavirus outbreak in the country.

Those arrested were preparing to sell a face mask worth Rs 3 at Rs 31, ten times higher the rate, according to Kathmandu Metropolitan Police Circle.

"They were held while they were supplying 78,200 pieces of face masks from China to be sold at the higher rates," police said.

The group of eight in the name of 'Manju Shree Suppliers' was found to have been involved in selling face masks and sanitisers at higher rates.

Arrested from Dallu in the capital, a case will be filed against them under black marketing offence.

There is currently one confirmed virus case in Nepal. — PTI

Afghan govt delays prisoner release plan

KABUL (TIP): The Afghan government has postponed its plan to release Taliban prisoners, a senior official said Saturday, throwing a precarious peace process between the insurgents and Kabul into deeper crisis.

President Ashraf Ghani earlier this week announced that the authorities would free 1,500 insurgents as a "gesture of goodwill" before negotiations begin. On Saturday, Javid Faisal, spokesman for the National Security Council, said "the prisoners' release has been delayed" to allow more time to review their identities. — AF

Sri Lanka to impose national curfew as South Asia accelerates coronavirus battle

COLOMBO (TIP): Mosques in Sri Lanka were shut indefinitely from Friday, and the island is set to impose a countrywide curfew over the weekend, as South Asian countries step up efforts to check the spread of COVID-19 cases.

The densely populated region of some 1.9 billion people has been less badly affected than other parts of the world, but new coronavirus cases in Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka are all accelerating, with the total across South Asia now exceeding 750. Seven people have died. (Reuters)

Sea of meth as Myanmar army smashes 3 drug labs

KAWANGHKA (TIP): Sacks of heroin and methamphetamine are laid out in endless rows in a remote Myanmar border zone during a rare raid in the heart of Southeast Asia's infamous 'Golden Triangle'. The seizure in one of the world's biggest narcotics-producing regions put three major laboratories out of business this week and hauled in 43 million meth tablets. Record amounts of drugs continue to be churned out of the lawless forest areas by rebel groups and shadowy organised crime networks making billions. — AFP

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20 New Cases, 1 Death in Dallas County

DALLAS (TIP) : A 60-year-old Richardson, Texas man found dead in his home ups the number of Texans who have died from 2019 novel coronavirus to four.

He is the first person in Dallas to die from COVID-19.

The medical examiner said he didn't have high-risk chronic health conditions.

"Things will get worse before they get better. How bad this gets is directly tied to how well each of you follow the CDC guidelines and exercise smart personal responsibility," said Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins. "Please also remember to check in on your family, friends and neighbors, especially those who are elderly."

In addition to the man's death, Dallas County Health and Human Services (DCHHS) has reported 20 additional positive cases of coronavirus in Dallas County. This brings the total case count in Dallas County to 55.

- The remaining new cases include: six men and two women in their 30's, two men and two women in their 50's, two men and three women in their 60's, one woman in her 70's and one woman in her 90's
- Three persons were hospitalized, including one in a critical care unit; 16 are self-isolating at residences.
- Twelve cases are residents of the city of Dallas, 3 are residents of Garland, 2 are residents of Mesquite, 1 is a resident of Cedar Hill, and 1 is a resident of Farmers Branch.
- Five cases are related to domestic out-of-state travel and 2 are related to international travel

Three patients are close contacts of a confirmed COVID-19 case.

Six have no source or travel risk factor yet identified, and are therefore indicative of community transmission. Four other cases are still under investigation.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends taking everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- Stay home when you are sick, except to seek medical care
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and help young children to do the same. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-base hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipes.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. If you do not have a tissue, use your sleeve, not your hands.

Indian American Congresswoman Joins over 100 Lawmakers for Special ACA Coverage during COVID-19 Pandemic

WASHINGTON (TIP): Indian American U.S. Representative Pramila Jayapal (WA-07) and a group of over 100 lawmakers wrote to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Alex Azar to urge HHS to employ its existing authority to establish a Special Enrollment Period for patients to seek Affordable Care Act Marketplace coverage during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This is particularly important for the 38 states covered by the federal exchange, since the Trump Administration truncated the enrollment period and eliminated almost all of the public information effort to encourage enrollment. The states who operate their own exchanges are empowered to expand their enrollment periods, but an HHS established enrollment period would apply nationwide. This week, Washington and Massachusetts wisely opened enrollment for their state exchanges. This is going to affect every state; the time to open a special enrollment period nationwide is now. HHS has previously opened federal enrollment periods following other disasters such as Hurricane Harvey and Hurricane Dorian.

"Many among the close to 30 million Americans living without insurance and estimated 44 million



Pramila Jayapal is among 100 lawmakers urging establishment of a Special Enrollment Period for patients to seek Affordable Care Act Marketplace coverage during the COVID-19 pandemic.

who are underinsured would benefit from such a declaration," the lawmakers write. "As outbreaks emerge and community spread continues in the United States, our most vulnerable neighbors are those who lack comprehensive health coverage. Without that coverage, they are unlikely to seek treatment for COVID-19, leaving all in our community at risk."

Social Security Payments to continue, says Andrew Saul, Commissioner of Social Security



Commissioner of Social Security Andrew Saul has said that but for the walk-ins the services at the Social Security will continue uninterrupted during the COVID-9 social distancing period

WASHINGTON (TIP): Commissioner of Social Security Andrew Saul has said in a written statement to The Indian Panorama that social service benefits will continue.

"I want you to hear directly from me how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting our services. The first thing you should know is that we continue to pay benefits. Be aware that scammers may try to trick you into thinking the pandemic is stopping your Social Security payments but that is not true. Don't be fooled.

"To protect you and help stop the spread of this coronavirus, we cannot accept visitors in our offices at this time. There are several other ways you can get help. Many services are available online at www.socialsecurity.gov. If you have a critical need that you cannot address online, we can help you over the phone.

"Please visit our COVID-19 web page at www.socialsecurity.gov/coronavirus/ to find out what services we are continuing and which ones we are suspending, how to contact us, and important information about deadlines we are extending to ease the burden on you and medical providers during this pandemic."

Coronavirus will keep Americans at home for at least 'several weeks,' Dr. Fauci warns

WASHINGTON (TIP): The coronavirus pandemic will likely force Americans to stay home and avoid other people for at least "several weeks," the country's top authority on infection diseases warned Friday, March 20.

"If you look at the trajectory of the curves of outbreaks in other areas it's at least going to be several weeks," said Dr. Anthony Fauci.

"I cannot see that all of a sudden next week or two weeks from now it's going to be over," he said. "I don't think there's a chance of that - I think it's going to be several weeks."

His prediction comes days after the White House urged people of all ages to avoid gathering in groups of more than 10 for the next two weeks. That timeline is likely to be expanded as the number of infected Americans continues to grow, with more than 14,000 confirmed cases Friday, March 20 morning.



"If you look at the trajectory of the curves of outbreaks in other areas it's at least going to be several weeks," said Dr. Anthony Fauci

The death toll nationwide has climbed over 200 as several states, especially New York and Washington, struggle to contain clusters of local infections.

In California, another hard-hit state, residents are facing the most stringent containment measures in the country. Gov. Gavin Newsom on Thursday issued a drastic stay-at-home order, banning the state's 40 million residents from going outdoors unless they're exercising or have to buy food or medicine.

Fauci, who leads the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, also discussed the shortage of medical supplies being reported across the country as hospitals face a surge of coronavirus patients.

"When you have a seriousness of an outbreak the way we're seeing right now, there's going to be a significant stress on supplies," he told NBC News. "That's what we're seeing play out right now. One of the things that can be done, is certainly not the total solution to the problem, is to delay if not cancel, anything that's elective."

(With inputs from NBC and agencies)

FOUR SENATORS DUMPED MILLIONS IN STOCKS

WASHINGTON (TIP): Four senators dumped millions of dollars worth of stock while Capitol Hill was being briefed on the threat of coronavirus but before the markets tanked as infections soared, disclosure records have revealed.

Republicans Richard Burr, Kelly Loeffler and James Inhofe and Democrat Dianne Feinstein collectively offloaded up to \$11million in stock between late January and early February, according to records seen by The Daily Beast, New York Times and ProPublica.

Burr, chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee that was directly briefed on coronavirus, sold up to \$1.7million in stock including in hotels, according to reporting from ProPublica.

Feinstein, a member of the same



committee, sold up to \$6million in stock including in a biotech firm.

Loeffler dumped up to \$3.1million in investments starting on the day the Senate Health Committee, which she sits on, was briefed by the CDC. Meanwhile James Inhofe sold up to \$400,000 in stock including real estate.

Loeffler and Feinstein have defended themselves, saying their stocks are invested in trusts and portfolios that they have no personal control over. Inhofe has not commented.

Sen. Jim Inhofe, a Republican from Oklahoma, sold up to \$400k all on January 27.

AAPI Urges Govt. to Enforce Total Lockdown and Self Quarantine of Entire Nation



AAPI President Dr. Suresh Reddy has suggested immediate lockdown of the nation to contain and prevent the Coronavirus pandemic

CHICAGO, IL (TIP): "As concerned physicians witnessing the growing COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on our society, healthcare system and economy, we, members of American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI), the largest ethnic Medical Association in the United States, urge the Federal, State and Local Governments and policymakers to advocate for more immediate and severe action to prevent the crisis from becoming unmanageable," Dr. Suresh Reddy, President of AAPI stated here, March 19. Since the outbreak of this deadly pandemic, AAPI under the leadership of Dr. Reddy has had several meetings with leaders of AAPI, representing nearly 100,000 Physicians of Indian Origin in the United States, serving every seventh patient across the United States. *Read the full story at www.theindianpanorama.news*

US, Mexico to 'restrict non-essential' border crossings

WASHINGTON (TIP): The United States and Mexico have agreed to restrict non-essential travel across their border beginning on Saturday because of the coronavirus outbreak, the US announced on Friday.

US President Donald Trump said the move, similar to one already announced with northern neighbor Canada, was necessary to prevent the "spread the infection to our border agents, migrants, and to the public at large."

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told reporters at a White House briefing that trade between the United States and Mexico would continue.

"The United States and Mexico have agreed to restrict non-essential travel across our shared border," he said.

"Both our countries know the importance of working together to limit the spread of the virus and to ensure that the commerce that supports our economy continues to keep flowing," he said.

Acting Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf said the agreements restricting non-essential travel with Mexico and Canada would take effect on Saturday.

Wolf also said the United States would bar entry to "all individuals seeking to enter the US without proper travel documentation".



President Donald Trump speaks during a coronavirus task force briefing at the White House, in Washington.

Photo / Courtesy

"That's for both the northern and southern border," he said. (Source: AFP)

Treasury, IRS and Labor announce plan to implement Coronavirus-related paid leave for workers and tax credits for small and midsize businesses

WASHINGTON (TIP): The U.S. Treasury Department, Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and the U.S. Department of Labor (Labor) announced, March 20, that small and midsize employers can begin taking advantage of two new refundable payroll tax credits, designed to immediately and fully reimburse them, dollar-for-dollar, for the cost of providing Coronavirus-related leave to their employees. This relief to employees and small and midsize businesses is provided under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (Act), signed by President Trump on March 18, 2020.

The Act will help the United States combat and defeat COVID-19 by giving all American businesses with fewer than 500 employees funds to provide employees with paid leave, either for the employee's own health needs or to care for family members. The legislation will enable employers to keep their workers on their payrolls, while at the same time ensuring that workers are not forced to choose between their paychecks and the public health measures needed to combat the virus.

Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news

USCIS Temporarily Closes Offices to Public till April 1

WASHINGTON (TIP): On March 18, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services suspended in-person services at its field offices, asylum offices and Application Support Centers (ASCs) to help slow the spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). This suspension of services will be effective until at least April 1. In the meantime, USCIS will provide limited emergency services. Please call the Contact Center for assistance with emergency services.

USCIS field offices will send notices to applicants and petitioners with scheduled appointments and naturalization ceremonies impacted by this closure. USCIS asylum offices will send interview cancellation notices



and automatically reschedule asylum interviews. When the interview is rescheduled, asylum applicants will receive a new interview notice with the new time, date and location of the interview. When USCIS again resumes normal operations, USCIS will automatically reschedule ASC appointments due to the office closure. You will receive a new appointment letter in the mail. Individuals who had

InfoPass or other appointments must reschedule through the USCIS Contact Center once field offices are open to the public again. Please check to see if your field office has been reopened before reaching out to the USCIS Contact Center.

Education and precautions are the strongest tools against infection. Get the latest facts by visiting the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's COVID-19 website. Continue to practice good health habits, refrain from handshakes or hugs as greetings, and wash hands and clean surfaces appropriately.

USCIS will provide further updates as the situation develops and will continue to follow CDC guidance.

SINGER KANIKA KAPOOR WHO TESTED POSITIVE FOR CORONAVIRUS BOOKED



NEW DELHI (TIP): Bollywood singer Kanika Kapoor who had attended several gatherings in Uttar Pradesh and tested positive for Coronavirus has been booked for negligence and disobedience to the order issued by a public servant, an official said.

Few MPs had also attended the same party in Lucknow. They went in a flashback mode to count their interaction with fellow MP Dushyant Singh who was present at the Lucknow party.

Singh was seen posing for a picture at a gala dinner on March 14 in Lucknow, where his mother and former Rajasthan CM Vasundhara Raje was also present. Later, Singh attended various public and private functions, including a breakfast at President's house, a standing committee meeting, sessions in Lower House and also attended a dinner at a friend's residence.

After news of Kapoor testing positive for the virus broke, Raje took to Twitter. "While in Lucknow, I attended a dinner with my son Dushyant & his in-laws. Kanika, who has unfortunately tested positive for #Covid19 was also a guest. As a matter of abundant caution, my son & I have immediately self-quarantined and we're taking all necessary precautions," she wrote.

The news spread like wildfire and Parliamentarians were in a state of shock. TMC MP Derek O'Brien, also announced that he was going in self-isolation as he sat next to Dushyant for two hours on March 18 during a parliamentary meeting.

Another MP Anupriya Patel, who also sat in the central hall with Singh quickly left Parliament. She later said, "I was present in a program where MP Dushyant Singh was also present. As a precautionary measure, I am going into self-isolation."

BJP MP Varun Gandhi also said that he has quarantined himself as he sat next to Singh in Lok Sabha. Congress leader Deepender Hooda is also in self-isolation.

From getting rid of paper tickets to curtains, here's how railways is tackling Covid-19

NEW DELHI (TIP): The passengers traveling on unreserved tickets on trains will not have to stand in long queues to buy tickets. The platform duty TTEs and mobile ticket vending machines will provide the railway passengers with e-tickets. This step has been taken by the Indian Railways to prevent the spread of novel coronavirus.

Agra Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) SK Srivastava said that all trains passing through the Agra division will be provided with this facility which will assist passengers in boarding the train faster way.

SK Srivastava also said that curtains from all AC coaches have been removed to prevent the spread of Covid-19. Blankets have also been removed and passengers are being provided with sanitised bedsheets and pillows. Air conditioners have been fixed at 25 degrees. The doors, handles, toilet seats and taps are being sanitised with powerful chemicals.

Besides this, announcements in English and Hindi are being made at the railway platforms spreading awareness about the novel coronavirus.

Sharp rise in corona tally warns of potential dangers

On Friday, India reported 63 fresh cases, taking the tally up from 173 a day earlier. Several states across the country have announced large-scale shutdowns to stop the outbreak from entering the stage of community transmission, a point when a person's infection can't be traced to its origin

NEW DELHI (TIP): India's battle to effectively contain the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) continued on Friday as the number of infections doubled in just four days to 271, even as experts reiterated that not enough people were being tested and that an undetected spread could overwhelm the country's health care infrastructure.

On Friday, India reported 63 fresh cases, taking the tally up from 173 a day earlier. Several states across the country have announced large-scale shutdowns to stop the outbreak from entering the stage of community transmission, a point when a person's infection can't be traced to its origin.

Experts said that a sudden and sharp spike in cases could hinder efforts to prevent the outbreak from taking hold if more aggressive and random testing is not carried out across India. Some even believe that community transmission has already begun silently and that it can be tackled only if many more people are tested at random.

As of Friday morning, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) had conducted 14,376 tests – one of the lowest diagnostic rates in the world. India currently has the capacity to test 10,000 samples per day.

South Korea, which has been able to slow the advance of the disease despite reporting about 8,500 cases, has tested about 274,000 people since February. Though the US has tested 82,000 people, Covid-19 cases have raced to alarming levels in the country, leading to widespread criticism of its authorities for intractable delays in making tests available.

On Friday, Delhi reported five fresh cases of the disease, which originated in China's Wuhan last December and has killed at least 10,000 people. The national capital has so far reported 17 confirmed cases, which include one foreigner. With 52 cases, Maharashtra remains the

TRACKING THE VIRUS			
GLOBAL		INDIA	
Cases	Deaths	Cases	Deaths
266,175	11,186	271	4



worst affected state, triggering calls for a complete lockdown to halt the advance of the disease.

While Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal ordered that all malls, except grocery stores and pharmacies, be shut down immediately, Maharashtra put in place similar measures by announcing that all non-essential businesses in Mumbai and across the state were shutting down from midnight through the end of March.

Public health experts warned that despite the intensifying efforts across states, the disease could spiral out of control if Indians showed callous disregard to guidelines and precautions in the fight against Covid-19.

Among the fresh cases reported on Friday was singer Kanika Kapoor, whose announcement of having contracted the disease sent alarm bells ringing in several quarters – from Parliament house to Rashtrapati Bhavan. Former Rajasthan chief minister Vasundhara Raje, her MP son Dushyant Singh, and parliamentarians Derek O'Brien and Anupriya

India expands testing protocol

NEW DELHI (TIP): India on Friday expanded its testing protocol to cover more people as contact-tracing of fresh coronavirus disease (Covid-19) cases revealed links to hundreds more, including senior politicians and bureaucrats still to show any symptom of the disease, even as experts said that an unexplained delay in extending the diagnostics to private labs meant the window to stop the virus from taking hold was fast slipping away.

Public health experts have repeatedly called for the pool of those being tested to be scaled up drastically and the private diagnostics mechanism to be opened up to people looking to get tested voluntarily.

With only 14,376 samples tested till Friday, the number was one of the lowest among countries that have tackled the outbreak. India can test 10,000 samples every day and experts say if this capacity remains underutilised, community transmission could go undetected. Community transmission is when the source of an individual's infection can't be traced and isolated.

A group of private labs that includes Dr Lal Path Labs, Dr Dang's Lab, SRL Diagnostics, PathKind Labs, Metropolis Lab, and Syngene International submitted proposals to the Indian Council Of Medical Research (ICMR) to test people at for 25,000 on Thursday, but they are yet to get a response. "Private labs will get the approval for testing in the next three to four days," said health minister Harsh Vardhan.

Patel began self-quarantines after coming into direct or indirect contact with Kapoor.

Uttar Pradesh health minister Jai Pratap Singh underwent a test for Covid-19 as it emerged that he

was at a party thrown by the celebrity singer after her return from London recently. Three BJP MLAs who met him on Thursday also went into self-isolation.

Source: HT

PM Modi's corona plan: Janata curfew, economic task force

NEW DELHI (TIP): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday asked all Indians to stay home on Sunday between 7 am and 9pm to fight the rapidly-spreading coronavirus. "Janta curfew (People's curfew) – Janta curfew for the people, janta curfew by the people, self imposed janta curfew on 22 March between 7am and 9pm. All citizens should follow janta curfew. No citizen should step out or congregate," he said in an address to the nation.

Modi cautioned that India could not be immune to the global pandemic caused by the coronavirus. He said social distancing was very important in such times. He said taking "sankalp and sanyam" (pledge and patience) were two important features to conquer the virus.

"Complacency will be our undoing," he said ahead of appealing to the nation to strictly adhere to "social distancing."

Dipping into the social capital he earned after winning a re-election in 2019, PM Modi sought to enlist citizens as stakeholders in the battle against the Corona epidemic.

"The world is passing through a grave crisis. Natural calamities prior to this have been restricted to a few countries. But this infection has engulfed the whole world," he said adding that World Wars 1 & 2 did not engulf so many countries as this crisis had.

The coronavirus pandemic has currently engulfed 159 countries infecting more than 222,000 people and claiming more than 9,000 lives.

In countries with major incidence of infections, after a few cases in the beginning, there has been an explosion in the number of cases, he said.

"Some countries are there that have taken needed decisions and have kept their people isolated," Modi said adding anyone who thinks that COVID-19 could not affect India were wrong. "Two things are needed in this situation," Modi said adding that these were "determination and patience."

To curb the spread of coronavirus, "130 crore Indians have to become determined. They have say they fulfil our duty fully,



'NEXT 3-4 WEEKS CRUCIAL IN FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19': PM MODI TO CMs

Prime Minister Narendra Modi told state chief ministers on Friday the next three to four weeks are crucial in the fight against SARS-Cov-2, which causes Covid-19, asked them to redouble efforts to crack down on the pandemic and assured them of all possible help from the Centre, according to people aware of what happened during the interaction.

A day after addressing the nation on the issue, and emphasising the importance of social distancing and a Janta Curfew on Sunday, Modi interacted with all chief ministers for the first time on the pandemic through a video conference. The Prime Minister asked the states to work with the Centre and underlined that India finds itself at a critical milestone in the spread of the virus. He also said there was no need for any

panic. Some chief ministers, including West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee, requested the government to allow private hospitals to test for and treat the disease as pressure is mounting on the government's medical establishments.

India's health ministry plans to allow 51 private laboratories to start testing, although it has not actioned this yet. Health ministry officials also added that they are already in touch with private hospitals and will engage them if the need arises.

Prime Minister Modi said the "threat of the pandemic is common for all states" and added that in this critical time the centre and all states must work together. According to a participant, Modi added that the participation of people is at the core of the success of any strategy.

obey the directions of the state and central government. They have to say we will take steps to prevent getting infected and will protect others from getting infected."

"If we are healthy the world is healthy," Modi said adding social distancing was key given that there was no vaccine as yet to stop the

disease.

"I appeal that in the coming few weeks only those who really have to, step out (of their homes). As much as possible, work and do business from home," he said.

He urged those between 60-65 years and older to not leave their homes.



INDIA NEARS SHUTDOWN; SCHOOLS, COLLEGES SHUT, TRAINS, FLIGHTS CANCELLED

NEW DELHI: India suspended international flights and sought to curb public transport and gatherings of people besides closing down schools and colleges due to COVID-19 outbreak. The government urged children below 10 and seniors above 65 to stay indoors.

The government announced the flight ban — no international services for a week starting Sunday — after a meeting of the group of ministers (GoM) chaired by health minister Harsh Vardhan. Indian Railways will suspend concessional travel from Sunday midnight, except for patients, students and the differently abled.

Public transport — metros, railways, domestic flights, buses — will reduce frequency and consider alternate seating to ensure social-distancing norms. Public transport, railway stations, platforms, bus stops and airport lounges will be routinely disinfected.

The government will introduce staggered timings for employees to reduce office crowding. Half of Group B and C employees will be required to attend office every day, and the remaining 50% will work from home. They will switch in the next week.

US, UK, Oz flyers can be quarantined on arrival

NEW DELHI (TIP): With Covid-19 cases surging amid recent evidence of incoming passengers from some nations escaping the surveillance net, India today decided to not only actively screen all incoming passengers from the US, Australia and UK but also risk profile them to determine if they need to be isolated or quarantined in public health facilities.

In an order issued today, the Ministry of Health said, "It has now been decided to expand the universal screening for all passengers coming from the US, Australia and the UK and risk profiling them for either quarantine or isolation based on risk assessment." The order came on a day when singer Kanika Kapoor faced an FIR in Lucknow for concealing her infection and turning up for partying at the city last week on her return from London.

Incoming air passengers from the UK, US and Australia will now be screened through separate aero bridges and the following protocol followed — passengers with symptoms (fever, cough, sneezing, shortness of breath) will be sent to a government hospital for isolation. The rest of the passengers who don't show any symptoms will be screened by the airport authorities and segregated in two categories. "The moderate risk category passengers from the UK, US and Australia will be sent to government quarantine facility and low-risk passengers instructed home isolation for 14 days," the ministry said.



Army issues fresh work from home advisory for officers, JCOs

NEW DELHI (TIP): Amid the novel coronavirus outbreak, the Army issued a fresh advisory on Friday, saying 35 per cent officers and 50 per cent junior commissioned officers (JCOs) in its headquarters here will take turns in working from home for a week from March 23.

The second group of officers and JCOs will proceed on home quarantine on March 30.

Army Chief Gen MM Naravane also reviewed the force's preparation to contain COVID-19 with senior functionaries at the Army Headquarters.

Instructions have been given to adhere to enhanced measures issued to all stakeholders.

"Thirty-five per cent officers and 50 per cent JCO/OR to work from home adhering to home quarantine for one week starting March 23, 2020. Second group to proceed on home quarantine on March 30, 2020.

"Intermixing of groups has to be avoided. It shall be ensured that personnel are available on telephone and electronic means at all times for exigencies of work," the Army said. The decision has been taken to minimise contacts in the wake of the

COVID-19 threat. In order to avoid crowding, bunching at entry, exit points, personnel attending office at the Army Headquarters will also adhere to staggered timings (0900 hours - 1730 hours and 0945 hours - 1815 hours), the advisory said.

It has also deferred postings of all personnel, while leave of personnel already on leave have been extended till April 15 at the discretion of competent authority.

The advisory also prohibited officers travel to and from country of foreign assignment whether on leave or completion of tenure till April 15.



SHIBANI DANDEKAR POSTS A LOVE UP PICTURE WITH FARHAN AKHTAR

Amidst the ongoing health scare that the coronavirus poses has led several Bollywood celebrities to stay indoors as a preventive measure especially since all business in Bollywood has been suspended for the time being. While several stars are sharing on social media what they are doing to kill time during their self quarantine phase, Shibani Dandekar and Farhan Akhtar seem to be spending some quality time together.

The actress and VJ shared on Instagram a picture with her 'better half' Farhan and also joked that she clearly didn't get the social distancing memo. Shibani captioned the picture, 'better half #Foo ?? @faroutakhtar clearly didn't get the social distancing memo.'

Stars like Kareena Kapoor, Katrina Kaif, Arjun Kapoor, Deepika Padukone, Twinkle Khanna, Alia Bhatt have been posting from their homes with updates of what they are upto. Bollywood stars are also busy spreading the message to their fans to not panic all follow all precautions.

'OUR LIVES HAVE TURNED UPSIDE DOWN': PRIYANKA ON 8-DAY SELF-ISOLATION

As coronavirus outbreak continues to claim lives across the world, Priyanka Chopra has shared a video, asking people to stock up on love, compassion, gratitude, kindness and joy. Her posts comes amid reports of panic buying in several nations amid coronavirus lockdown. She also shared a video to talk to her fans about how husband Nick Jonas and she are dealing with their 8th day in self-quarantine.

In a video message for her fans, Priyanka says, "I hope you are all safe out there. I just wanted to come in and say hello! This is such an insane time and all of our lives have been completely turned upside down and it feels like, something out of a movie, but its not. Nick and I have been home for the last week and this is day 8 of self-isolation for us. We have always had such crazy schedules and had so many people around us all day and all of a sudden, this being our reality, it just feels crazy. I am sure all of you feel the same way. We are taking all recommended precautions right now, we are safe, we are healthy, we are practising social distancing."

Priyanka posted another video on her social media platforms and wrote, "There are so many other things to stock up on right now.



Please look out for each other and the people who are most at risk for #Covid19."

Actor Kerry Washington seconded Priyanka's thoughts and wrote on Twitter, "There are a lot of

aspects of #SocialDistancing that have become unexpected gifts. Like keeping my family close and having time to stock up on gratitude, kindness, compassion and joy. LOVE THIS @priyankachopra."

BHUMI PEDNEKAR: I WANT TO COMPETE WITH MYSELF

Actress Bhumi Pednekar has been on a roll as she has had a series of hit films, such as "Saand Ki Aankh", "Bala" and "Pati, Patni Aur Woh". She feels blessed to see her work getting noticed by people, and now she wants to compete with herself to do better on screen.

"My journey in cinema has recently begun and I feel blessed and fortunate that my work has got noticed by some of the best film-makers of the industry. I'm thrilled about my performances being highlighted...As an actor, I can only aspire to do better from here on. I want to compete with myself and do better with each film," Bhumi said.

She added: "It has been an incredible year for sure and I have to thank my incredible directors for choosing me to be a part of their vision. Their confidence in me is a huge validation for an artist like me who wants to be a part of the best films that are being made today. I'm cherishing this moment and all the success and it is making me a lot more motivated to only do better work and deliver better performances on-screen."

Bhumi will next be seen in "Durgavati" and "Dolly Kitty Aur Woh Chamakte Sitaare".



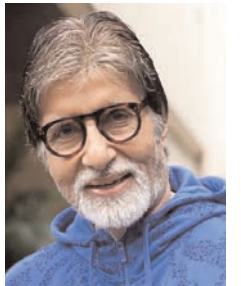
Amitabh Bachchan gets 'home quarantined' stamped on hand

The coronavirus pandemic has left the entire world in a state of panic and has affected every individual's life. While colleges and schools are being shut down, offices are asking employees to work from home.

The film industry has also been struck by the scare and the shoot of many films and TV shows has been put on hold. Releases of much-awaited films have been postponed indefinitely and most Bollywood celebrities like Deepika Padukone, Alia Bhatt, Kareena Kapoor Khan and Arjun Kapoor are opting for self-isolation and social-distancing.

Superstar Amitabh Bachchan has been super active on social media and every now and then shares motivational, informative posts about the pandemic. Last night, he took to his official handle to announce that he got 'Home Quarantined' stamped on his hand with voter's ink. Along with a picture of the same, he wrote: "Stamping started on hands with voter ink, in Mumbai .. keep safe , be cautious , remain isolated if detected .."

Many film stars have also shared videos of themselves taking the #SafeHands challenge and are actively asking fans and followers to take care and avoid public gatherings. The paparazzi are also taking some time off and many gyms and restaurants have been shut down.





CORONAVIRUS: FROZEN 2 ACTRESS RACHEL MATTHEWS TESTS POSITIVE

Actress Rachel Matthews is the latest celebrity who has been diagnosed positive for the novel coronavirus (Covid-19), after Tom Hanks and wife Rita Wilson, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's wife Sophie Grégoire Trudeau, Olga Kurylenko, Idris Elba and Game Of Thrones actor Kristofer Hivju.

Rachel, who lent her voice for the character of Honeymaren in the 2019 musical fantasy Frozen 2, made the announcement on social media. Rachel posted a lengthy note on her Instagram story saying that she has been tested positive for Covid-19 and has been in quarantine since last week.

"Hey guys, I tested positive for Covid-19 and have been in quarantine the last week. Unsure of what the next step is (been getting mixed info so will keep you posted) but obviously will remain in quarantine until told to do otherwise. I'm feeling better but I will be posting some info that I hope will be helpful to some. Please feel free to reach out and ask me any questions. I really would love to help in any way I can. Again, let's please be mindful of our decisions- now is the time to be smart and responsible," the Frozen 2 actress wrote in her first Insta story.

DISNEY POSTPONES RELEASE OF SCARLETT JOHANSSON'S BLACK WIDOW

The release of Marvel Cinematic Universe movie Black Widow has been postponed amid the coronavirus pandemic. The movie was supposed to release on April 30. A new date for the Scarlett Johansson-starrer is yet to be finalised.

The film's events take place much before the events of Avengers: Endgame where Black Widow ends up sacrificing her life for the greater good.

Apart from Scarlett Johansson, Black Widow features Florence Pugh, Rachel Weisz and David Harbour among others. It has been helmed by Cate Shortland.

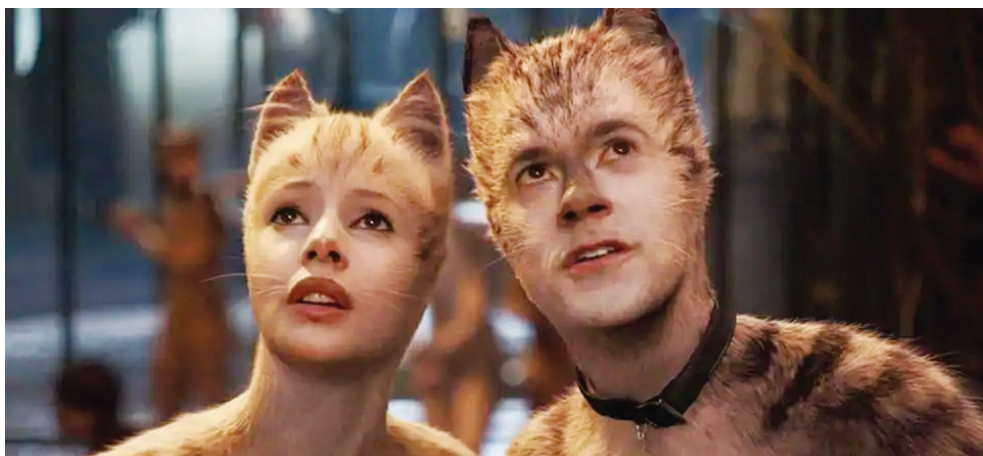
Not only Black Widow, but several Hollywood flicks like No Time to Die, A Quiet Place II and Mulan among more have shifted their release dates in the wake of coronavirus outbreak.

As far as the finances are concerned, not all is lost for Marvel and Disney since it has a ton of upcoming and exciting projects to look forward to on Disney Plus, including the likes of The Falcon and the Winter Soldier, The Eternals, WandaVision and Loki among others.



Apart from Scarlett Johansson, Black Widow features Florence Pugh, Rachel Weisz and David Harbour among others. It has been helmed by Cate Shortland.

IDRIS ELBA AND TAYLOR SWIFT-STARRER CATS DOMINATES RAZZIE AWARDS, WINS WORST FILM, SCREENPLAY, DIRECTOR



The movie musical Cats on dominated the Razzie Awards for the worst movies of 2019, winning six trophies including worst film, screenplay and director. The results capped a dismal performance for the big screen adaptation of Andrew Lloyd Webber's hit stage show Cats.

The movie, with an all-star cast including Judi Dench, Taylor Swift and Idris Elba, who were costumed in digitally-produced fur, was ridiculed by critics and proved a box office flop, taking in just \$70 million (£57.10 million).

The tongue-in-cheek Razzies, or Golden Raspberries, were created in 1980 as an antidote to Hollywood's awards season. Nominees were announced in February, a day before the Oscars, the highest honours in the movie industry.

Razzie nominees and winners are voted for online by around 1,100 Razzie members from more than two dozen countries, who sign up online and pay a \$40 membership fee.

The six Razzie awards for Cats included supporting actor wins for James Corden and Rebel Wilson. Tom Hooper was named worst director.

VANESSA HUDGENS APOLOGISES FOR 'HORRIBLE AND HEARTLESS' COMMENTS ABOUT COVID-19 DEATHS

Actor Vanessa Hudgens has apologised for making remarks perceived to be 'insensitive' towards the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Hudgens on Monday had implied that loss of life will be 'inevitable' and that everyone should accept it.

After widespread backlash against her message, shared originally in an Instagram live video, Vanessa wrote on Twitter, "I realize my words were insensitive and not at all appropriate for the situation our country and the world are in right now. This has been a huge wake up call to the significance my words have, now more than ever. I'm sending safe wishes to everyone to stay safe and healthy during this crazy time."

In her video message, she'd said, "Until July sounds like a bunch of b*****t, I'm sorry, but like it's a virus, I get it, I respect it. Even if everybody gets it, like yeah, people are going to die which is terrible, but inevitable? I don't know, maybe I shouldn't be doing this right now."

The actor was reacting to US president Donald Trump's suggestion that containing the coronavirus in the



US could extend to July or April. Her comments received criticism online. "Who knew the first celebrity death due to coronavirus would be Vanessa Hudgens' career?" one person joked on Twitter. "What people like Vanessa Hudgens don't realize is that while they are missing Coachella, the rest of us are missing paychecks. While she struggles to stay relevant, the rest of us struggle to provide for our families," wrote another, while one person described her comments as 'horrible and heartless'.

Iraq's Shiite parties line up to oppose new PM-designate

BAGHDAD (TIP): Iraq's typically divided Shiite political parties lined up to signal their opposition to premier-designate Adnan al-Zurfi, less than 24 hours after his nomination. The 54-year-old lawmaker and former Najaf governor was nominated on Tuesday to be Iraq's new Prime Minister, the second attempt to replace outgoing premier Adel Abdel Mahdi this year. AFP

Japan care home killer gets death

YOKOHAMA (TIP): A Japanese man was sentenced to death on Monday for the murder of 19 disabled people at a care home in 2016, in one of the country's worst ever mass killings.

Satoshi Uematsu never disputed his involvement in the grisly rampage but his lawyers entered a plea of not guilty, arguing the 30-year-old was suffering a "mental disorder" linked to his use of marijuana.

The court ruled the former employee of the facility deserved no leniency over the 2016 attack. "The lives of 19 people were taken away. This is profoundly grave," chief judge Kiyoshi Aonuma told the court. — AFP

20 to stand trial for 2015 Paris attacks

PARIS (TIP): French judges have ordered 20 people to stand trial over the coordinated attacks that killed 130 people in Paris in November 2015, including Salah Abdeslam, the only suspected assailant still alive, prosecutors said Monday. The move comes after investigators wrapped up their vast inquiry into the murderous attacks claimed by the Islamic State group, part of a wave of jihadist strikes on French soil over the past five years. No date was announced for the trial. A total of 130 people died in the November 15, 2015, assaults by 10 heavily armed gunmen who attacked during a football match at the national stadium outside Paris, and then bars and restaurants in the capital as well as the Bataclan concert hall. — AFP

Rockets hit military base housing US troops in Iraq

BAGHDAD (TIP): Three US soldiers were injured when rocket strikes on Saturday targeted a military base housing American troops near Baghdad for the second time in a week, a Defence Ministry source said. More than 15 rockets struck the al-Taji Camp, some 20 km north of Baghdad, where some US troops stationed, the source told Xinhua news agency, without giving further details about casualties. The strikes came three days after a similar attack by unidentified militia on Camp Taji that killed two US soldiers and one British service member and wounded a dozen others. IANS

GANTZ CHOSEN TO FORM NEW ISRAELI GOVT

JERUSALEM (TIP): Israel's president says he has decided to give opposition leader Benny Gantz the first opportunity to form a new government following an inconclusive national election this month.

President Reuven Rivlin's office announced his decision late Sunday after consulting with leaders of all of the parties elected to parliament.

Israel's president on Sunday summoned Netanyahu and his challenger, Benny Gantz, to an emergency meeting in hopes of breaking the deadlock that has paralysed the political system for the past year and could threaten the country's response to the coronavirus crisis.

Rivlin announced the meeting after a day of consultations with the country's political parties ahead of his decision on who should lead Israel's next government.

With rival sides evenly divided



following the country's third inconclusive election in under a year, a unity government may be the only way out of the deadlock, which comes as the government confronts an increasingly serious coronavirus threat. — AP

Christchurch marks anniversary of mosque shootings

CHRISTCHURCH (TIP): People in the New Zealand city of Christchurch honored the 51 worshipers who were killed in a mass shooting a year ago in small but poignant ways Sunday, after a planned national memorial event was canceled due to fears it might spread the new coronavirus.

Outside the Al Noor mosque, dozens of leather-clad bikers from the Tu Tangata club performed a traditional Maori haka. They were welcomed by mosque imam Gamal Fouda, who said people of all beliefs and cultures were stopping to pay their respects, and they were all united as New Zealanders.

One of those who survived the shooting at the Linwood mosque was Mazharuddin Syed Ahmed, who said that marking anniversaries was not typically a Muslim tradition but they were doing it so the wider community could grieve and remember. He said the shootings had provoked an outpouring of love and compassion.

"Of course, we lost our loved friends, family, people and community," he said.

"But we are also seeing so much good has come out of it. So looking at the positive part of that. Today, it is such a privilege to be in this country." Temel Atacoglu, who survived after being shot nine times at the Al Noor mosque, said the anniversary had provoked strong feelings.

"We are sad more than we are angry," he said. "It's very emotional. When I woke up this morning, I'm speechless. I can't explain what I feel." Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said Saturday the decision to cancel the memorial event planned for Horncastle Arena was pragmatic and precautionary.



A planned national memorial event was canceled due to fears it might spread the new coronavirus. Reuters file

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New Zealand has had eight confirmed cases of COVID-19. All of those cases have been connected to people returning from abroad and so far there haven't been signs of a local outbreak. Ardern has enacted strict border rules in an attempt to prevent the disease from taking hold in New Zealand. — AP

Estonia, Lithuania shut borders to foreign visitors

There are no restrictions on leaving the country

TALLINN (TIP): Estonia and Lithuania said on Saturday they will shut their borders to most foreign visitors while fellow Baltic EU member Latvia imposed security measures of its own to stem the spread of the novel coronavirus.

"The government has decided to temporarily reintroduce border controls on the whole border," Estonian Prime Minister Juri Ratas said in a government statement.

The measure will apply starting Tuesday in the country of 1.3 million people which has registered 115 confirmed cases of COVID-19.

Only citizens, individuals with residence permits and foreigners with a family member in Estonia will be allowed in but will have to undergo two weeks of isolation.

Foreigners will still be able to pass through Estonia to get to their country provided they show no symptoms of the virus. The same goes for cargo transporters.

There are no restrictions on leaving the country.

The government had earlier decided to close down all schools, museums, cinemas, leisure centers, and sports clubs and banned all public gatherings until May 1.

Fellow Baltic state Lithuania for its part decided to ban foreigners from entering the country of 2.8 million people starting 1000 GMT on Sunday, with the exception of individuals with a residence permit, diplomatic workers and NATO troops.

"Our goal is to delay the spread of the



virus as long as possible inside the country and to reduce the negative consequences," Lithuanian Prime Minister Saulius Skvernelis said Saturday.

Freight transport will not be affected, he added.

Lithuania, which has nine confirmed COVID-19 cases, has been on partial lockdown since Friday after the government shut down all schools, kindergartens and universities and banned large public events.

From Monday, the ban will also cover most shops, restaurants and pubs, although food delivery will be allowed. The measure does not concern grocery stores and pharmacies.

Skvernelis said his cabinet will approve an economic stimulus plan on Monday worth "at least one billion euros".

Neighbour Latvia, with a population of 1.9 million people and 26 confirmed cases of the coronavirus, said it will suspend all international flights, ferries, buses and trains from Monday.

"Border crossings by private car will continue, as well as international freight and cargo flow," Latvian Transport Minister Talis Linkaits told reporters.

Most of the measures will apply for a couple of weeks but will likely be prolonged according to Baltic authorities. — AFP

Putin says he's not a 'tsar' after 20 yrs in power

MOSCOW (TIP): Russian President Vladimir Putin dismissed comparisons to a tsar on Thursday, arguing he "works every day" and listens to what people want. "Well, this is not true," Putin said when asked about being described as a Russian imperial-era ruler. "Maybe someone else can be called a tsar. But in my case, I don't reign, I work every day," he told the state-run TASS news agency. The interview aired on Thursday as part of a series rolled out by TASS to mark 20 years since Putin took the helm of Russian politics. — AFP

French priest gets 5-yr jail for sexual abuse

LYON (FRANCE) (TIP): A French priest who acknowledged sexually abusing at least 75 boys over decades was sentenced Monday to five years in prison, in France's worst case of clergy abuse to reach trial.

The court in Lyon issued the verdict against 74-year-old Bernard Preynat behind closed doors because of the spreading coronavirus that has shuttered most activity in France. Preynat's case forced the first serious reckoning with sex abuse within the Catholic Church in France.

Preynat testified multiple cardinals and other senior church officials were aware of his misconduct dating back to the 1960s, but he wasn't removed from the priesthood until last year. Victims of Preynat's abuse, primarily boy scouts, welcomed his conviction. — AFP

Netanyahu, Gantz agree to hold talks



B Netanyahu



Benny Gantz

JERUSALEM (TIP): Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his main rival, centrist Benny Gantz, have agreed to launch talks on possible unity government amidst post-elections deadlock.

A joint statement issued by Netanyahu's right-wing Likud party and Gantz' centrist Blue and White party on Sunday said the negotiating teams of both parties would meet "as soon as possible", reports Xinhua news agency.

Earlier on Sunday, President Reuven Rivlin consulted leaders of all parties elected in the parliamentary elections on March 2. His office said that he will formally task Gantz with trying to form a coalition government after the latter was endorsed by parties representing 61 lawmakers, while Netanyahu by 58. Agencies

European stocks, oil prices recover after rout

LONDON (TIP): European stocks and oil prices recovered Friday on US stimulus hopes, while Asian equities experienced wild swings, with traders closing out a week of carnage for world markets as the coronavirus pandemic fuels fears of a global recession.

After Wall Street's Dow index dived 10 percent Thursday, its worst session since 1987, Sydney won 4.4 percent and Tokyo tumbled 6.1 percent.

Nearing the half-way mark in Europe, London surged 6.7 percent, Frankfurt rallied 6.2 percent, Paris soared 7.2 percent, Milan won a massive 14.4 percent and Madrid recovered 7.1 percent.

Yet the gains were not enough to overturn a bloodbath Thursday, which saw leading European indices suffer their worst falls for decades.

The Paris CAC 40 dived more than 12 percent Thursday to record its biggest one-day loss since the index was created

at the end of 1987.

London's FTSE 100 and the Frankfurt DAX 30 indices meanwhile had their biggest one-day drops since the late 1980s, with losses of around 10-12 percent.

By Friday, Europe's main stock markets were on average down about 15 percent over the past week.

"After a wild week on the markets, hopes of a Fed stimulus package are boosting stocks," said Fiona Cincotta, analyst at City Index trading group.

"The turnaround comes as central banks from US to Australia pump liquidity in the financial markets and as investors become hopeful that US Democrats and Republicans could pass a stimulus package on Friday," Cincotta added.

Tokyo, which fell as much as 10 percent at one point Friday, ended down 6.1 percent, while Hong Kong shed 1.1-percent lower having plunged around

seven percent earlier in the session.

The volatility gripping markets has wiped trillions of dollars off the globe's combined company valuations in just a few weeks.

"Despite continued uncertainty over the coronavirus spread, some market players with more optimistic outlooks will see current levels as good buying opportunities for medium and long term plays," said Nick Twidale, at IC Markets.

Oil prices, which have also been ravaged this week, were up more than five percent on Friday.

Still, trading floors remain nervous places following a virtual implosion worldwide. "In mere weeks, the market has shifted gears from a transitory health scare to a full-blown global recession," said AxiCorp market strategist Stephen Innes. "Global supply chains are no longer just 'disrupted' but are now in the process of shutting down completely," he added. AFP

WORKING FROM HOME? DON'T FORGET TO WATCH YOUR WEIGHT

It is one thing to skip exercises for a day and give your body some rest, and another thing to avoid any kind of movement at all. As the novel coronavirus makes its way around the world, governments issue guidelines asking offices to make it compulsory for employees to work remotely. Now, this work-from-home situation is both a boon and a curse. Boon, because it saves people a lot of time — time that they would have otherwise spent in travelling, and curse, because it is, somewhere, making people lazy by restricting them to their home space.

When this is all over, when the restrictions will be lifted and the world will have some answers as to how to better fight the deadly virus, one of these two things will likely happen: one, you will leave your house looking more refreshed and relaxed than ever; or two, you will emerge with a few extra kilos. Now, here are some ways you can best avoid the latter scenario; read on.

Find an indoor activity that you enjoy

Between work, or when you are done for the day, engage in a physical activity that you genuinely enjoy. It could be yoga to help you get more mindful, or dancing. It is okay if you are not outside, walking to the bus stop; as long as you do something that you enjoy, you are helping your body. You do not have to necessarily focus on the end result; the key is to not make fitness seem like a chore.

Clock in adequate sleep hours

Just because you are working from home, does not mean you are at liberty to mess with your sleep cycle.



It is important to understand that your physical health depends a lot on how many hours of sleep you clock in every night. If you do not wish to gain unnecessary weight, sleep and wake up on time, like you do on regular days, and be disciplined about it. Especially when you are working from home, you need a designated sleep space and time.

Be mindful of what you eat

It is also essential that you eat healthy meals, and on time. Most people have the tendency to get carried away, simply because they don't feel the pressure to get ready and head out every day. So, they may feel that occasional diet cheats are okay.

But, these occasional indulgences can become regular, making you gain weight. One way to eat healthy, is to stock your fridge with healthy snacks only, so whenever you feel

hungry, you take a mouthful of nutritious food.

Plan your workouts

Plan your day the moment you wake up in the morning, so you know what your daily goal is. Accordingly you can squeeze in your workout hours. Some people like to engage in a physical activity the first thing in the morning, before they sit down for work. Others like to do it post work; to each their own. Find your time and stick to the schedule.

Have a designated workout area

Inside your house, have a designated space that can act as your workout area. This is, so you know that once you are done with the other more pressing tasks, you are free to begin a workout session.

FOOD CORNER



Oats spinach vada

Ingredients

Oats - 1 cup, Potatoes - 3/4 cup, boiled, peeled, mashed
Spinach - 1/2 cup, finely chopped, Onion - 1, Ginger Paste - 1/2 tsp, Green Chilli Paste - 1/2 tsp, Salt as per taste, Oil as required

Method

- Add a little water to oats and keep aside for 20 to 30 minutes. Drain well.
- Add potatoes, spinach, onions, ginger paste, green chilli paste and salt. Mix well.
- Heat oil in a frying pan. Make small balls of the dough and flatten them. Fry them in hot oil until golden brown. Remove and drain excess oil. Serve hot with chutney

MOONG DAL PAKODI

Ingredients

Moong Dal - 1 cup
Onion - 1/4 cup, finely chopped
Green Chillies - 4, finely chopped
Baking Powder - a pinch
Salt as per taste
Cumin Seeds - 1/2 tsp
Coriander Leaves - few
Oil as required for frying

Method

- Soak the dal for 2 hours.
- Drain well.
- Add salt and grind to a coarse paste.
- Add green chillies, onion, coriander leaves, baking powder and cumin seeds.
- Heat oil in a deep frying pan.
- Make small balls of the dough and fry them in hot oil until golden brown.
- Remove and drain excess oil.
- Serve hot with sauce or mint chutney.

COVID-19: Should you be going to the salon right now?



To answer this question would be to simply say 'no'. No, it is not advisable to visit the salon right now, because it will really negate everything that social distancing is trying to achieve. We are facing a time when it is best if we do not come in close proximity with another person, so as to minimise the risk of transmitting the novel coronavirus, or receiving it.

We all know that the work in beauty parlours entails coming into physical contact with people. This is dangerous for both parties. Which is why, unless absolutely necessary, do not make a parlour appointment — least of all for procedures like manicure, pedicure and haircut.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) warns that the virus can survive on surfaces for a long period. So, even if someone is not coughing/sneezing near you, it is highly possible that you can contract the infection by

touching tables, chairs, and then your eyes, nose or mouth. Which is why, it is important for salons to exercise caution and hygiene measures should they choose to stay open.

- Communicate to your patrons that you would appreciate if they do not cough or sneeze when they are near someone, or to cover their mouths when they are doing so. Ideally, if they are not feeling okay, they should cancel the appointment and stay at home.
- It is imperative that beauty parlours do some extra cleaning and disinfecting. No client would want to walk into a parlour that is visibly dirty, and where they do not clean up after they are done with another customer.
- A stylist must always clean their hands after they are done with a customer. This is a safe and hygienic practice, which is more important now than ever before.
- When wiping their hands dry, it is better that they use eco-friendly paper than towels that are repeatedly used.

Timely genetic screening, testing can help parents understand risk of Down's Syndrome in babies

On World Down's Syndrome Day, awareness must be raised on the non-invasive and effective screening tests available today

NEW DELHI (TIP): According to recent statistics, the incidence of Down's Syndrome in India is 1 per 850- 900 live births. It is one of the most commonly occurring chromosomal abnormalities in India and children born with the condition have an average life expectancy of 50 to 60 years.

Down's Syndrome or Trisomy 21 is a genetic condition marked by an extra copy of chromosome 21. It is associated with intellectual disability, a characteristic facial appearance, and a weak muscle tone (hypotonia). While there is no exact reason for its occurrence, the age of the mother at the time of conception and family history of the condition may be two of the risk factors.

Speaking about this, Dheeraj Jain, Founder, Redcliffe Lifesciences, said, "Genetic disorders such as Down's Syndrome are a very serious health burden and there is a need to work towards making available informed choices to parents as early as 10th week of the pregnancy. With advent of Next Generation Sequencing and increasing awareness, there are non-invasive screenings such as DNA based Prenatal Genetic Testing available today that can help identifying three types of trisomies one of which is Trisomy 21, the anomaly behind Down's Syndrome. At Redcliffe, we offer genetic screening options at our in-house lab to enable both



Dheeraj Jain, Founder, Redcliffe Lifesciences



Dr K K Aggarwal, President, Heart Care Foundation of India

clinicians and parents to understand the risk of their child being born with the condition. An NGS routine genetic testing is comprehensive and can detect all types of genetic mutations. At Redcliffe we have made it affordable to masses with fastest turnaround time to the clinicians, in order to break the myth that samples sent to western countries are very expensive test"

Some signs in a child with this condition include low muscle tone, enlarged tongue, and a flat facial profile. They also experience intellectual disability apart from health issues such as respiratory infections, heart defects and hearing problems.

Adding further, Padma Shri Awardee, Dr K K Aggarwal, President, Heart Care Foundation of

India (HCFI) and Confederation of Medical Associations of Asia and Oceania (CMAAO), said, "The space of genetic testing is growing at a rapid pace and more intensive research is being carried out. It is important to raise awareness on how beneficial these tests are when it comes to detecting abnormalities such as Down's Syndrome early. Making screening compulsory at a nation-wide level can be the first step in this regard."

Although it may not be possible to prevent all birth defects, there are steps women can take to reduce the likelihood. Some of these include undertaking regular check-ups, routine exercises, consuming folic acid daily before and during pregnancy, eating a healthy diet, and avoiding habits like smoking and drinking.



CORONAVIRUS: STAY MENTALLY HEALTHY WITH THESE WHO GUIDELINES

For the general public

It has been established that COVID-19 has gripped the world. It has affected people from different nations and geographical locations. The World Health Organisation (WHO) says we should be empathetic around this time. Those who have been affected, deserve our support, compassion and kindness. It is, therefore, necessary that we do not refer to them as "COVID-19 cases", "victims", "COVID-19 families" or the "diseased".

Limit watching, reading and listening to news that can make you feel more anxious and distressed. The WHO says we must seek information from trusted sources only. We must not only protect ourselves, but also others. We can check in on our friends and neighbours on phone and assist them in this time of need.

For healthcare workers

Those working in the healthcare industry are likely to feel under pressure, given the circumstances. Which is why, WHO says that stress and its associative feelings do not reflect that you cannot do your job or are weak. It is important that you take care of yourself. Your mental health is as important as your physical health. "Try and use helpful coping strategies such as ensuring sufficient rest and respite during work or between shifts, eat sufficient and healthy food, engage in physical activity, and stay in contact with family and friends. Avoid using unhelpful coping strategies such as tobacco, alcohol or other drugs," suggests WHO.

For older adults

Just like with children, older adults also need to be told, in a simple way, about what is going on. The information given to them can be repeated whenever necessary. Remember to be clear, concise, respectful and patient. If they have an underlying health condition, ensure that there is an access to medication. With them, too, it is important that you maintain a regular routine or create a new one in a new environment.

For people in isolation

It is imperative that you take care of yourself most, if you are in isolation. Stay connected with other people via social networking, and stay as close to your daily routine as possible. "Exercise regularly, keep regular sleep routines and eat healthy food. Keep things in perspective," suggests WHO.

SUPPLEMENTS TO BOOST YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM

How do we ensure our immune system is in good shape? Well, there are a few things we can do to boost it, including eating the right foods, exercising, and supplementing our diet with specific nutrients. While these supplements do not replace a healthy and balanced diet, they can help boost our immune system.

Vitamin C

Vitamin C, or L-ascorbic acid, is a popular choice when it comes to boosting the immune system. This vitamin has great antioxidant effects and, being water soluble, it's pretty safe to consume, as any excess will be flushed out your body, mostly through urine. Vitamin C has been shown to reduce the duration of the common cold by 8 to 14% if taken before you catch it. This reduction is even more accentuated in athletes.

Zinc

This essential mineral is yet another popular choice when it comes to boosting the immune system. Taking zinc as soon as symptoms of the common cold appear can reduce its duration. Most colds are caused by a type of virus called rhinovirus, and zinc prevents the virus from multiplying. It is, however, unclear if it works with other types of viruses. Oral lozenges are superior to tablets and sprays. This is because lozenges help inhibit the replication of the virus at the back of the throat.

Vitamin D



This vitamin also plays an important role in our immunity. Vitamin D is naturally produced by our bodies when we're exposed to direct sunlight. The problem is that many of us lack the necessary daily exposure to produce the appropriate levels of vitamin D, leading to deficiency. In supplement form, vitamin D3 works best. A study has shown that supplementation reduced the incidence of flu in schoolchildren.

Echinacea

This herb can also help boost your immune system. It's a well known supplement used to ward off the common cold. A review on the effects of echinacea on respiratory tract infections (RTIs) concluded that "echinacea presents an effective option for the longer term management of recurrent RTIs and related complications."

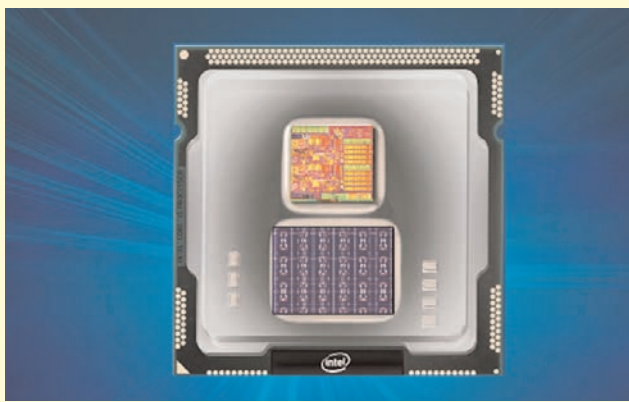
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Intel's Loihi chipset can smell hazardous chemicals: Here's what it means

A computer chip, modelled on the human brain, that can smell without a nose? That's what Intel has achieved with its Loihi, neuromorphic research chip, which will be able to detect the smell of hazardous chemicals. The research was published in Nature Machine Intelligence as part of a joint paper between researchers from Intel Labs and Cornell University.

"We are developing neural algorithms on Loihi that mimic what happens in your brain when you smell something. This work is a prime example of contemporary research at the crossroads of neuroscience and artificial intelligence and demonstrates Loihi's potential to provide important sensing capabilities that could benefit various industries," Nabil Imam, senior research scientist in Intel's Neuromorphic Computing Lab said in a press statement. But what exactly is Loihi and what does this ability to smell out different chemicals mean for artificial intelligence? Here's a look

What is the breakthrough that Intel is claiming with Loihi?

Intel's research has shown that Loihi will be able to recognise the smell of 10 hazardous chemicals, including those such as acetone, ammonia, methane. It managed to do this even in the presence of significant noise. The chipset, which is designed to mimic the human brain and its complex neurological systems, achieved this feat of recognising each odour with just a single sample being used to train it. Further, this method did not disrupt the chipset's previous memories of earlier scents, which were taught to it.

In order to get the chipset to recognise these hazardous smells, the Intel research team relied on a "dataset consisting of the activity of 72 chemical sensors in response to 10 gaseous substances (odours) circulating within a wind tunnel." The response of these sensors to individual scent was then "transmitted to Loihi where silicon circuits mimicked the circuitry of the brain underlying the sense of smell."

Facebook bug removes legit posts, news on coronavirus

A massive bug in Facebook has removed several legitimate posts, news and comments about new coronavirus from some leading media outlets like USA Today, Buzzfeed and Medium.

Aimed at curtailing the spread of fake and mischievous health information around COVID-19, Facebook's News Feed spam filter blocked URLs of legitimate websites.

"It looks like an anti-spam rule at FB is going haywire. Facebook sent home content moderators yesterday, who generally can't WFH (work from home) due to privacy commitments the company has made. We might be seeing the start of the ML going nuts with less human oversight," tweeted former chief security officer at Facebook.

Guy Rosen, Vice President, Product Management at Facebook replied: "We're on this - this is a bug in an anti-spam system, unrelated to any changes in our content moderator workforce. We're in the process of fixing and bringing all these posts back".

WHAT IS LIDAR AND WHY IS IT IN APPLE'S NEW IPAD PRO?

When Apple launched a new iPad Pro on Wednesday, there was one particular feature that drew everyone's interest along with the keyboard which now has a proper trackpad and the dual-camera system. This is also the first Apple device to feature a LiDAR scanner.

But what is LiDAR, and why has Apple used this sensor on the new iPad?

What is LiDAR?

In simple terms, LiDAR stands for light detection and ranging. It is basically a remote sensing method that uses light in the form of a pulsed laser to measure distances to the subject. These light pulses – when combined with other data, generate accurate, high-resolution three-dimensional information of the object.

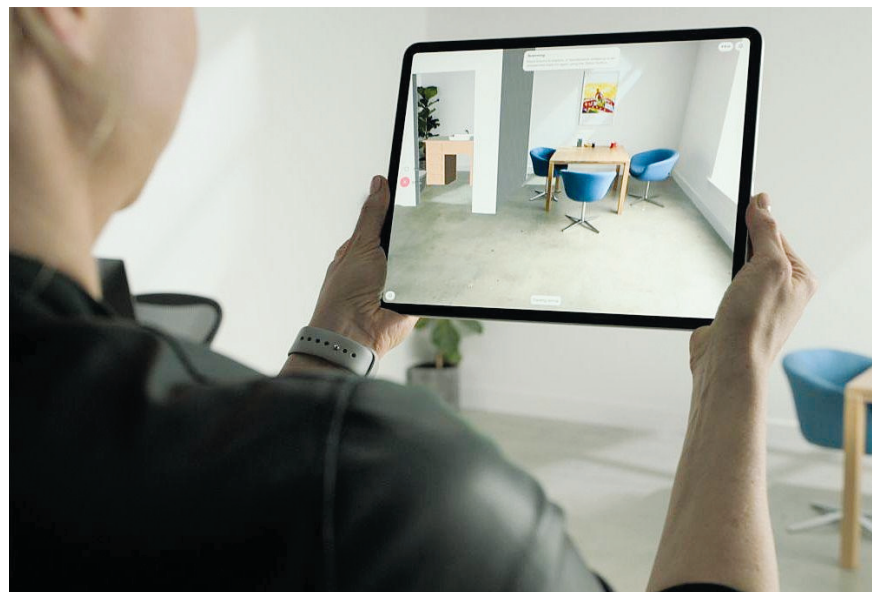
How is it different from Sonar, Radar and LiDAR

Like LiDAR, Sonar and Radar too can reveal information about an object's shape, size, direction and height, but they are different in the type of signal they use.

Sonar (short for sound navigation and ranging) relies on sound waves to detect objects and hence is usually used to detect objects underwater. Meanwhile, Radar (short for radio detection and ranging) uses radio waves to determine an object's distance or range. Radio waves can work over a long distance and perform better in dusty conditions.

Where is LiDAR being used?

LiDAR is typically used to collect high-density data in order to produce high-resolution maps.



LiDAR sensors are being fitted under drones to create readings of the terrain, transmission lines, buildings, and trees. Experts say LiDAR accurately maps the ground beneath and can provide a highly accurate 3D model when compared with terrestrial sampling methods. This technology is mostly used for ground-based surveys.

Apart from aerial surveys, the LiDAR sensor is the most important component in self-driving cars. The LiDAR sensor provides continuous 360 degrees of visibility and accurate depth information.

LiDAR was first used on a spacecraft during the Apollo 15 mission in 1971, when astronauts mapped the surface of the moon.

What is the use of LiDAR in iPad Pro?

The LiDAR here is essentially a Time-of-flight sensor as seen on devices like the Galaxy Note 10+, Galaxy S20 Ultra and Huawei Mate 30 Pro. But it appears that Apple has

used a custom LiDAR scanner, which is slightly more advanced than a ToF system.

Apple says the new LiDAR sensor can measure an object up to five meters (16 feet) away. In contrast, a ToF sensor on existing smartphones can only detect objects at a maximum distance of around two metres. Meanwhile, Apple claims its LiDAR system can operate "at the photon level at nano-second speeds."

Apple believes its LiDAR scanner will immensely benefit Augmented Reality (AR) apps. For those of you who are not familiar, AR refers to a technology that overlays information and virtual objects on real-world scenes in real-time. It uses the existing environment and adds information to it to make a new artificial environment.

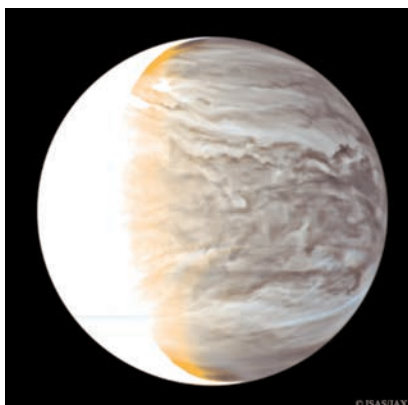
Apple has been pushing the use of AR on the iPad and iPhone for quite some time. Apple's App Store currently offers many AR apps, many of which are targeted at the student community.

Mercury's extreme climate turns its poles into an 'ice-making chemistry lab'

The extreme heat on the planet Mercury likely helps make ice on its polar regions, according to a study which suggests how water could arise, and collect as ice on planets rife with all the necessary components.

The researchers from the Georgia Institute of Technology in the US, said while asteroids may have delivered most of Mercury's water, the planet's extreme daytime heat, combining with its ultra-cold polar craters—that never see the sunlight—could also be acting as an "ice-making chemistry lab".

In their new study, to be published in the journal *Astrophysical Journal Letters* on Monday, they modelled the complex conditions on Mercury, including solar winds that pelt the planet with charged



particles, many of which are key to the ice making chemical process.

"This is not some strange, out of left field idea. The basic chemical mechanism has been observed dozens of times in studies since the late 1960s," said Brant Jones, study

co-author from the Georgia Institute of Technology.

"But that was on well-defined surfaces. Applying that chemistry to complicated surfaces like those on a planet is groundbreaking research," Jones said.

According to the scientists, minerals in Mercury's surface soil contain what are called hydroxyl groups (OH), which are generated mainly by the subatomic particles protons.

Based on their study, they said extreme heat helps to free up these hydroxyl groups, energise them to smash into each other, and produce water molecules and hydrogen.

The water and hydrogen then lift off from the surface and drift around the planet, the researchers said.

Oil makes record rebound after trump hints at role in price war

Oil surged the most ever in New York as the U.S. president said he could get involved in the standoff between Saudi Arabia and Russia that has rocked crude markets.

U.S. futures rose 24% on Thursday, the most since trading began in 1983. Prices are still down almost 60% this year, with the slide accelerating following a failed OPEC+ meeting in early March, after which major producers pledged to pump more in a battle for market share just as the coronavirus crisis crushes demand.

U.S. President Donald Trump said he was searching for “medium ground” in the impasse.

“It’s very devastating to Russia, because the whole economy is based on that, and they have the lowest prices in decades,” he said. “I would say it’s very bad for Saudi Arabia. But they’re in a fight, they’re in a fight on price, they’re in a fight on output. At the appropriate time I’ll get involved.”

“Trump getting involved was bound to happen with the existential threat to the oil industry,” said Walter Zimmermann, chief technical strategist at ICAP Technical Analysis. “This rebound may not have a future though unless Saudi and Russia stop digging their heels



in.” Earlier, the U.S. said it would kick off its commitment to fill its Strategic Petroleum Reserve by buying 30 million barrels of American oil.

Signs of stress due to the oil crash are also being revealed in the Middle East and other parts of the world. Canadian oil at a record low and some North Sea fields are becoming uneconomic.

Meanwhile, policy makers across the globe are trying to strengthen economies against the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. The European Central Bank has unleashed an emergency bond-buying program, and the U.S.

Senate cleared the second major bill responding to the outbreak in an attempt to kickstart the economy.

White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow said the government might take equity positions as part of corporate rescues.

Countries are ramping up measures as the global spread of the virus continues to gather pace with the number of confirmed cases in Europe now exceeding China. Italy’s death count has surged to almost 3,000, while the U.K. imposed tighter controls on movement of people including closing all schools.



RBI EXTENDS RS 60,000-CR CREDIT LINE TO YES BANK

NEW DELHI (TIP): To tide over liquidity issue, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has extended Rs 60,000-crore credit line to Yes Bank so that it meets obligation of depositors, sources said.

This is in line with assurance given by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das on Monday saying the regulator was ready to offer liquidity if required after lifting of moratorium.

“I would like to mention that Yes Bank has enough liquidity to meet any requirement. If there is a requirement, the RBI will provide necessary liquidity support,” he had said.

“Never in the history of banks (in India) have depositors lost money. The point is, depositors’ money is absolutely safe,” Das also said.

As per Section 17 of RBI Act 1934, the central bank can provide liquidity support to any lender in the form of loans and advances against collateral such as stocks, funds and securities (other than immovable property) in which a trustee is authorised to invest trust money by an Act of Parliament.

According to the sources, the RBI’s assessment found Yes Bank had liquidity issues but no solvency problem or any other issue.

Philippines shuts stock exchange

MANILA/SINGAPORE (TIP): The Philippine Stock Exchange closed indefinitely on Tuesday while currency and bond trading were suspended, the first shutdown of markets worldwide in response to the coronavirus, with authorities citing risks to the safety of traders.

The move comes after some bourses around the world closed trading floors or paused trade after withering falls in market value. It is the first blanket market halt.

And while the Philippine shutdown was prompted by health reasons, amid a broad nationwide lockdown, it raises the prospect other exchanges may follow and has drawn analysts’ attention.

“Given the unprecedented speed of the slump in equity prices, it has been suggested that stock exchanges might be closed soon if things don’t turn around,” research house Capital Economics said in a note on Tuesday. Global markets are in meltdown as the pandemic spreads, with roughly \$14 trillion in shareholder value erased.

Moody’s lowers India’s GDP growth forecast to 5.3%

NEW DELHI (TIP): Moody’s Investors Service on Tuesday lowered India’s GDP growth forecast for 2020 to 5.3%, on coronavirus implications on the economy.

Moody’s had in February projected a 5.4% real GDP growth for India in 2020. The 5.3% real GDP growth forecast for 2020 compares to 5.3% growth estimate for 2019 and 7.4% achieved in 2018.

Stating that there was significant economic fallout from more rapid and wider spread of the coronavirus, the rating agency on Tuesday said dampening of domestic consumption demand in affected countries exacerbates disruptions to supply chains and cross-border trade of goods and services.

Coronavirus scare: Global growth may shrink to 1 pc in 2020

NEW DELHI (TIP): Following the coronavirus pandemic, global growth may shrink to 1 per cent in 2020, down from 2.3 per cent before the outbreak started, as four major economies—Japan, Italy, Germany, France—are likely to experience a full-year recession, says a report.

According to The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), the situation appears grim in most countries around the world.

As per its assumption, the virus will infect around 50 per cent of the world population; 20 per cent of the cases will be severe, and 1-3 per cent will result in deaths.

“Global growth will stand at 1 per cent for 2020, down from 2.3 per cent before the outbreak started. This is the lowest rate in global growth since the global financial crisis,” The EIU said, adding that at least four G7 countries will experience a full-year recession (Japan, Italy, Germany, France).

The EIU has revised the US growth forecast downwards to 1 per cent for 2020. It has also dragged China’s growth to around 2 per cent in 2020 following the release of bleak industrial output data for January and February.

It further noted that the euro zone will register a full-year recession (-0.5 per cent).

As per the report, though quarantine measures will be effective to prevent the disease from spreading, but they will have a high economic impact on both supply and demand conditions.

On global trade The EIU said: “We have made a downward revision to global trade growth for 2020, to 0.4 per cent (from 2.3 per cent previously)”.

CENTRE MOVES SC FOR BREATHERS TO TELCOS

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Centre today moved the apex court seeking approval of its formula to allow telecom companies to pay their adjusted g revenue (AGR) dues in annual instalments for over 20 years to avoid impact on the economy.

A Bench of Justices Arun Mishra and MR Shah directed that the Centre’s application be listed before the same Bench which had given the October 24, 2019 verdict for payment of AGR dues, amounting to Rs 1.47 lakh crore, owed by telecom companies.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, mentioned the application for urgent listing saying that if a telecom company goes bankrupt due to the dues, it would have a major impact on the sector.

The Bench said however that it does not know when the original Bench which gave the verdict will assemble due to the precautionary measures adopted by the top court in wake of Covid-19.



CHAITRA NAVRATRI



Chaitra Navratri is observed during Chaitra month of Hindu calendar. It is a significant festival for Hindus having specific importance. Read on to learn about the significance of Chaitra Navratri. Chaitra Navratri is one of the famous festivals of Hindus, which is celebrated for nine days and falls usually in the month of March or April. Devotees worship Goddess Durga, who is known for strength and power and seek blessings from her so that they can fight wrong things in life without compromising their morale.

Chaitra Navratri Dates

Chaitra Navratri 2020 begins on 25th March and ends 2nd April.

All nine days of Navratri:

- March 25, Wednesday - Chaitra or Basanti Navratri Begins (Gudi Padwa)
- March 26, Thursday - Dwitiya(Sarvartha Siddhi Yoga)
- March 27, Friday - Tritiya(Sarvartha Siddhi Yoga)
- March 28, Saturday - Chaturthi
- March 29, Sunday - Panchami(Ravi Yoga)
- March 30, Monday - Shasthi
- March 31, Tuesday - Saptami
- April 1, Wednesday - Ashtami
- April 2, Thursday - Navami

Why is Chaitra Navratri Celebrated?

Chaitra is the first month of Hindu calendar and so people celebrate New Year day on the first day of worship. It is also known as Ugadi, Gudi Padwa. Navratri is celebrated twice in a year by the Hindus. First one is celebrated on the arrival of summer and the second one, on the advent of winter. The customs and rituals observed during this festival is almost the same as observed during the Navratri celebrated on the onset of winter.

10 Facts about Chaitra Navratri

Take a quick look at 10 facts on Chaitra Navratri.

- The festival of Navratri is very auspicious in Hinduism as it celebrates the power of all the nine forms of Goddess Durga.
- These nine days, households witness a series of rituals as families worship the Goddesses.
- The first three days of Navratri, Goddess Durga's energy and power are worshipped. Each day, a different appearance of Durga is worshipped. i.e., Parvati, Kali and Kumari.
- Goddess Laxmi is worshipped on the fourth and the sixth day.
- Goddess Saraswati is worshipped on the fifth and the seventh day.
- On the eighth day or Ashtami, the Goddess Mahagauri is worshipped.
- Goddess Siddhidatri is worshipped on the ninth day.
- On the ninth day, nine girls are invited who are yet to reach the stage of puberty. They are worshipped and given delicious food to eat and a token of love in the form of something new, like clothes or accessories. This is known as Kanya Puja.
- After worshipping all the different appearances of goddess Durga, on the tenth day comes the festival of Dussehra.
- In some parts of the county, on these nine days, the folk dance, Garba and Dandiya are played. This witnesses colourful clothes and a lot of

enthusiasm from people.

Fasting

In some parts of the country, people fast during Navratri. People believe that by fasting, they can purify their body, heart, mind and soul. There is a specific fast diet that people follow during these nine days.

Here is why people fast

- People believe that by fasting and sacrificing some personal interests, one devotes his or her respect for goddess Durga. By doing this the person can achieve the blessings of goddess Durga.
- Navratri is observed at the change of seasons. Seasonal changes can have various effects on your body, physically and mentally. Fasting during this time could really balance your energy and can enable you to seek blessings of Goddess Durga.
- Fasting can enable you to have a control over your mind and body and stay disciplined.

Rules for fasting

Very young, very old or pregnant women should not fast, as it could affect their health majorly.

Eating non-vegetarian, onions, garlic, salt and spices during fasting is not allowed. One should not indulge in drinking and smoking during fasting.

Make sure you intake a lot of fluids during fasting.

People who are fasting must get up early, take a bath and get dressed in fresh clothes. During the fasting period, people are supposed to perform a Puja in the morning and evening after the sun sets.

Men and women, both, are allowed to fast. During the fasting period, people who fast are required to eat Satvik meal.

One must indulge in charity during this period for a spiritual cleanse.

Eat loads of fruit and consume fruit juices during the fasting period.

Significance of Chaitra Navratri

Devotees worship Goddess Durga during the ten days and seek blessings from her. It is believed that one who worships her during this specific time period without any desire can attain salvation. Chaitra Navratri is observed during the time of the year when Mother Nature undergoes big changes climatically. It is believed that keeping fast during this time helps one prepare for the summer season. Also, Chaitra Navratri symbolizes beginning of the New Year according to Hindu calendar. It also marks beginning of spring season when new flowers and fruits start to bloom. People worship Goddess Laxmi and Goddess Saraswati to seek blessings from them. The entire period of nine days and the tenth day when the idol is immersed are about praying, fasting, dancing and enjoying. All this in totality helps people get organised for summer season.

Mythological Significance

Navratri is a Sanskrit word, which means nine divine nights. This means nine nights of celebration and during this period nine forms of Goddess Durga are worshipped. Since this Navratri falls in the month of Chaitra, it is known as Chaitra Navratri. Navratri symbolizes victory of good over evil. Navratri is divided into three parts to worship three different aspects of three Goddesses.

According to popular Hindu belief, Lord Shiva gave permission to his wife, Goddess Durga to meet her mother only for nine days. This is because in many castes women visit their mother's house during this period. During this period of time she killed the demon, Mahishasura. This is the reason why Goddess Durga is worshipped as symbol of Shakti, which means ultimate strength. She is worshipped for strength, power and energy. Devotees believe that Maa Durga cannot be created or destroyed. People pray to the Goddess to bestow blessings on them so that their inner strength never gets destroyed.

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"If Hindus don't maintain Hinduism, who shall save it?"

"If India's own children don't cling to their faith, who shall guard it?"

"Indians alone can save India, and India and Hinduism are one."



Shree Ganeshaya Namah

Bejan Daruwalla is world's most famous astrologer today. He appears regularly on world wide TV shows. Bejan who has been a professor in English, has authored a number of books on astrology. India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on March 29, 2012, lunched one of Bejan's books, '2012- End of the World? Bejan contributes to a number of journals and newspapers in many parts of the world which include Berkley Communications (London) Times of India (Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai) and The Indian Panorama (New York and Texas). Bejan's predictions have mostly been correct and people the world over rely on his predictions.



Bejan Daruwalla is available for astrological consultations. He can be reached at info@bejandaruwala.com and on phone **011-91-8141234275** www.bejandaruwala.com

The Indian Panorama brings you Weekly and Birthday Horoscope from the World's most trusted astrologer Bejan Daruwalla. Latest correct prediction: Modi's historic victory

Weekly Horoscope March 23 - March 29, 2020

ARIES: Ganesha says there are many issues at play now. While work is on the upswing, you are also in the throes of domestic responsibilities. There are many expenses, and travel is also thrown in. You make many profitable contacts. There is a possibility of a new relationship that enters your radar. It may not last but there will be new excitement for sure.

TAURUS: You may indulge it as an expression of rebellion but that is not a good enough reason for a relationship to last. Your peer group will also disapprove of the relationship. On another note, you may begin collecting unusual and beautiful objects for your home. You will enjoy decorating your castle; your home and your workspace may be subjected to renovation.

GEMINI: You may even look at purchasing new property. You will also seek out new and different kinds of amusement. You will be indulgent and offbeat mood and will want to be entertained. There is money at hand and you splurge. Ganesha warns you do not go overboard. The mood will pass soon, just hang on, and you will be on stable ground.

CANCER: The intensity of the phase may surprise you. But it will not be upsetting as it is quite possible that you will do nothing during this time. You will be filled with a feeling of balance and will be unusually peaceful and relaxed now. This is also a good time to travel, both for work and relaxation. This period has many hidden energies. It is fundamentally an opportunity to grow and explore the world and also see where and how you fit in.

LEO: Your mind is wrapped in strange ideas, even illusions and delusions. You get suspicious and think of strange, even bizarre, happenings all the time. Try not to get bogged down by heavy, pessimistic thinking. Communication with others becomes more difficult and you run the risk of losing your sense of perspective. Your viewpoints get narrowed by this influence.

VIRGO: You are on the threshold of a new cycle of ideas and opinions, of communicating in new ways. You now look at rooting out old ideas and notions that have outlived their usefulness. Ganesha urges you to use your creativity as there is a danger of thinking too narrowly. Look for alternatives. Don't fall into depression. Look at the macro picture, the larger aspects of life.

LIBRA: You are thinking fast and furious; your thought processes are on a treadmill. You are working out all the alternatives and looking for the right focus to steer ahead. This is an excellent time for working on a single idea right through to the end. Plan carefully as what you embark on now can have significant consequences. Do not be preoccupied with perfection.

SCORPIO: If you are too exacting and critical, you run the risk of alienating others as there will be none who will meet your exacting standards; not even you. Learn to accept what you cannot do and go with the flow. There is a higher power overseeing all life. Live with faith and confidence. Ganesha is with you right through.

SAGITTARIUS: There are positive trends at play here. You work hard and establish yourself. You win acclaim and respect. After all the soul-searching, you have reached a point of equilibrium and your actions are reliable and consistent. Your affairs are running smoothly and on schedule. Your approach to work and life is well planned and disciplined.

CAPRICORN: You win accolades and are the toast of the town. There may even be awards. This is a good time for those in the areas of realty and the stock markets. This is a good time for speculation. Ganesha blesses you. There is a lot of movement now. You meet up with old friends and old flames. No power on earth can suppress you as you move about like an India rubber ball.

AQUARIUS: You are flamboyant and not at all conservative. Your responses may be inappropriate to the situation. You may be pig headed and not very flexible. But you make headway as you gain valuable experience, particularly in your profession. You are ambitious and make substantial progress. Many people assist you now as though the forces of nature want you to be a success.

PISCES: You will be a success without a doubt and will be self-sufficient; if you have borrowed money you will be able to clear your debts. If you have been indebted to anyone, all accounts will be sorted out. Mortgages and bank loans will be cleared. There could be many expenses on the domestic front. Your health may need attention and there could be some troubling domestic issues in the form of elders being hospitalized. Ganesha is with you.

Birthday Horoscope March 23 - March 29, 2020

MARCH 23: Ganesha says the Moon opens up lines of communication, allowing you to have meaningful dialogues that bring mutual understanding, helpful exchanges, commitments and deals.

MARCH 24: The Moon in your sign makes you impatient, assertive, and impulsive, which helps you to seize opportunities, but also inclines you to be a touch overconfident. Be careful about misreading another's intentions.

MARCH 25: You and a partner may not be on the same wavelength. It's not a day to go on a

joint shopping adventure. On purchases and other things, but especially values, you're not seeing eye-to-eye

MARCH 26: Overall trends are splendid for reaching an understanding with someone today, maybe even meeting someone new, particularly where good mental rapport is one of the requirements.

MARCH 27: Subtlety is not your strong suit, but you'll have no choice but to play it when others' behaviours seem to mask their motives. Their need to feel in charge and in

control seems at stake.

MARCH 28: Frustrating tasks, delays, or an overload of work can cause you to feel pressured and under the gun. Or maybe you're just feeling under the weather. It will help just to pace yourself.

MARCH 29: If you feel that your personal freedom is something you're willing to protect at all costs, that could put you at odds with those who impose obligations, leaving you to manage rifts that result.

Coronavirus crisis pushes back Tax Day to July 15: Mnuchin



In a reprieve to Coronavirus hit Americans, Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin announced Americans don't have to file or pay taxes until July 15 instead of the usual April 15 deadline. Screenshot

WASHINGTON (TIP): Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin said Americans don't have to file or pay taxes until July 15 instead of the usual April 15 deadline.

The move means Americans who owe Uncle Sam will keep more money in their pocket longer. Those who are expecting a refund should still file as soon as possible so they get their cash.

The feds are trying to pump as much money into the economy as possible amid dire economic predictions over the global pandemic.

There is a program in 2020 that qualifies homeowners who live in specific zip codes to be eligible for \$1,000's of dollars in Government tax credits to install solar.

The IRS had already pushed back the deadline for payments. But it had said taxpayers would still have to file by April 15, a deadline that has now been delayed for three months.

Coronavirus in Texas: Gov Abbott Imposes Statewide Restrictions for 2 Weeks ; No Gatherings of 10 or More

AUSTIN, TX (TIP): As cases of Covid-19 continue rising in Texas, Governor Greg Abbott issued statewide restrictions Thursday, March 19, on public gatherings and restaurants among other things.

"All jurisdictions must work to contain the spread of Covid-19 for at least the next two weeks."

His order begins after 11:59 p.m. on Friday, March 20 and extends to midnight April 3.

The Governor said he may have to extend it.

Under his order, restaurants and bars across the state won't be allowed to have any people dining in.

Only take-out and delivery are permitted.

Also under the Governor's order, no social gatherings of groups larger than ten will be allowed.

All gyms and massage studios will have to close, along with all schools.

And no visitors will be allowed at nursing homes, retirement centers, and long-term care facilities unless they're providing critical care.

After initially allowing individual cities and counties to set their own



Governor Greg Abbott issued statewide restrictions Thursday, March 19, on public gatherings and establishments

restrictions, the Governor said statewide restrictions are now needed.

The Governor's order came after Texas State Department of Health Services Commissioner Dr. John Hellerstedt issued the state's first public health disaster declaration since 1901.

At the news conference with Governor Abbott Thursday, he said, "Covid-19 is the greatest public health

challenge in living memory."

Since the Governor's first emergency declaration last Friday, the number of Covid-19 cases in Texas has jumped from 39 to 83 Wednesday and to 143 Thursday.

More than 2,300 people in Texas are being monitored for possibly having the virus.

Four people have died.

Governor Abbott issued a warning for those who ignore the order.

"The state now has quarantine authority. We don't want to exercise that authority. If Texans are irresponsible in behavior though, there are more tools where we can be more aggressive."

In Frisco, Mayor Jeff Cheney took some heat from residents who criticized him for allowing restaurants to operate without restrictions, while the city of Dallas and Dallas County set restrictions on restaurants and bars among other places early this week.

Cheney said, "I certainly welcome any criticism from any of our residents. We're trying to work through a very difficult time together."

He praised Governor Abbott's statewide order.

Embassy of India Issues Advisory Related to COVID -19 for Indian Students Studying in US

WASHINGTON (TIP): Following the growing cases of the coronavirus (COVID-19), US universities have taken measures to shut down on-campus operations and/or move classes online. The Embassy of India Education Team/India Student Hub has the following advisory for Indian students who may be impacted by these decisions. Please note that this advisory is based on information available as of 18 March 2020. The WHO, CDC, Government of India Ministry of Health and Welfare (for India-specific updates), and your universities are generally the best sources for the latest information in this rapidly evolving situation. Further Embassy of India Student Hub updates will be issued as needed.

Please read this advisory carefully. For further questions, you may use the helpline numbers mentioned below.

If you are staying in on-campus housing and are asked to vacate, check with your university if you can petition to continue staying in on-campus housing. If you cannot petition for continued on-campus housing or your petition is not accepted, consult with your university or your network on how

to find alternate accommodations.

If your university is shutting down on-campus services, check with your university on how to avail your university's health services, student health insurance, international student services, and any other essential service(s) that may be impacted.

Read official campus advisories or contact your Designated Student Official (DSO) for information on how short-term or long-term shifts to online courses will impact your F-1 or J-1 status. If you are graduating in Spring 2020 and travelling internationally, please contact your DSO for advice on how this may impact your graduation and application for OPT.

The Embassy of India is in touch with the US government on the issues being faced by Indian students. The US government has indicated that it is closely monitoring the implications that this evolving situation may have for international students. The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) will continue to provide guidance on distance-learning for international students. SEVP recently confirmed that international students can temporarily engage in distance learning, either from within the U.S. or outside the country, in light of COVID-19, without affecting

their visa status. Please continue to monitor the Department of Homeland Services (DHS) at <https://www.ice.gov/covid19> including this Guidance for SEVP Stakeholders for future updates on visa status, OPT applications/extensions, and related matters.

Please avoid all non-essential domestic or international travel. For official advisories on domestic US and international travel, please consult the CDC website. For international travel, please also contact your DSO for information on any possible impact in the future on your F-1 or J-1 status.

As of 18 March 2020, if you are planning travel from the US to India, then you will be subject to medical screening upon arrival and you may be put in quarantine at a government-earmarked facility for a minimum of 14 days if required. No travel OR transit is allowed through the restricted countries mentioned on Government of India Bureau of Immigration FAQs.

<https://boi.gov.in/sites/default/files/u4/faq-covid19.pdf>

For travel from India to the United States, please check the US Department of State and US Embassy in New Delhi websites.

For admitted students to US universities concerned about summer and fall 2020 admissions / visas, please contact your designated university admissions officer and/or the EducationUSA advising centers <https://educationusa.state.gov/find-advising-center> for more information.

Please consult the WHO and CDC guidelines for further information about the disease, preventative measures, and what to do if you experience any symptoms.

This is an unprecedented situation, but we can successfully manage it by taking decisions with a calm mind. Please take prudent health precautions and carefully review information and travel advisories.

To receive the latest Embassy of India Student Hub advisory(s), register here:

https://www.indianembassyusa.gov.in/Indian_Students_Registration

For queries/clarifications regarding recent travel advisories issued by the Government of India for travel to India in view of the spread of COVID-19, please see travel advisories at:

<https://www.mohfw.gov.in/> and on the Embassy of India/Consulate Generals of India websites in your area.

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contd from page 1

Trump Administration's \$1 Trillion...

The payments would be gradually phased out for individuals with income between \$75,000 and \$99,000, at which point payments cut off. In a speech on the Senate floor Thursday, March 19 afternoon, McConnell said he hoped this "bold new proposal" would receive "bipartisan respect and mutual urgency." He added that discussions between Republicans and Democrats about this legislation needed to occur on a "member level," and said that Republican committee chairmen would begin speaking with their Democratic counterparts tomorrow.

"These are urgent discussions. They need to happen at a member level and they need to happen starting right now," McConnell said. McConnell told reporters Friday that he had given the bipartisan groups of senators negotiating the legislation a midnight deadline to get to an agreement, and he would take basic procedural measures so the legislation could be brought to the Senate floor. He also said that he planned for senators to draft the final legislation on Saturday.

Some of the credit facilities for larger businesses will go to industries the government is looking to aid.

Several companies and industries are seeking relief. They include the U.S. travel and tourism industry, which is seeking \$150 billion in aid, the U.S. airline industry which is seeking government aid of more than \$50 billion, and Boeing and is seeking \$60 billion for itself and the aerospace supply chain.

The administration has made clear it is intent on helping those industries in particular that have been pummeled by travel restrictions. Trump said in a news conference Tuesday, March 17 that the challenges facing the industry are not its fault.

Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle have supported offering relief to certain industries, particularly airlines, which have drastically cut back capacity as the coronavirus and resulting travel restrictions spread. Defenders of industrywide bailouts think collapses would hurt workers as well as executives. Airlines, in particular, are viewed as essential to the U.S. economy, supporting 750,000 jobs and local hubs throughout the country. "Central banks need to work with major financial institutions to target cheap credit to vulnerable businesses - airlines, hotels, manufacturers paralyzed by broken supply chains and the like," wrote Damon Silvers director of policy and special counsel for the AFL-CIO. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin has told GOP senators that unemployment could reach 20% if Congress doesn't enact the administration's proposed stimulus package.

A number of Democrats, however, have said they will not support any bailout of an industry that doesn't come with sacrifice from companies.

Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts on Tuesday, March 17 outlined her own set of stipulations for any big business that receive federal bailout money. They include permanently giving up stock buybacks and adding at least one seat to the board representing workers. There have also been continued disputes between the two parties over paid leave for workers. Democrats have pushed hard to offer all U.S. workers the ability to stay home during the pandemic without fear of losing a paycheck. Republicans, though, have argued that certain small businesses may not be able to afford that service, while cash flow freezes up.

(Read full story on www.theindianpanorama.news)

NY Governor Cuomo Mandates...

He also announced Matilda's Law, named after his mother, to mandate people aged 70+ and those with

compromised immune systems to remain indoors and pre-screen visitors by taking temperature.

Visitors should wear masks and stay 6 feet away from others, he said.

"I call it Matilda's Law. My mother's name is Matilda. Everybody's mother, father, sister, friend (are) in a vulnerable population - this is about protecting them. What you do, highly affects their health and wellbeing," Cuomo said.

The Governor ordered cancellation of all non-essential gatherings of any size for any reason.

He said if people do go out for reasons such as buying groceries, they are required to stay six feet away from each other.

"We are laser focused on protecting those most at risk," Cuomo said.

Total COVID-19 cases in the US now stand at 10,442 and there have been 150 fatalities.

Cuomo said public transportation will keep running for nurses, doctors, law enforcement officers and other essential personnel.

"Everyone else: Limit the use of public transportation to only when absolutely necessary," he said, adding that such measures will put the state in "PAUSE - Policies, Assure, Uniform, Safety for Everyone".

He warned that the state will enforce the orders effective Sunday night.

"These are not helpful hints. I am not kidding about this," he added.

These provisions will be enforced," Cuomo said. "Your actions can affect my health."

Even as he offered a dire assessment of the crisis, the governor sparred with reporters who asserted that the new measures amounted to exactly what he said he was avoiding. Cuomo said he was seeking to limit contact between New Yorkers to reduce the spread of the deadly virus -- and compared the rise in cases to a plumbing valve. "Tighten the valve more," Cuomo said. "We're closing the valve." Earlier, yesterday, Governor Cuomo announced that mortgage payments will be waived for 90 days for those with financial hardships as the state ramps up measures to mitigate the health and economic impacts of the new coronavirus. He added that overdraft fees on ATMs and credit cards will also be waived.

(With inputs from PTI)

4 Nirbhaya convicts executed...

In last-ditch efforts, one of the convicts knocked on the doors of the Delhi High Court and the Supreme Court hours before the hanging.

Hours before the execution, Pawan Kumar Gupta approached the Supreme Court challenging rejection of the second mercy petition by the President.

In an unprecedented late-night hearing that began at 2.30 am and lasted an hour, a Supreme Court bench dismissed his last plea, paving the way for the execution.

It also refused to pass any direction allowing Gupta and Akshay Singh to meet their families just before they were sent to the gallows.

Relieved that their daughter finally got justice after a seven-year-long legal struggle, Nirbhaya's parents said they would continue their "fight for India's daughters".

"We finally got justice. We will continue our fight for justice for India's daughters. Justice delayed, but not denied," her mother told reporters after the hanging.

She added that women would definitely feel safer after the execution of the convicts.

The mother said the entire country was awake and waiting for justice.

There was cheer after the hanging as hundreds of people, carrying the national flag and shouting slogans of 'long live Nirbhaya' and 'Bharat Mata ki jai', gathered outside Tihar Jail since early hours of Friday.

Some of them distributed sweets after the four convicts were executed.

Among the people who gathered outside the jail was social activist Yogita Bhayana. She held a poster which read 'Nirbhaya has got justice. The other daughters still await'.

"Justice has been delivered finally," she said, adding it was a victory of the legal system.

Sana, a resident of west Delhi, said, "Nothing will change after this hanging in our society, but we are happy that the four convicts have been hanged and the justice was delivered to Nirbhaya."

After raping and brutalizing Nirbhaya, the men, one of whom was a juvenile at the time, dumped her on the road and left for dead on the cold winter night. Her friend who was with her was also severely beaten and thrown out along with her. She was so severely violated that her insides were spilling out when she was taken to hospital. She died in a Singapore hospital after battling for life for a fortnight.

Six people, including the four convicts and the juvenile, were named as accused.

While Ram Singh allegedly committed suicide in Tihar Jail days after the trial began in the case, the juvenile was released in 2015 after spending three years in a correctional home.

The road to the gallows was a long and circuitous one, going through the lower courts, the High Court, the Supreme Court and the President's office before going back to the Supreme Court that heard and rejected various curative petitions.

The death warrants were deferred by a court thrice on the grounds that the convicts had not exhausted all their legal remedies and that the mercy petition of one or the other was pending before the President.

On March 5, a trial court issued fresh death warrants for March 20 at 5.30 am as the final date for the execution. (Source: PTI)

Madhya Pradesh Congress...

Nath said people of the state were watching the machinations and would pay back all those who helped topple the popular government elected by them.

Who will be the next chief minister is on the mind of everyone.

The BJP legislature party will make the decision in a meeting with observers from the Centre, party leaders say, dismissing speculation of "several claimants and differences and factionalism" in the party.

Reports of senior state leader Shivraj Singh Chouhan's "history of rivalry with Prime Minister Narendra Modi" is the main reason for the speculation.

It is one of the reasons that while the most obvious name appears to be that of three-time chief minister Chouhan, names of other contenders like Gwalior-Chambal leader Narottam Mishra who, along with Chouhan, is among those the Congress has accused of "horse-trading" to dislodge the Kamal Nath government, are also doing the rounds.

Apart from Chouhan and Mishra, others in the fray are Morena MP Narendra Singh Tomar; the Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and Minister of Rural Development in the Narendra Modi cabinet. Also being mentioned are Leader of Rajya Sabha Thawar Chand Gehlot, Union Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment Prahlad Singh Patel and Kailash Vijayvargiya, the fire spitting BJP old horse from Indore. (Source: PTI)

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GET PANORAMIC VIEW OF HIMALAYAN PEAKS AT KAUSANI

Kausani is a hill station and village situated in Bageshwar district in the state of Uttarakhand, India. It is famous for its scenic splendour and its spectacular 300 km-wide panoramic view of Himalayan peaks like Trisul, Nanda Devi and Panchchuli. Mahatma Gandhi called this place the 'Switzerland of India', due to similarity in landscapes.

Here, nature showcases the best of itself, with the chirpy creatures celebrating its precious serenity with the opening of the day until the sun sets. Thus, offers the best of the holiday experience to the tourists. Situated in the Bageshwar district, Kausani lies at the close proximity to the capital - Delhi, thus this spectacular piece of land becomes an ideal getaway for its residents. The serene nature of Kausani wrapping up beautiful temples like Baijnath temple, and Somnath temple that lies near the gushing Rudradhari falls and caves, which is another point of interest for the tourists including pilgrims.

The nature lovers can also visit Kausani tea gardens and get pleased by witnessing its stunning tea plantations scattered over an area of 208 hectares.

Among the other best places to visit, there is Sumitranandan Pant Gallery; which is a peaceful respite for those who have a fascination for poetries. Be it a nature lover or a honeymoon couple looking for a romantic seclusion, or even an adventure enthusiast, Kausani remains as the one stop for all with its attractions.

Be it a nature lover, adventure enthusiast or a connoisseur, Kausani has got something to offer to every one of them. The solemn ambience in and around the temple sites attract many pilgrims too to dwell into its tranquilizing splendour. Trekking and taking delight in the sweet poetries of the famous poet; Sumitranandan Pant are some of the best things to do in Kausani.

RUDRADHARI FALLS AND CAVES

A location which is around 12 km away from Kausani on the Almora-Kausani road, is blessed with rich pasture land and rocky mountains through which the Rudradhari fall gushes with extreme force. Near to it, lies the sacred Someshwar Temple dedicated to Lord Shiva, and ancient caves waiting to be explored by the tourists.

KAUSANI TEA ESTATE

Adorning an elevated land of 1800 m altitude, the Kausani Tea Estate calls for a visit for the tourists who are both a tea and a nature lover. The Kausani Tea Estate produces an exceptional quality tea leaves that are even exported to other countries like Australia, Germany, Korea and the U.S. Girias Uttaranchal tea is the most popular among all its production.

BAIJNATH TEMPLES

Baijnath Temples, are the bunch of ancient temples sprawling at an altitude of 1126 m that are dedicated to Lord



Shiva. This holy site by being placed on the banks of the river Gomti surrounded by exquisite scenery invokes peace in the heart and soul of the visitors.

SUMITRANANDAN PANT GALLERY

Kausani is the birthplace of a very popular poet and a legendary figure of modern Hindi literature; Sumitranandan Pant. To celebrate his fine art in the field of literature, a museum dedicated to him has been built at Kausani itself. The Sumitranandan Pant Gallery has a fine display of the holographs of his poems and a library containing the text copies of his entire literary works.

PINNATH

Just a 5 km trek from Kausani; Pinnath is the adventurer's paradise that comes with the delightful but foggy views of the green landscapes nourished by the Kosi river. Once reached the top, the Pinnath temple dedicated to Lord Bhairon impresses with its fascinating structure. The walls and doors of the temple carry the images of the Kings and Pandavas. The place seems enchanting during the fair held in October. Other than this, adventurers can also choose to go for some far away treks to Pindari Glacier, Kafni Glacier, and Sunderdhunga Glacier, that equally beautiful and tranquilizing.

How to Reach

Kausani is a beautiful hill station snuggled in the Kumaon division in the Bageshwar district of Uttarakhand. It is situated just 52 km away from Almora



and around 413 km from Delhi, which establish a viable connection of Kausani with the other major cities as well.

BY AIR

The nearest airport to Kausani is in Pantnagar, which is around 168 km away. There are flights available that ply between Delhi and Pantnagar daily. While, upon reaching the airport, one can opt for a public bus or can hire a private taxi to reach Kausani.

BY RAIL

To reach by train, one has to get down at the Kathgodam railway station which

is the nearest railway station that is around 134 km away from Kausani. Prompt public transport and private taxis available at the station finally reach you to Kausani.

BY ROAD

If you wish to travel by bus then board the state-run buses from Delhi that travel through Hapur, Moradabad, Ramnagar, Ranikhet to finally reach Kausani. Longer route buses are also available that take more time by switching to Rampur route. The option of private taxis is also available if you love to travel with comfort at your own demand.

Euro, Copa America postponed to 2021

LAUSANNE (TIP): UEFA has postponed the European Championship, due to take place across the continent in June and July this year, until 2021 after holding crisis meetings today, European football's governing body announced.

"The move will help all domestic competitions, currently on hold due to the Covid-19 emergency, to be completed," UEFA said in a statement.

Most of Europe's domestic leagues have been suspended as football confronts its biggest issue in modern times. The UEFA Champions League and Europa League competitions for clubs have also been suspended, with both still in the last-16 stage, but postponing the European Championship for national sides means they, along with national leagues, will have the chance to be completed, assuming travel restrictions are lifted in time. The head of the Italian football federation, Gabriele Gravina, had already led calls for the Euros to be postponed. Euro 2020 was due to be held in 12 different cities.

The semifinals and final were due to be played in London and there would be considerable knock-on effects to postponing the competition — the women's European Championship is scheduled to run from July 7 to August 1 next year in England, with the final at Wembley.

Copa America in June 2021

SAO PAULO: This year's Copa America has been postponed until



2021 due to fears over the spread of the coronavirus, the South American Football Confederation (CONMEBOL) said. The 12-team tournament had originally been scheduled to take place from June 12 to July 12 in Colombia and Argentina. CONMEBOL president Alejandro Dominguez said the rescheduled tournament would be played between June 11 and July 11 next year.

French Open postponed to September

PARIS: The French Open tennis tournament has been postponed until September 20 to October 4 amid the coronavirus outbreak,

organisers of the season's second Grand Slam said today. It was initially scheduled to be played from May 24 to June 7. "In order to guarantee the health and safety of all those involved in the preparation of the tournament, the French Tennis Federation decided to organise the 2020 edition of Roland-Garros from 20 September to 4 October 2020," the French tennis federation said in a statement. "While no one today can predict what the health situation will be like on May 18 (when qualifications were due to start), the lockdown measures in force make it impossible to prepare for it and therefore to organise it on the dates initially planned."



'Stay Home, Stay Safe': Anushka Sharma & Virat Kohli Share Video Message For Fans Amid Coronavirus Scare

NEW DELHI (TIP): Power couple Anushka Sharma and Virat Kohli shared a powerful video message for their fans and spoke about the importance of self-isolation and the immediate need to stay indoors to stop the spread of Coronavirus. Virushka, as fondly called by fans, urged the netizens to remain at home to fight the pandemic.

Virat Kohli said, "We know that we are all going through a very difficult time", while Anushka reminded everyone saying "And the only way to stop the Coronavirus spread is by acting together."

The Indian cricket team captain further said, "We are staying at home for our safety and everyone else's too," to which Anushka added, "You should do it too to prevent the further spread of the virus."

Virat and Anushka stressed on the importance of self-quarantine in their video message. "Let's make it safe for us and everyone else by self-isolation. Stay home and Stay Healthy," the celebrity couple said.

Anushka shared the video along with the caption, "Stay Home. Stay Safe. Stay Healthy."

Virat re-tweeted the video and wrote, "The need of the hour is to absolutely respect and follow the government's directive. Stay home. Stay safe. Stay healthy."

Indian football legend PK Banerjee is no more

By Prabhjot Singh

Indian soccer legend and Olympian Pradip Kumar Banerjee died in Kolkata on Friday. He was 83. He is survived by daughters Paula and Purna and younger brother Prasun Banerjee, a sitting Trinamool Congress MP.

Pradip had played for India in 1956 Melbourne and 1960 Rome Olympic Games. Besides, he helped India to gold medal win in the 1962 Jakarta Asian Games.

A solid striker, Pradip played for India in 84 international games. After retiring from active football, he took to coaching. He had the distinction of playing for the top two Kolkata Clubs – Mohan Bagan and East Bengal.

He was suffering from Parkinson's disease, dementia and heart problem. He was on life support system since March 2 and breathed his last this afternoon.

Born on June 23, 1936 in Moynaguri on the outskirts of Jalpaiguri in West Bengal, Banerjee's family relocated to his uncle's place in Jamshedpur



before partition.

Besides helping India win the gold medal at the Jakarta Asian Games in 1962, Banerjee led India in the 1960 Rome Olympics, where he scored the equaliser against a formidable French team in a 1-1 draw. He also represented India in

the 1956 Melbourne Olympics and was instrumental in 4-2 win over Australia in the quarterfinals.

Banerjee's contribution to Indian football was duly recognised by FIFA by awarding him the Centennial Order of Merit in 2004.

Athletes returning from high-risk nations to be quarantined: Rijiju

NEW DELHI (TIP): Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju has said athletes arriving back from high-risk Covid-19-affected countries will have to be in mandatory quarantine but refused to be drawn into speculation surrounding the IPL and the Tokyo Olympics.



Spelling out the protocol for the athletes arriving from the most-affected countries such as China, South Korea, Iran, Italy, Spain, France and Germany, Rijiju said they will have to follow what has been mandated for everyone else. "Athletes who are coming back from countries which are very prone to coronavirus will be quarantined as per the government provisions. There will be no exceptions. Anybody who has come from abroad is being put in isolation and athletes also have to adhere to it," Rijiju said.

Currently, chess ace Viswanathan Anand has self-isolated himself in Germany after travel restrictions delayed his return to India. Wrestler Vinesh Phogat and javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra are among the sportspersons to have cut short their training stints in Europe to head back due to the Covid-19 pandemic. They have put themselves in isolation after returning.

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The Eye Foundation of America and Goutami Eye Institute provide all these services free of charge in Andhra Pradesh, India.

**Help save the a child's sight
by donating today via PayPal,
DonorView, cash, or check.**

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE
EYE FOUNDATION OF AMERICA AT
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