



KEEP SAFE

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

KEEP AMERICA SAFE

Indian Origin Long Island Man Charged under Defense Production Act for Price-Gouging of PPE



Amardeep Singh wears a face shield as he poses beside stocks of disinfectant in an Instagram post on April 7. Photo / courtesy US Attorney's office for the Eastern District

NEW YORK (TIP): A criminal complaint was filed April 24 in federal court in Central Islip charging Amardeep Singh with violating the Defense Production Act of 1950 by hoarding personal protective equipment ("PPE") at a warehouse in

contd on Page 32

Indian-American-led clinical trial of remdesivir in COVID-19 treatment shows positive results

'A drug can block this virus': Dr. Fauci hails Covid-19 treatment breakthrough

FOSTER CITY, CA (TIP): The phase three clinical trial of the antiviral drug remdesivir, led by a team of investigators including an Indian-American physician, for the treatment of the coronavirus patients has shown positive results, a US pharma company announced on Wednesday, April 29.

The California-based pharma company Gilead Sciences said that the



Picture for Representational purpose

preliminary results showed that 50 per cent of the COVID-19 patients treated with a 5-day dosage of remdesivir improved and more than half were discharged from the hospital within two weeks. A phase three clinical trial is said to be the final step in the process of the drug approval. "Certainly, it's a positive it's a very positive event,"

contd on Page 32

Congress questions 68,607 crore loan write-off due from 50 economic offenders



Mehul Choksi and Nirav Modi, two fugitives whose bank loans running into thousands of crores were written off

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Congress on Tuesday, April 28, asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to 'explain' why his government has waived ₹68,607 crore worth of bank loans taken by the top 50 defaulters including Nirav Modi, Mehul Choksi and Vijay Mallya at a time when the country is fighting the coronavirus [COVID-19] pandemic.

contd on page 32

Two cinema legends die a day apart



Buddies stayed together and died almost together, a day apart

NEW YORK (TIP): Irrfan Khan, the actor who excelled in both Bollywood and Hollywood cinema died fighting cancer on April 29. In Mumbai, India. A day later, on April 30, another legendary actor Rishi Kapoor who, too, suffered from cancer, died in a hospital in Mumbai.

READ THE INDIAN PANORAMA TRIBUTE TO RISHI KAPOOR ON PAGE 17 AND TO IRRFAN KHAN ON PAGES 18-19.

Open up economy in measured way: Raghuram Rajan



Raghuram Rajan, former RBI Governor

NEW DELHI (TIP): Former RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan said here, April 30, that India should open up its economy in a measured way

soon to enable people to have jobs and underlined that Rs 65,000 crore should be spent to support the poor during the Covid crisis.

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No respite for US; 2,500 die in 24 hours

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Happy Doctors' Day March 30<sup>th</sup>

V.K. Raju, MD, FRCS, FACS

Hats off to the Doctors who can't stay home and are saving lives

There are two kinds of fools in this world: Those who give advice and those who do not take it.

I propose to belong to the first category, in the hope that you will not belong to the second.

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## DEAD VIRUS PARTICLES MAY AFFECT TEST RESULT

Coronavirus patients who remain positive weeks after diagnosis may harbour dead virus particles that can't be distinguished from infectious ones in tests, scientists in South Korea found.

The virus dies one to two weeks after infecting and proliferating inside respiratory cells, doctors at the National Medical Center in Seoul said.

Pieces of the virus's RNA may remain in cells and be detected by a nucleic acid test a month or two after infection, underscoring the limitation of Covid-19 testing, they said.

Some Covid-19 patients have continued to test positive over more than a month, said Peter Collignon, a professor of clinical medicine at the Australian National University Medical School in Canberra.

It's possible that the virus detected in these patients isn't viable or capable of causing an infection, "but we need better animal models to see if it's dead or alive," he said.

How long an individual excretes infectious virus in their respiratory secretions and faecal matter is key to determining the optimal time an infected person should self-isolate or be quarantined. Previous studies indicate that very ill patients remain infectious longer than people who experience a mild illness.

## 'MAJOR STRATEGIC ACHIEVEMENT': XI JINPING HAILS CHINA'S COVID-19 BATTLE

**BEIJING (TIP):** Chinese President Xi Jinping has termed China's battle against Covid-19 as a major strategic achievement, as the ruling Communist Party is all set to hold the postponed Parliament session on May 22 amid a steady decline in the coronavirus cases. China's National Health Commission (NHC) on Thursday said the country reported only four new confirmed Covid-19 cases on Wednesday, taking the total number to 82,862, while no death due to the disease was registered. The virus has claimed 4,633 lives in the country.

China's arduous efforts to contain the coronavirus have brought a decisive outcome to the fight of defending Hubei and its capital city Wuhan, Xi told a high-powered Central Committee meeting of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) on Wednesday.

The nationwide battle against the epidemic has gained major strategic achievements, the state-run Xinhua news agency quoted Xi as saying. Xi said Hubei, including Wuhan, should continue strengthening community-level epidemic prevention and control. He asked officials to make efforts to contain the virus case at Heilongjiang Province bordering Russia, where a large number of Chinese returning from Russian cities were tested positive for coronavirus.

## Antiviral drug could hold promise in fight against Covid-19: Study

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** An investigational antiviral drug could hold promise in devising a treatment for Covid-19. In a trial, evaluating 5-day and 10-day dosing durations of the drug remdesivir in coronavirus patients, it was found that the administration of the drug in patients with a severe manifestation of Covid-19 achieved improvement.

"The data shows that remdesivir has a clear-cut, significant, positive effect in diminishing the time to recovery," Anthony Fauci, the top US epidemiologist who oversaw the study, told reporters at the White House as reported by news agency AFP.

It was found that coronavirus patients receiving a 10-day treatment course of remdesivir achieved similar improvement in clinical status when compared to those taking a 5-day treatment course.

The trial was conducted by Gilead Sciences, Inc., a research-based biopharmaceutical company headquartered in California, US, with operations in over 30 countries.

# After over 26,700 deaths, PM Boris says UK is past peak

**LONDON (TIP):** The death toll in the United Kingdom from coronavirus was 26,711 on Thursday, but a slower rate of new infections and dwindling rate of deaths prompted Prime Minister Boris Johnson to declare that the country is past the peak.

Addressing the daily briefing for the first time after returning to office, Johnson, who had a brush with death after contracting the virus, said he was "very, very lucky" when he was admitted to the intensive care unit, but regretted that many people had lost their lives that.

He said: "Today the number of Covid hospital admissions is falling. The number of patients in ICU is falling. We have so far succeeded in the first and most important task we set ourselves as a nation. To avoid the tragedy that engulfed other parts of the world. Because at no stage has our NHS been overwhelmed".

Five mega hospitals were quickly set up with help from the military, but after admissions slowed, the NHS was left with considerable capacity. Figures released on Friday said the number cases across settings in the UK were 171,253.

Johnson said: "And it is thanks to that massive collective effort to shield the NHS that we avoided an uncontrollable and catastrophic epidemic where the reasonable worst case scenario was 500,000 deaths. And so I can confirm today for the first time that we are past the peak of this disease. We are past the peak and we are on the downward slope".

### Russia's Coronavirus cases surpass 100,000

Russia's coronavirus caseload surpassed 100,000 on Thursday, with the number of deaths exceeding 1,000.

Russian health officials reported a record daily spike of 7,099 new confirmed cases on Thursday morning, which brought the country's total to 106,498. The number of infections is likely to be much higher, as not everyone is being tested and many carry the disease without

## TRACKING THE VIRUS

### GLOBAL

Cases	Deaths
<b>3,308,290</b>	<b>234,108</b>

### INDIA

Cases	Deaths
<b>35,043</b>	<b>1,147</b>



## COVID-19 CURVE IN BRAZIL ON THE RISE, DEATH TOLL HITS 5000

Brazil saw the total number of deaths due to coronavirus surpass 5,000 on Tuesday after reporting 474 deaths over the past 24 hours, making its overall pandemic-related toll the ninth-highest worldwide.

In contrast to other parts of the world, Brazil's coronavirus curve is climbing, Health Minister Nelson Teich announced during a news conference Tuesday. As of Tuesday, the country had counted nearly 72,000 positive cases, 5,017 deaths, and a 7% death rate.

When asked during the same news conference about mounting fatalities, President Jair Bolsonaro answered, "So what? What do you want me to do about it?" before joking that even though his middle name means messiah in Portuguese, "I can't make miracles."

The leader has refused to follow World Health Organization guidance on combating the virus throughout the outbreak. On the domestic front, he's criticized governors who called for quarantines, fired his health minister for advocating for restrictions and containment measures, and personally took to the streets without a protective face mask, shaking hands and visiting



crowded bakeries and markets as a rebellious gesture.

Even as increasing numbers of Brazilians fall victim to the virus, some businesses across the country have taken Bolsonaro's lead. Popular clothing store Hering announced Tuesday it would immediately reopen their 104 stores, and more than 50 shopping malls are back in business, welcoming crowds of masked consumers.

In other places in the country, the outbreak is ravaging fragile health systems: hospitals overwhelmed, and beds and ventilators in short supply. Images of hastily-dug cemetery plots in Sao Paulo are splashed across front pages of international newspapers.

exhibiting any grocery shops, for gradually reopening symptoms. pharmacies and banks, the country. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry The vast majority of Russian regions have been on lockdown since late March, with people ordered to stay at home and only essential businesses, such as putting together a plan On Tuesday, Russian President Vladimir Putin extended the lockdown until May 11 and tasked the government with unfolding. Dmitry Peskov pointed out that the timeline for the reopening will be contingent on how the outbreak continues to unfold.

# New Jersey Gets Special Financial Aid from White House, Trump Praises Murphy

## *Parks, Golf Courses to Reopen May 2*

**TRENTON, NJ (TIP):** New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy had a "good discussion" with President Donald Trump at the White House, April 30 on the coronavirus pandemic and detailed him part of the plan for his state's reopening. The outcome of the meeting was good indeed as the Garden State is receiving additional grant from the White House.

**I had a very good and productive meeting at the @WhiteHouse with President @realDonaldTrump earlier today. As a result, we are receiving 550,000 new #COVID19 test kits and 750,000 swabs from the Trump Administration. This is a tremendous boost to our overall testing capacity.,** Murphy tweeted Thursday, April 30 afternoon.

"We've been crushed as a state. As you know, it's a state you know very well. We have 6,770 fatalities. But the curves, thank God, are beginning to show promise. And we're beginning to take some baby steps on that road to reopen. In fact, we've announced that, as of this weekend, our state and county parks, golf, under certain protocols, as of Saturday morning will be able to be open again" Murphy told Trump at the meeting.



President Trump held a Meeting with New Jersey Governor Murphy, April 30 *Twitter picture*

Trump also praised the Democrat Governor for his leadership during the crisis. "I have to speak as President but I also speak as somebody that is in New Jersey a lot. It's a great place. It's a beautiful state. People don't understand New Jersey quite. But it's a beautiful -- it's a beautiful state. And it's great to have you as the governor" said Trump. "And, by the way, he's a Democrat, so I'm

getting myself in trouble, but that's okay. (Laughter) I have to tell the truth. He's -- he's something", Trump jokingly added.

Governor Phil Murphy thanked President Trump for his help on coronavirus relief efforts in the state.

On April 29, Murphy signed an executive order reopening state parks and golf courses, and restoring the authority of county governments to

determine whether county parks will be open or closed. The order takes effect at sunrise on Saturday, May 2. It's Murphy's first major move to begin lifting the near-lockdown orders he installed to slow the virus' spread in the Garden State.

"We understand that New Jerseyans want to get outside and get some fresh air as the weather warms up," said Governor Murphy. "However, this should not serve as an open invitation to rush back to normalcy and break the necessary social distancing measures we've put in place. This approach will also bring New Jersey in line with our neighboring states, which will discourage residents from needlessly crossing state lines for recreation."

New Jersey's COVID-19 death toll hit a new high on Thursday with 460, Governor Murphy announced Thursday. 79 of those deaths were reported in Bergen County alone.

The state's death toll is 7,228, and 118,652 people have tested positive for COVID-19.

New Jersey has now lost more people to coronavirus than residents lost in World War I, the Korean war, the Vietnam war, both Gulf Wars, Afghanistan, September 11th and Superstorm Sandy combined, Governor Murphy said.

## New York City temporarily suspends overnight subway service due to coronavirus concerns

**NEW YORK (TIP):** New York City's subway system will close down in the overnight hours as the state combats the coronavirus crisis, Gov. Andrew Cuomo and Mayor Bill de Blasio announced Thursday, April 30.



The overnight shutdowns for the largely 24 hour a day, seven day a week system will begin on May 6, with trains being stopped for cleaning between 1 am and 5 a.m. every night, Cuomo said at his coronavirus briefing.

The decision to close the country's largest subway system follows multiple published reports about a growing homeless population and poor sanitary conditions that had been growing for weeks.

"You now have more homeless people on fewer trains and you have fewer people to conduct outreach for the homeless people," Cuomo said.

Subway ridership has plummeted since New York's stay-at-home order went into place last month.

Buses, vans, and for-hire vehicles will be used to transport essential workers during the hours the subways are shuttered, the governor said.

## South Asian Arts Resiliency Fund Gains Grassroots Momentum in USA

**NEW YORK (TIP):** As the coronavirus pandemic continues to take its toll on the livelihood of artists and arts organizations across every major discipline, grassroots communities are uniting to show their support for The South Asian Arts Resiliency Fund (SAARF), a grant program created by the India Center Foundation for South Asian artists and arts workers in the U.S. who have been impacted by the economic fallout of COVID-19 because of postponed or canceled performances, events or exhibitions.

Supported by ICF seed money, a crowdfunding campaign and multiple live streaming experiences, the Fund has already raised more than \$25,000, with a targeted goal of \$500,000, which the organization hopes to raise over time from generous support by arts patrons and philanthropic communities. In fact, multiple solo artists and groups, like Third Eye Collective, Non Resident and Kathak Meetup NYC, have already hosted online performances and live stream festivals to benefit the Fund, while other arts/community organizations are sharing information about the program with its patrons.

To date, more than 80 artists and arts workers have applied for a grant through SAARF; their ancestral origins range from across South Asia, including Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and India. Sixty percent of these applicants say they have lost more than 80% of their income due to COVID-19. Applications have also originated from 10 of the 50 states in the United States, primarily from the 'performing arts' field, and within that, predominantly 'dance.'



To date, more than 80 artists and arts workers have applied for a grant through SAARF

"We are humbled by the response SAARF has been getting over the past two weeks, especially from artists, patrons and community groups" said Raoul Bhavnani, one of ICF's Co-Founders. "But we have a long way to go to even make a DENT in repairing some of the havoc this pandemic has wrecked on the lives of the South Asian artist community. We are surviving our respective lockdowns, in part, because of the art we are consuming on a daily basis, whether it be a film or television series, a virtual museum tour or an online live music concert. Our artists' livelihoods have been paused, and they have very few places to turn. We need everyone to pitch in to make this initiative the success it has the potential of becoming for the South Asian arts community."

## Indian American Neera Tanden named to NJ Governor's Restart and Recovery of State Economy Commission



Neera Tanden is President and CEO of the Center for American Progress and the CEO of the Center for American Progress Action Fund

**TRENTON, NJ (TIP):** Neera Tanden, President and CEO of the Center for American Progress and the CEO of the Center for American Progress Action Fund, has been a member of commission announced by New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy charged with advising the administration on the timing and preparation for New Jersey's recovery from the COVID-19 shutdown.

The Governor's Restart and Recovery Commission will be comprised of 21 members, all with a vast wealth of experience in health care, business, finance, academics, and economics and will be chaired by Princeton Professor and former University President Shirley Tilghman and Ken Frazier, Chief Executive Officer of Merck and Co., Inc.

"With this task force we are bringing together some of the sharpest minds our state and nation have to offer," said Governor Murphy. "As I have said from the start, public health creates economic health and these individuals will help us decide when and how to restart the economy to best benefit both."

The Commission will begin virtual meetings immediately as the administration tackles the work of restarting the state and putting New Jerseyans back to work. Among the Commission's first tasks will be to advise the governor on the timing of the restart as it aligns with predetermined public health metrics.

# Indian American Renu Khator Elected to Prestigious American Academy of Arts and Sciences

**HOUSTON (TIP):** Renu Khator, University of Houston System chancellor and UH president since 2008, has been elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in the field of Educational and Academic Leadership, AAAS announced this week. She joins more than 250 exceptionally accomplished artists, scholars, scientists and leaders in the public, nonprofit and private sectors as members of the AAAS class of 2020.

"While recognition from this esteemed organization is personally very gratifying, I am even more pleased with the honor it brings to the University of Houston and UH System, which has given me such a valuable opportunity to



Renu Khator joins more than 250 exceptionally accomplished artists, scholars, scientists and leaders in the public, nonprofit and private sectors as members of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences class of 2020

develop my leadership skills," Khator said. "Being included with such an array of eminent individuals is humbling, and I am proud to join my fellow UH Cougars in the Academy."

Born in Uttar Pradesh, India, Khator is UH System's first woman Chancellor and the first Indian immigrant to head a comprehensive research university in the United States. She earned her bachelor's degree at the University of Kanpur, and her master's and Ph.D. degrees in political science and public administration from Purdue University.

The American Academy of Arts and Sciences represents innovative thinkers in every field, including more than 250 Nobel and Pulitzer Prize winners.

## Indian American Manisha Singh Nominated by Trump as US Envoy to OECD

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** US President Donald J. Trump announced his intent to nominate Manisha Singh, of Florida, to be Representative of the United States of America to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), with the rank of Ambassador.



Manisha Singh is currently the Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs at the State Department

Manisha Singh is currently the Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs at the State Department. She previously served as the Acting Under Secretary of Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment and as a Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Economic, Energy and Business Affairs at the State Department.

Ms. Singh also previously served as Deputy Chief Counsel to the United States Senate Foreign Relations Committee. She was also the Senior Fellow for International Economic Affairs at the American Foreign Policy Council and was a term member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

Ms. Singh's private sector experience includes practicing law at multinational law firms and working in-house at an investment bank. She earned an LL.M. in International Legal Studies from the American University Washington College of Law, a J.D. from the University of Florida College of Law, and a B.A. from the University of Miami. In addition, she studied at the University of Leiden Law School in the Netherlands.

## Indian American Seema Nanda Steps Down as CEO of Democratic National Committee



Seema Nanda who took over as Democratic National Committee Chief Executive Officer in June 2018, has stepped down.

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** Indian-American Seema Nanda has announced her decision to step down as the CEO of the US Democratic National Committee. "After two years, I will be stepping down as CEO of the DNC. I couldn't be prouder of the infrastructure we have built, the primary process we have run, and the team we have built. I look forward to continuing the fight for our democracy and to elect Democrats everywhere" she tweeted.

In June 2018, Democratic National Committee announced Seema Nanda as Chief Executive Officer. As CEO, Seema managed the day-to-day operations of the organization. Seema served on DNC Chair Tom Perez' transition team, which took a fresh look at the committee's operations following the 2016 election and put in place an infrastructure that contributed to wins in 2017 and 2018.

Seema also served as Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer at The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, where she oversees strategy and manages day-to-day operations. Prior to that, Seema was Chief of Staff to then-Secretary Tom Perez at the U.S. Department of Labor.

(Read full story at [www.theindianpanorama.news](http://www.theindianpanorama.news))

## Indian Couple Found Dead in Murder-Suicide in New Jersey



Garima Kothari was found murdered in her apartment and her husband Man Mohan Mall was found dead in an apparent suicide in the Hudson River in Jersey City

**JERSEY CITY (TIP):** Following an autopsy by the Regional Medical Examiner, the cause of death of the 35-year-old Jersey City woman found dead in an apparent murder-suicide on Sunday April 26, Garima Kothari, has been ruled multiple upper body injuries and the manner of death has been ruled homicide. Additionally, the Medical Examiner determined that Ms. Kothari was approximately five months pregnant.

The cause and manner of death for the deceased male, Man Mohan Mall, age 37, of Jersey City, who was found dead in the Hudson River near Exchange Place, is still pending with the Regional Medical Examiner.

On Sunday, April 26, 2020, the Jersey City Police Department responded to a report of a possible suicide attempt in the Hudson River near Montgomery Street in Jersey City. Upon arrival, responding officers found an unresponsive male in the river near Montgomery Street and Exchange Place. The male, later identified as Man Mohan Mall, was pronounced dead at the scene at approximately 7:55 a.m.

(Read full story at [www.theindianpanorama.news](http://www.theindianpanorama.news))

# Indian -Americans have been "extraordinary source of strength during pandemic", says Ambassador Sandhu

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** Applauding the Indian-Americans for their sense of community service and duty, Mr. Sandhu said they have gone above and beyond in extending a helping hand to those who need.

The Indian-American community has been "an extraordinary source of strength during the coronavirus pandemic", India's Ambassador to the US Taranjit Singh Sandhu said Wednesday, April 29, asserting that they have stepped up and shown leadership in these difficult times.

"The Indian community in the United States has been an extraordinary source of strength and support for our Embassy since the time this crisis broke out. You have stepped forward and shown leadership in difficult circumstances and demonstrated the strength of the Indian diaspora," Mr. Sandhu said in a virtual interaction with a group of eminent Indian-American community leaders from across the country.

"You are example not just for India but also for the United States. The selfless service that many of you are providing amongst your local communities in the United States has been appreciated by leaders here and makes me very proud, he said.

"Needless to say, Indian-Americans are leading this country in the fight against Covid19. Whether as healthcare workers; doctors; scientists, business-owners -- you are leading the charge against Covid and your contributions will not go unacknowledged," he said.

Describing them as important

stakeholders in the India-US relationship, he said that the community is the common bond which brings the two countries together. "As global strategic partners, we have close co-operation in all spheres of human activity including scientific and medical research."

Observing that Indian students in the United States have been facing an unpredictable situation due to the lockdown and classes going online, he said he has succeeded in persuading many Universities in allowing them to continue in their accommodation, some were unable to do so due to closure of dormitories.

"When they had no other place to go, Hotel Owners came forward to offer accommodation to stranded students and other short-term visitors. It gives me a great sense of pride that through the pooled resources from all of you, over 5000, such rooms have been arranged. Special thanks to Indian Hotel owners including AAHOA for this," he said.

"When some students did not have enough resources to take care of the daily needs, you came forward to help with provisions and food packets," he said.

The Indian Embassy had reached out to many community doctors in anticipation of the worsening health situation in the United States.

"Many of our stranded Indians here in the United States are elderly, visiting parents. One of the main problems they are facing is shortage of prescription medicines due to their extended stay. When they approached us, due to your support, we were able to connect them

with Indian-American doctors," he said.

In fact, AAPI has set up a dedicated e-mail helpline to assist those in need of medical prescriptions. The AAPI has also tied up with Telemedicine to assist in prescription of medicines. These are only a few among the countless instances where the community has stepped forward, he said.

Sandhu said that many of the community organizations/associations, either individually or jointly as a group, have constituted Task Force/Teams, to provide help.

"I have seen the helpline of NCAIA (National Council of Asian American Associations). Sewa International has been helping out students and other stranded Indians on a range of issues and mobilizing volunteers for assistance," the top Indian diplomat said.

The Indian-American community leaders praised Sandhu for his efforts to connect with the community during this coronavirus pandemic.

"Due credit should be given to the Indian mission under the guidance and leadership of Ambassador Taranjit Singh Sandhu who are doing a great job, tirelessly reaching out to the Indian-American community in this Pandemic" said New York-based Al Mason.

Indian-American Sikh leader Sukhpal Singh Dhanoa, said Ambassador Sandhu has been proactively reaching out to the community during this hour of crisis.

Kalpesh Joshi from AAHOA said that it was very nice of the Ambassador to take this initiative. "I have never seen this extraordinary response from



Ambassador Taranjit Singh Sandhu praised the Indian American community for their selfless service in the difficult times of pandemic

Photo / Jay Mandal-on assignment

government official that they care about Indian citizens overseas and the diaspora," he said.

"The community is doing its best in this hour of crisis. We hope that things get better here and in India. Some (Indian) students really want to go back and some students are scared as to what will happen. We give them moral support," said Joshi, who has been leading the AAHOA efforts to provide accommodation to the stranded students.

(Source: PTI)

## Indian-American wins Republican primary for Ohio's sixth senate district



Indian-American Niraj Antani has won the Republican primary for the US state of Ohio's sixth Senate district. Antani, 29, is currently serving in the Ohio General Assembly as a state representative.

**COLUMBUS, OH (TIP):** Indian-American Niraj Antani has won the Republican primary for the US state of Ohio's sixth Senate district. Antani, 29, is currently serving in the Ohio General Assembly as a state representative.

Antani had nearly 65 per cent of the vote in the Republican primary, according to unofficial results. In the November election, Antani will face Democrat Mark Fogel in the Republican-leaning district. If he wins, Antani would become the first Indian-American to get elected to the Ohio state Senate in history. "I am truly honored to have won the Republican primary election for State Senator! Thankful to have won an overwhelming majority of over 64 per cent despite a competitive three-way race! (Read full story at [www.theindianpanorama.news](http://www.theindianpanorama.news))

## Indian-American Congressman seeks refugee status for Afghan Sikhs, Hindus

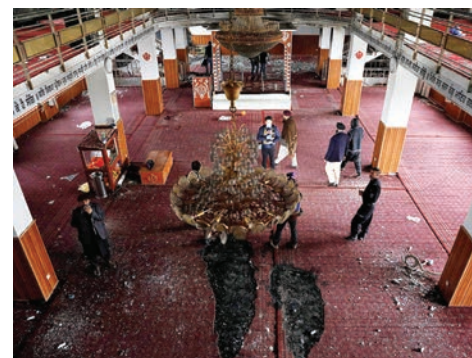


Congressman Ro Khanna has urged the Trump Administration to give refugee status to the minority Sikh and Hindu families in Afghanistan

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** Indian-American Congressman Ro Khanna has urged the Trump Administration to give refugee status to the minority Sikh and Hindu families in Afghanistan who are increasingly facing persecution by terror outfits in the Asian country.

"There are approximately 200 Hindu and Sikh families left in Afghanistan," Khanna said in a letter to the Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and the Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Chad F Wolf, expressing concerns about the health and safety of religious minorities in the war-ravaged nation.

"The US proposed resettling 18,000 refugees in this fiscal year, including up to 5,000 individuals who are persecuted for their religion or other protected grounds. Additionally, up to 7,500 individuals can be referred to the US Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) by a US embassy in any location," he



The gurdwara after the attack in Kabul. A lone Islamic State gunman rampaged through a Sikh house of worship in the heart of the Afghan capital, Kabul, on March 25, killing at least 25 worshippers

wrote. "Because the rampant religious violence against Afghan Sikhs and Hindus poses an existential threat for them, I urge the US Embassy in Kabul to refer Sikhs and Hindus still in Afghanistan for emergency refugee protection under the USRAP and for the Department of State and Department of Homeland Security to accept this referral without objection to ensure their safety," Mr. Khanna said.

(Read full story at [www.theindianpanorama.news](http://www.theindianpanorama.news))

## Indian American Lawmaker Leads Special Order on Importance of U.S. Global Leadership During COVID-19



Rep Bera also strongly recommended that the U.S. must continue to lead on global health

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** Rep. Ami Bera, M.D. (D-CA) joined Rep. Ted Yoho (R-FL) on April 28 in leading a virtual Special Order to highlight the importance of U.S. global leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Several decades of leadership and investment in global health have not only saved the lives of people across the world, but have proved vital to protecting the health, security, and economic interests of Americans within our own borders. In our interconnected world, it can take 36 hours for a virus to travel from a remote village to all six continents. (Read full story at [www.theindianpanorama.news](http://www.theindianpanorama.news))

## Coronavirus Testing by Pharmacy and retail chains

**NEW YORK (TIP):** As the coronavirus outbreak continues to take a toll in the U.S., major pharmacy chains - including CVS, Rite Aid and Walgreens - as well as big retailers such as Kroger and Walmart are stepping up efforts to offer testing options in local communities. All tests are free to patients who meet eligibility criteria established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Typical symptoms of COVID-19, the disease caused by the new coronavirus, include shortness of breath, fever and cough. Some retailers also are extending testing options to nonsymptomatic health care workers and first responders.

In general, patients seeking testing must first undergo an online screening process to determine eligibility and secure an appointment. Once at a testing site, usually arriving by car, the patient will be asked to self-administer a nose swab under the guidance of a pharmacist or other health care professional. Patients typically remain in their vehicles during testing. Some test results are delivered on-site; most, however, are delivered later by phone or email.

Michael Mina, an assistant professor of epidemiology at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, raises concerns about the effectiveness of self-administered nasal swab tests. "There's some evidence that it does not work as well," says Mina, who specializes in immunology and infectious diseases. "It might have 15 percent loss in sensitivity, for example. We're trying to understand maybe saliva works better in self-swabbing than nasal pharyngeal swab."

In the rush to combat the coronavirus spread, the Food and Drug Administration has granted what's called emergency use authorization (EUA) to coronavirus tests, which means the tests have not gone through the typically rigorous regulatory approval process. Some retailers are using a rapid test developed by Abbott called ID Now, which can deliver results on the spot. Others are using tests that require swabs to be sent off to central labs for processing to get test results.

"The normal solution that the swab gets placed back into after being taken seems to inhibit some of the Abbott ID Now process, and there's a loss of sensitivity there," says Mina, who favors tests that are processed in central labs. (Source: AARP)

# Science of Spirituality/SKRM Feeds Tens of Thousands During India's Nationwide Lockdown

**NEW YORK / NEW DELHI (TIP):** As the world comes to grips with a global pandemic of epic proportions, countries have taken strong measures to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus. On March 24, a nationwide lockdown was instituted in India in an effort to protect its 1.3 billion-strong population by breaking the cycle of infection and containing the outbreak. However, as declared by Dr Tedrous Ghebreyesus, director general of the World Health Organization (WHO), "these steps can have unintended consequences for the poorest and most vulnerable within a population." In India, millions of migrant workers dependent on daily wages have been impacted. Government programs are being implemented to ensure food and essentials reach the most vulnerable at this time.

Complementing the national efforts, under the leadership and guidance of Sant Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj, spiritual head of US based Science of Spirituality (SOS)/Sawan Kirpal Ruhani Mission (SKRM), SOS volunteers across the country have mobilized to set up food kitchens and food drives, bringing warm meals and basic essentials to individuals in need. From Delhi to Jalandhar, Amritsar to Hyderabad, Mumbai to Dehradun, SOS volunteers, while practicing social distancing, have united to prepare and package meals and supplies at SOS Centers around the country. These packages are then distributed in collaboration with the local government authorities on a daily basis as a means of alleviating hunger within the communities. With over 3000 satellite centers around the world, and over 2000 centers in India alone, the organization's large footprint affords it the expansive reach necessary to feed tens of thousands during these challenging times.

Service to humanity or seva, as it is known in Hindi, is a core tenet of Science of Spirituality, a worldwide spiritual organization dedicated to transforming lives through meditation. In the words of Sant Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj, service is "the sweetest fruit on the tree of love." It is an acknowledgement of the fundamental unity underlying our existence, and when carried out with kindness, compassion, and in a spirit of selflessness, such service has the power to change the world, one heart at a time.

This spirit of selflessness, kindness, and generosity has been growing around the world as individuals and communities embrace their common humanity and find creative ways to help each other at this time. So much so that when the definitive history of the coronavirus pandemic is written, it will not only relate a story of loss and despair, but also one of human unity, where we came together as a global community to meet one of the greatest challenges of our time.



Getting ready to load the van



Distributing food in Ahmednagar, Maharashtra



Distributing food in Ahmedabad, Gujarat

For more information about Sant Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj and Science of Spirituality, visit [www.sos.org](http://www.sos.org)

## AAPI writes to President of US, Governors and Lawmakers urging for Plasma Drive

**NEW YORK (TIP):** The Corona virus COVID-19 pandemic is the defining global health crisis of our time and the greatest challenge we have faced since World War II. Since its emergence in Asia late last year, the virus has spread to every continent except Antarctica. Cases are rising daily around the globe with no effective remedy or vaccination found to deal with this deadly virus.

"There is enormous anxiety and numerous questions among general public about the pandemic and the havoc it's creating. In the past few week, AAPI has taken several initiatives to educate its members and the public, and to provide much needed help and support through helping obtain much needed PPEs and distributing them to medical institutions around the country," said Dr. Suresh Reddy, President of AAPI.

As Convalescent Plasma appears to be the promising treatment for Covid

patients, AAPI has launched the Plasma Drive from patients who have been cured of COVID-19 and are now without Corona-virus related symptoms for at least the past two weeks. AAPI has created three separate committees on Convalescent Plasma treatment.

"An official letter of recommendation on Convalescent Plasma Therapy from AAPI has been sent the President of the United states, state Governors and to all members of US Congress and Senators. Thank you all for your efforts to reach our goal," said Dr. Sudhakar Jonnalagadda, President-Elect of AAPI.

AAPI's Covid Plasma Government Policies Committee is being headed by Dr. Dalsukh Madia with the task of "Writing Letters to the President, Governors and Senators and other Government officials urging them to encourage individuals and medical facilities to harness this much needed resource.

AAPI's Covid Plasma Local Hospital Administrators committee is being chaired by Dr. Binod Sinha, who will contact the hospital administrators for the policy implementation in all the hospitals in the country.

AAPI's Covid Plasma Collection committee is led by Dr. Madhavi Gorusu, who is responsible for coordinating with the Red Cross and other agencies to work with Plasma Donations and donors.

"Following the recommendations for disbursements of AAPI Covid 19 funds. approved by the fund committee, comprising of Dr. Jayesh Shah (chair), Dr. Suresh Reddy, Dr. Seema Arora, Dr. Sajani Shah, Dr. Sudhakar Johnlaggada, Dr. Anupama Gotimukula, Dr. Chander Kapasi, Dr. Surendra Purohit, AAPI has distributed funds to the locations based on local needs," Dr. Seema Arora, Chair of AAPI's BOT, announced here. (Read full story at [www.theindianpanorama.news](http://www.theindianpanorama.news))

# TRIBECA 2020 VIRTUAL FEST: NARRATIVE FILMS

By Mabel Pais

**"While we cannot gather in person to lock arms, laugh, and cry, it's important for us to stay socially and spiritually connected. Tribeca is about resiliency, and we fiercely believe in the power of artists to bring us together. We were founded after the devastation of 9/11 and it's in our DNA to bring communities together through the arts." - Jane Rosenthal, Co-Founder - Tribeca Film Festival**

**TFF 2020 DEBUTS SELECT VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING, BRINGING AUDIENCES & STORYTELLERS TOGETHER**

Here are highlights of some narrative films available.

## **BLOOD AND GLORY**

**DIR/WR/CO-PROD: SATINDER KAUR | US | 12M | NARRATIVE SHORT**

**"This story is very close to my heart because I'm a combat veteran myself. I joined the Army when I was 18 and deployed to Iraq when I was 21. Transitioning back to civilian life was difficult, but I was lucky to have a community and resources. I wrote "Blood and Glory" to explore this intersectionality of invisibility through film. - Satinder Kaur, director**

### **FILM FACTS**

**Satinder Kaur (Director) - U.S. Army Combat Veteran and**

**Jomarla Melancon (Lead actress) - Navy Veteran**

**- More than 85% Female crew**

**- Powerful Women of Color in lead roles**

"BLOOD AND GLORY" was the grand prize winner in Women in Media's CAMERAderie Initiative.

"Blood and Glory" is a drama about the friendship between two homeless veterans living on the streets of Los Angeles. Jackie is a dreamer and a hustler who is trying to get her life back on track. She also takes care of her battle buddy Rosa, who suffers from debilitating PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). The day that Jackie finally gets a job interview, she wakes up with a super heavy period. Without money for pads or tampons, Jackie has to figure out how to get through the day without letting her blood stain her clothes or her dignity.

Satinder Kaur, U.S. Army veteran, writer and director, loves to write about female friendship and explore themes of human resilience and transformation against all odds. She won the Grand Prize in 'Women in Media' CAMERAderie initiative 2019 for her short film "Blood and Glory." In partnership with Ensaaf, she spearheaded the largest human rights video advocacy efforts in Punjab, India, by interviewing survivors of torture and families impacted by enforced disappearances.

For more information on 'Women In Media,' visit [womennmedia.com](http://womennmedia.com). To learn more about Satinder Kaur, visit [satikaur.com](http://satikaur.com)

To learn more the Tribeca Film Festival, visit [tribecafilm.com](http://tribecafilm.com)

## ASIA, World Premiere

**DIR: RUTHY PRIBAR | US | 1H26M | NARRATIVE FEATURE**

**"Ruthy Pribar makes an assured feature debut, balancing sobriety with emotional intensity in 'Asia.' The maturity of the directorial voice is evident in its clear-eyed, rigorously unsentimental assessment of a shattering situation." - David Rooney, "The Hollywood**



Jomarla Melancon (foreground) with Shara McGlenn

## **Reporter"**

"This is a film about motherhood, sacrifice, and love. It's about the ability and the choice to take responsibility for another person's life. Even when it means letting go." - Ruthy Pribar, Director (April 2020)

Developed in the prestigious Cannes Film Festival residency program; Featuring Shira Haas star of the Netflix series "Shtisel" and "Unorthodox."

Asia's (Alena Yiv) motherhood has always been an ongoing struggle rather than an obvious instinct. Becoming a mother at a very early age has shaped Asia's relationship with her teenage daughter Vika (Shira Haas). Despite living together, Asia and Vika barely interact with one another. Asia concentrates on her job as a nurse while Vika hangs out at the skate-park with her friends. Their routine is shaken when Vika's health deteriorates rapidly. Asia must step in and become the mother Vika so desperately needs. Vika's illness turns out to be an opportunity to reveal the great love within this small family unit.

Ruthy Pribar's work focuses on delicate moments of human emotions and interactions. "ASIA" is her debut feature film. To learn more, visit [tribecafilm.com](http://tribecafilm.com)

## STATELESS (APÁTRIDA), World Premiere

**DIR: MICHÈLE STEPHENSON | CAN | 1H36M | NARRATIVE FEATURE**

**A Race Against Time. A Time Against Race.**

**"My objective is to connect the film to a network of committed partners in the Caribbean region, Latin America, the US, and internationally, to utilize the film as a platform for their work on protecting the rights of migrants and citizens, and to deepen people's understanding of the intersection between anti-Black racism, migration, and citizenship rights." - Michèle Stephenson**

**FROM EMMY-NOMINATED AND SUNDANCE WINNING DIRECTOR MICHÈLE STEPHENSON**

"Stateless," director Michèle Stephenson's new documentary traces the complex tributaries of history and present-day politics, as state-sanctioned racism seeps into mundane offices, living room meetings, and street protests.

"Stateless," filmed with a chiaroscuro effect and richly imbued with elements of magical realism, combines gritty hidden-camera footage with the legend of a young woman fleeing brutal violence to flip the narrative axis, revealing the depths of institutionalized oppression.



People crossing river between Haiti and Dominican Republic

Photos / Courtesy TFF-2020

In 1937, tens of thousands of Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent were exterminated by the Dominican army, based on anti-black hatred fomented by the Dominican government. Fast-forward to 2013, the Dominican Republic's Supreme Court stripped the citizenship of anyone with Haitian parents, retroactive to 1929. The ruling rendered more than 200,000 people stateless, without nationality, identity or a homeland. In this dangerous climate, a young attorney named Rosa Iris mounts a grassroots campaign, challenging electoral corruption and advocating for social justice. To learn more, visit [tribecafilm.com](http://tribecafilm.com)

## PACIFIED, New York Premiere

**DIR/WRIT: PAXTON WINTERS | BRAZIL/US | 2H | NARRATIVE FEATURE**

**GOLDEN SHELL WINNER - SAN SEBASTIAN FILM FESTIVAL, 2019**

"PACIFIED," the new film by American filmmaker Paxton Winters was born of a seven-year creative collaboration between him and the community of 'Morro dos Prazeres' - a favela in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil - where he's resided for the past 8 years.

"PACIFIED" offers a bracingly intimate portrait of a family trying to find peace in the ever-shifting urban battlefield they call home.

Tati (Cassia Gil), is an introspective 13-year-old girl living in a Brazilian 'favela' (a tight-knit community within a slum or shantytown located within or on the outskirts of the country's large cities). Tati (Cassia Gil), struggles to connect with her estranged father and former leader of the 'favela', Jaca (Bukassa Kabengele), after he is released from prison in the turbulent wake of the Rio Olympics. As Brazilian "Pacification" Police battle to maintain a tenuous occupation of the surrounding Rio 'favelas,' Tati and Jaca must navigate the clashing forces threatening to derail their hope for the future. Tati's mother Andrea (Débora Nascimento) wants to escape with Tati but struggles due to her drug addiction. Her family and living situation changes abruptly when Jaca is released from prison and returns. His presence creates tension between the community and the new leaders that have taken his place.

The film takes place during the Olympics in Brazil, when the country's police and government implemented an operation called pacification, aiming to quell violence in the 'favelas' by sending armed police forces to these neighborhoods. What this policy created was a complex layer of violence that was mostly sustained by the criminalization of poverty. To learn more, visit [tribecafilm.com](http://tribecafilm.com)

(Mabel Pais writes on Social Issues, The Arts and Entertainment, Health & Wellness, and Spirituality)



By G. Parthasarathy

**"The US is now going through a situation, where rather than dealing seriously with immense challenges, its President is virtually at war with his own advisers and America's best experts. He is isolated and opposed even within the White House, because of his readiness to back Conservative State Governors and his party's right-wing, which wants a rapid drawdown and end of restrictions on the movement of people."**

When PM Modi visited Houston for his 'Howdy, Modi!' Summit last year, an important item on India's agenda was to promote energy cooperation by investments and imports of natural gas from the US. New Delhi was putting in place plans to diversify its energy imports, as the earlier monopoly of traditional exporters like Saudi Arabia, Iran and Iraq was coming to an end, with the discovery of vast reserves of shale gas in countries like the US and Canada. Russia was also emerging aggressively on the world stage with its vast energy resources, and arrangements were underway for increasing imports of Russian natural gas by India. The OPEC countries were finding it difficult to charge extortionist sums for oil and gas. Energy cooperation with India was an important item during Trump's visit to India last year. Saudi Arabia and the UAE, meanwhile, had agreed to make substantial investments in developing the oil and gas sector in India.

Global oil production was keeping pace with international demand, even before the Covid crisis broke. It was, however, becoming evident that with Russia and the US entering the global supply chain, OPEC would be compelled to cede greater space in determining oil prices. Things reached the breaking point when Saudi Arabia Crown Prince Salman decided to challenge Russia's demands for higher prices by suddenly increasing production a few weeks ago. He bit off more than he could chew, as Russia responded with increased production which sent global prices on a downward spiral. Coming under pressure from US producers of shale oil and gas, President Trump, who needs their financial support for the forthcoming presidential elections, caved into the pressures. He forced Saudi Arabia and Russia to reach a compromise that would not undermine the US oil and gas industries.

Not surprisingly, the agreement brokered by Trump amidst the usual fanfare he is given to, soon collapsed.

AS I SEE IT

# Disasters of Trump's Making

The President has taken a series of wrong decisions, alienating even the White House



*Me first: Trump's sole priority today is to ensure that he is re-elected.*

What has followed is an unprecedented fall in global oil prices, which has shaken not only major traditional producers like Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait and other Gulf monarchies but also countries like Iraq, Nigeria, and Venezuela. Global oil consumption arises primarily from road, rail, and air transport, which are today used minimally, or not at all. Oil storages worldwide have hardly any capacity left. While OPEC was expected to reduce supplies because of falling demand, global demand has fallen well below what was expected.

Trump's efforts to provide some respite to his potential electoral backers in the US oil industry are now in tatters. Large sections of the oil and gas industry are now fast running out of potential buyers. Covid has resulted in the prices falling from \$60 a barrel in January to around \$20 a barrel. It is going to take quite some time before the US, Russia and OPEC can restore some semblance of earlier normalcy in prices. With over six million Indians living in Arab countries, our foreign exchange reserves received \$83 billion remittances last year. These remittances are expected to fall by 20% this year. We will be able to balance our books, because the drastic fall in demand globally will significantly reduce the massive amounts spent annually on energy imports.

What is adding to the problems that have accompanied the oil crisis is the whimsical approach of President Trump. His sole priority today is to ensure that he is re-elected President. When the crisis broke

out in January, he refused to take any action against China, with his attention then focused on a trade 'deal' with it. Covid had picked up momentum by December 2019, yet, on January 24, he proclaimed: 'China has been working very hard to contain the coronavirus. The United States greatly appreciates their efforts and transparency.' Adding to the confusion in the US was his propensity to make sweeping proposals, which were at total variance with reality. One of these proposals, which he initially pushed, despite strong expert opposition, was his belief that the virus could be eliminated by people consuming hydroxychloroquine. Much time and efforts were expended in importing large quantities of this drug, to little or no avail.

The US is now going through a situation, where rather than dealing seriously with immense challenges, its President is virtually at war with his own advisers and America's best experts. He is isolated and opposed even within the White House, because of his readiness to back Conservative State Governors and his party's right-wing, which wants a rapid drawdown and end of restrictions on the movement of people.

Xi Jinping, meanwhile, appears determined to replace the US as the most formidable power. There should be no illusion that China will give minimal strategic space to India in a world order it dominates. PM Modi has handled the diplomatic crisis following the coronavirus challenge skillfully. India played a constructive role in persuading Saudi Arabia to convene both a summit and a meeting of health ministers of G20 - the most representative global economic grouping. Modi is among the very few leaders in the world who has a good personal equation with the mercurial Trump. One is looking forward to a carefully calibrated phase to reduce the rigors of the present restrictions on movement and economic activity in India. While global industrial and energy cooperation can realistically move only in a measured and slow manner, India can be very satisfied if its agricultural sector successfully meets national needs. How we handle the coming harvest seasons is of crucial importance. One hopes that in the meantime, research by scientists across the world will find remedies to overcome the dangerous challenges we now face from Covid.

*(The author is Chancellor, Jammu Central University & former High Commissioner to Pakistan)*

## GUEST COMMENT

### India must protect its freedoms, and come down heavily on religious violence

Religious freedom is of paramount importance, not because it is about religion, but because it is about freedom. The characterization by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) of India as a country of particular concern, in its annual report, is not entirely surprising, considering its dim and known views about sectarian violence and aggravating governmental measures over the last year. The Indian government not only repudiated the report but also ridiculed the USCIRF.

## Religion and freedom: On India and communal violence

The autonomous, bipartisan commission's influence over any U.S. executive action is limited and occasional but its presumption of global authority appears amusingly expansive. Whether or not the U.S. government acts on its recommendation to impose targeted sanctions on Indian government agencies and officials depends on American strategic interests. The U.S. has used arguments of freedom, democracy, tolerance, and transparency as tools in its strategic pursuits, but there is no proof of any uniform or predictable pattern of enforcement of such moral attributes. The process can be selective and often arbitrary in spotlighting countries. Mirroring this pattern, India selectively approaches global opinions on itself,

embracing and celebrating laudatory ones and rejecting inconvenient ones. The frantic, and relatively successful, efforts to raise its Ease of Doing Business ranking by the World Bank is a case in point. Many of these reports have a circulatory life - the USCIRF report quotes U.N. Special Rapporteurs to buttress its point on the discriminatory outcome of the National Register of Citizens in Assam. Overall, such reports contribute to the construction of an image of a country, and the Indian government is cognizant of this pattern. In March, the Indian government told Niti Aayog to track 32 global indices and engage with the bodies that measure them, to advance reform and growth.

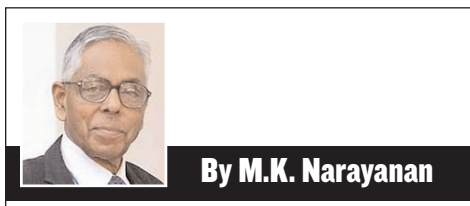
India advertises itself as a multi-

religious democracy and as an adherent to global norms of rule of law. It also aspires to be on the table of global rule making. For a country with such stated ambitions, its record on religious freedom as reflected through events of the last one year is deeply disconcerting. The catalogue of religious violence, incitement and wrecking of the rule of law in several parts of the country remains an unsettling fact. The partisan nature of the ruling dispensation is also difficult to wish away. Reputation is important for a country's economic development and global standing but beyond that instrumental perspective, rule of law and communal harmony are essential for any functioning democracy.

*(The Hindu)*



# The script of disruption and a new order



By M.K. Narayanan

**“The geopolitical fallout of this pandemic could be still more serious. One distinct possibility is that COVID-19 would effectively put paid to the existing global order that has existed since the late 1940s. The United States which is already being touted in some circles as a ‘failing’ state, will be compelled to cede ground. Weakened economically and politically after COVID-19 has ravaged the nation, the U.S.’s capacity to play a critical role in world affairs is certain to diminish.”**

The COVID-19 pandemic is unprecedented, involving as it does far too many variables. The very complexity of the novel coronavirus leads to radical uncertainty. Hence, it is unlikely that the world will ever be the same again. Abnormal could well become the new normal.

Pandemics have often changed the world and reshaped human society. Empires have collapsed. Commentators are already talking of fundamental alterations in governance and business norms. What is left unsaid - and likely to pose an even bigger challenge - is the extent to which the pandemic will impact human values and conduct. There is already concern that a diminution in human values could occur, and with this, the concept of an international community might well cease to exist. Each nation is tending to look inwards, concentrating on its narrowly defined national interests.

## Institutions under fire

It is singularly unfortunate that at a time like this, existing international institutions such as the United Nations, the United Nations Security Council and the World Health Organization (WHO) are seen to have failed to measure up to the grave challenge posed by the pandemic.

While the UN Security Council is under attack for being slow in dealing with a situation that appears, at least on the surface, far graver than any military threat in recent decades, WHO has been tarred with the charge of bias and of grossly underestimating the nature of the epidemic. That prestigious global institutions should have been singled out for attack at this time speaks volumes about the mood prevailing across the world.

There are many other aspects of the COVID-19 crisis that will drastically impact the globe. On the economic front, the World Bank has already predicted negative growth for most nations. India's growth forecast for the current fiscal year has been put at 1.5% to 2.8%. Contraction of the economy and the loss of millions of jobs across all segments will further complicate this situation.

What is likely to change even more dramatically are certain other aspects relating to political management and security. Both terms are set to gain new meanings. The role of the state as an enforcer of public good will almost certainly become greatly enhanced. The dominant imperative would be to not put limits on the role of the state even where the situation may not be as grave as the present one. Many pieces of legislation of yesteryears that had been relegated to the archives - they were perceived to be anachronistic in a modern democratic set-up - may get a new lease of life. Some pieces of legislation such as the Disaster Management Act already reflect this reality today. Other pieces of legislation could follow in its wake.

This trend is already becoming evident to some extent across the world. Europe has shown a willingness to sacrifice personal liberties in favor of greater state control.

There are no serious protests over the fact that many of the powers being vested in the instruments of state in democracies today, to meet the current challenge, are eerily similar to those already practiced by authoritarian regimes such as China.

## China in the spotlight

Far-reaching changes can also be anticipated in the realm of geo-economics and geopolitics. The world needs to prepare for a sea change. One nation, viz. China, is presently seeking to take advantage of and benefit from the problems faced by the rest of the world in the wake of the epidemic. Already one of the most prominent nations of the world and an important player in international institutions, China remains totally unfazed by the stigma that the current world pandemic owes a great deal to its negligence - the first identified and detected COVID-19 victim in Wuhan was on December 1, 2019, but it was only in the second week of January 2020, that China sounded the alarm. More importantly, it is seeking to convert its ‘failure’ into a significant opportunity. This is Sino-centrism at its best, or possibly its worst.

Already indispensable as the world's supplier of manufactured goods, China



*Across the globe, the geopolitical and geo-economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic could be serious*

now seeks to benefit from the fact of its ‘early recovery’ to take advantage of the travails of the rest of the world, by using its manufacturing capability to its geo-economic advantage. Simultaneously, it seeks to shift from being a Black Swan (responsible for the pandemic), to masquerade as a White one, by offering medical aid and other palliatives to several Asian and African countries to meet their current pandemic threat. In turn, it seeks to gain a geopolitical advantage by this action.

China also seems to be preparing for the eventuality that the current pandemic could hollow out the financial viability of many companies, institutions and banks across the world. There are enough reports of China's intentions to acquire financial assets and stakes in banks and companies across the world, taking advantage of the scaled-down value of their assets to support this. India seems to have woken up only recently to this threat, after the Peoples' Bank of China acquired a 1% stake in India's HDFC, taking advantage of the sharp decline in the price of HDFC stocks. Across the world, meanwhile, the clamor against China's hostile takeover bids is becoming stronger. Several countries apart from India, such as Australia and Germany, have begun to restrict Chinese foreign direct investment in companies and financial institutions in their countries, recognizing the inherent danger of a possible Chinese hostile takeover of their critical assets.

This may not, however, be adequate to checkmate China, which is poised to dominate the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), thus enabling it to exploit market access across the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, East Asian nations, Australia and New Zealand. Together with its Belt and Road Initiative, which seeks to combine regional connectivity alongside gaining a virtual economic and substantial stranglehold across Asia, China is ostensibly preparing the way for a China-centric multilateral globalization framework.

## A faltering West

The geopolitical fallout of this pandemic could be still more serious.

One distinct possibility is that COVID-19 would effectively put paid to the existing global order that has existed since the late 1940s. The United States which is already being touted in some circles as a ‘failing’ state, will be compelled to cede ground. Weakened economically and politically after COVID-19 has ravaged the nation, the U.S.'s capacity to play a critical role in world affairs is certain to diminish. The main beneficiary of this geopolitical turnaround is likely to be China, a country that does not quite believe in playing by the rules of international conduct. Europe, in the short and medium term, will prove incapable of defining and defending its common interests, let alone having any influence in world affairs. Germany, which may still retain some of its present strength, is already turning insular, while both France and a post-Brexit United Kingdom will be out of the reckoning as of now.

## West Asia and India

Coming to West Asia, both Saudi Arabia and Iran are set to face difficult times. The oil price meltdown will aggravate an already difficult situation across the region. There may be no victors, but Israel may be one country that is in a position to exploit this situation to its advantage. In the meantime, the economic downturn greatly reduces India's room for maneuver. In South Asia, it faces the prospect of being isolated, with the Chinese juggernaut winning Beijing new friends and contacts across a region deeply impacted by the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Likewise, India's leverage in West Asia - already greatly diminished - will suffer further, with oil prices going down and the Indian expatriate community (who are among the hardest hit by this downturn) out on a limb. Many of the latter may seek repatriation back to the host country, substantially reducing the inflow of foreign funds to India from the region.

*(The author is a former National Security Adviser and a former Governor of West Bengal)*

## UNICEF warns of health crisis for kids in South Asia

**UNITED NATIONS (TIP):** South Asia could face another health emergency if the unimmunised or partially immunised children in the region — nearly 4.5 million of whom live in India, Pakistan and Afghanistan — do not receive their life-saving vaccine shots due to the COVID-19 lockdowns, the UNICEF has warned.

Sporadic outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases, including measles and diphtheria, have already been seen in parts of Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal, the UN Children's Fund said.

"With lockdowns in place as a part of the novel coronavirus response, routine immunisations have been severely disrupted, and parents are increasingly reluctant to take their children to health centres for routine jabs," it said.

"Vaccine stocks are running dangerously low in some countries of the region as supply chains have been disrupted with travel bans and cancelled flights. The manufacturing of the vaccines has also been disrupted, creating additional shortages," Regional Health Advisor for UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA) Paul Rutter said.

"As long as frontline health workers take the appropriate precautions, particularly washing their hands, there is no reason not to vaccinate — in fact, it is crucial that vaccination continues," Rutter said. — PTI

## Virus pushes Indonesia zoo animals to brink of starvation

**JAKARTA (TIP):** Thousands of animals, including endangered Sumatran tigers and Bornean orangutans, are facing starvation at Indonesia's zoos as the global pandemic pushes shuttered facilities toward collapse, officials say.

Some 60 cash-strapped animal parks — home to roughly 70,000 creatures — across the Southeast Asian archipelago have been closed since mid-March and most say they have only enough food until the middle of May. "If a few more months pass and we don't get any aid from the government or other international organisations, then with a heavy heart we'll have to feed herbivores... to the carnivores," Syafi'i said. "Most zoos relied on ticket sales so when they closed everything collapsed," said Indonesian Zoo Association spokesman Sulhan Syafi'i. "We've had to rely on creativity to survive," he added.

"If a few more months pass and we don't get any aid from the government or other international organisations, then with a heavy heart we'll have to feed herbivores... to the carnivores," Syafi'i said. Zoo keepers have taken up the task of collecting grass and plants to boost food stocks for giraffes and other herbivores. AFP

# Pak PM warns coronavirus crisis could continue for months as tally rises to over 16,000

**ISLAMABAD (TIP):** Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Thursday warned that the coronavirus crisis could continue for months and lockdown was not a solution to the pandemic, as the total number of the COVID-19 infections rose to 16,117 with 358 deaths so far in the country.

"We don't know if the current situation will continue for six months or a year," Khan said while addressing the media along with his top advisors.

"I know that the worst hit due to the lockdown will be poor."

Khan said the government so far disbursed 81 billion rupees among 6.6 million deserving families under Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme.

He said the third category of the programme covered all provinces and Sindh was given the maximum relief funds under the Ehsaas programme.

He said the COVID-19 brought major devastation in countries like the United States and Italy, but the circumstances are quite different in Pakistan. He said the death rate in the country from the virus was lower than feared.

Khan said the COVID-19 Tigers Force would be made operational from next week and would be asked to go the rural areas and help the people.

Planning Minister Asad Umar said that the coronavirus was still under control in the country.

"It is true that we have a big number of cases and deaths. The number of deaths will increase in the coming days but our situation is not as bad as other



countries," he said.

He said that easing of the lockdown after May 9 will depend on whether people were following the restrictions and social distancing measures or not.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of National Health Service said that Pakistan's coronavirus cases jumped to 16,117.

It showed that Punjab reported 6,061 cases, Sindh 6,053, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa 2,313, Balochistan 978, Gilgit-Baltistan 333, Islamabad 313 and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir 66 cases.

It said that 12 more patients died on Thursday, taking the death total toll to 358. So far 4,105 patients had recovered. The authorities so far conducted

174,160 tests, including 8,249 on 29 April. The ministry also said that local transmission was 84 per cent and foreign travel 16 per cent.

The government said that 3,560 patients were admitted across the country in 717 hospitals with COVID-19 facilities, while others were isolated at their homes.

Meanwhile, the aviation ministry said that the suspension of domestic airline operation will continue until May 7.

Separately, Islamabad administration sealed some areas in I-10 Sector after several cases of the coronavirus were found there. PTI

## Suicide bombing in Kabul province kills 3, wounds 15

**Not yet clear who was responsible for the blast**

**KABUL (TIP):** A suicide bombing in Kabul province not far from Afghanistan's capital killed three people and wounded 15 on Wednesday, the Ministry of Interior said.

"A suicide bomber detonated his explosives among civilians in Reshkhora area of Char Asiab district of Kabul on Wednesday morning," Ministry of Interior spokesman Tariq Arian said in a statement, referring to the district which is about 11km from Kabul city.

It was not immediately clear who was responsible for the blast, which came during the Islamic holy month of Ramzan, and as the coronavirus pandemic and US-led efforts to broker peace talks between the insurgent Taliban and the Afghan government have left many calling for a ceasefire and reduction in violence. — Reuters

## Bangladesh's tallest man passes away

**DHAKA (TIP):** Bangladesh's tallest man — 24-year-old Jinnat Ali — died on Tuesday after a long battle with brain tumour. Jinnat, also the world's second tallest man with the height of 8 feet 6 inches, died while receiving treatment at the neurosurgery department of Chittagong Medical College & Hospital on Tuesday, Dhaka Tribune reported.

Born in 1996, Jinnat was diagnosed brain tumour some five years ago. He, however, refused to go for an operation for the disease, the paper said.

He was also suffering from diabetes and other ailments.

"He was first admitted to the neurology department of CMCH on Sunday. Later, he was placed on life support at the neurosurgery department of the hospital as his condition worsened," Jinnat's brother Ilias Ali was quoted as saying by the paper.

Citing family sources, the paper said that Jinnat's body suddenly started to grow abnormally at the age of 11 and continued to grow further with his age. PTI

## Bangladesh cleric tests positive for Covid-19 after leading Ramzan prayers

**DHAKA (TIP):** A Muslim cleric has tested positive for coronavirus after he conducted the Ramzan prayers for a group of nearly two dozen people at a local mosque in southwest Bangladesh, according to a media report.

The cleric led the prayers at a mosque in Adadanga village in Magura district on Saturday and was found to be infected with the disease the following day, bdnews24 reported.

According to the report, authorities are making a list of around 20 to 25 people who attended the prayers and will be tested for the virus.

Tanveer Rahman, chief executive officer of Shalikka sub-district, was quoted as saying in the report that the cleric's Bagharpara Pashchima village, which is one-and-a-half kilometres from the mosque, had been put under lockdown following the discovery.

Bangladesh reported a total of 5,416 confirmed Covid-19 cases and 145 deaths till Sunday. PTI

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## No respite for US; 2,500 die in 24 hours

**Death toll crosses 62,000 mark | 35 states unveil reopening plans as Trump talks of better days ahead**

WASHINGTON (TIP): The US recorded 2,502 coronavirus deaths in the past 24 hours, according to the latest tally reported by Johns Hopkins University on April 30. After two days of a relative easing in the toll on Sunday and Monday, the numbers have spiked again in the past two days.

The reported US death toll on Wednesday, April 29 crept past 60,000, a figure, which President Donald Trump had suggested in recent weeks, might be the total death count. He had cited the estimate as a sign of relative success after the White House previously warned the US could suffer 1,00,000 to 2,40,000 deaths.

In New York state, the epicentre of the pandemic in the US, nearly 3,00,000 coronavirus cases have been reported, while its daily death toll fell to the lowest since early March, according to Governor Andrew Cuomo. In his daily briefing, Cuomo said that with 4,585 additional cases, the state's overall tally reached 299,691, and the daily death toll fell to 330, the lowest since early March. With as many as 35 of the 50 American states unveiling formal reopening plans, President Trump expressed confidence that "much better days" were ahead.

It was on April 16 that Trump laid out a plan for opening up America again. "And we sit here today. I am informed that 35 states have already released formal opening plans many of which are consulting directly with our team here in the administration and we are going to continue to work with all of them," Vice-President Pence said. (Agencies)

## Indian-origin girl names NASA's 1st Mars copter



Rupani came up with the name 'Ingenuity' during "name the rover" contest.

WASHINGTON (TIP): NASA's first Mars helicopter has a name now and the credit goes to 17-year-old Indian-origin girl Vaneeza Rupani. Rupani, a high school junior from Northport, Alabama, earned the honor of naming the helicopter after she submitted her essay into NASA's "Name the Rover" contest. Destined to become the first aircraft to attempt powered flight on another planet, NASA's Mars Helicopter officially named: Ingenuity, as suggested by Rupani. While NASA announced in March that its next rover would be named Perseverance based on seventh-grader Alexander Mather's essay, the agency decided to also choose a name for the helicopter. (Read full story at [www.theindianpanorama.news](http://www.theindianpanorama.news))

# Jobless claims top 30 million as coronavirus continues to devastate economy

**Around 18 percent of the workforce is currently unemployed. Additional 3.8 million more workers file for unemployment, total now exceeds 30 million**

WASHINGTON (TIP): Nationwide lockdowns led to the abrupt shutdown of the economy in mid-March, leaving millions of people scrambling to file for unemployment insurance. The sheer volume of applicants overwhelmed the system, with many states reporting website outages and hourslong delays on telephone helplines. That has led to inaccurate accounting of the jobless, with many people reporting waits of six weeks or more.

States have ramped up staff at workforce centers, with New York adding 1,000 more workers and Texas tripling the size of its phone center staff. But that is still not enough.

According to new data from the Labor Department, California - the first state to issue a stay-at-home order - paid only 1 in 8 claims in March. With an estimated labor force of 19.5 million, 3.3 million Californians have filed unemployment applications in the four weeks after March 14. "We're paying about \$1 billion a day in unemployment insurance

claims," California Labor Secretary Julie Su told NBC News. "In California just in the last six weeks alone, we had over 3.5 million people file for unemployment insurance. To put that in perspective, two weeks ago that was already more than we had in all of 2019." Virginia and Rhode Island have only processed half their state's claims, and the Texas Workforce Commission said more than 2 million people tried to call in on just one day seeking to file for unemployment.

In many cases, chronic underfunding and aging technology have left states vulnerable. In Michigan, where jobless claims have risen by 2,200 percent, the state's unemployment site was down for several hours.

Several state governments have teamed up with tech giants such as Amazon and Google to boost the number of claims they can process. Other states are asking retired employees to come back and deal with the onslaught of forms. (Source: NBC News)

## China wants me to lose: Trump



"China will do anything they can to have me lose this race," said Trump

WASHINGTON (TIP): President Donald Trump said on Wednesday, April 29 that he believes China's handling of the coronavirus is proof that Beijing "will do anything they can" to make him lose his re-election bid in November. Trump talked tough on China and said he was looking at different options in terms of consequences for Beijing over the virus. "I can do a lot," he said.

Trump has been heaping blame on China for a global pandemic that has killed at least 61,000 people in the United States and thrown the US economy into a deep recession, putting in jeopardy his hopes for another four-year term.

"China will do anything they can to have me lose this race," said Trump. He said he believes Beijing wants his Democratic opponent, Joe Biden, to win the race to ease the pressure Trump has placed on China over trade and other issues. -Reuters

Meanwhile, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said. "The US presidential election is an internal affair; we have no interest in interfering in it. We hope the people of the US will not drag China into its election politics." (Agencies)

# Rare complication seen in some kids with COVID-19

**The vast majority of coronavirus cases in children are mild. But for some, a dangerous complication can emerge.**

DALLAS (TIP): Last Friday, high school junior Jameela Barber called her teacher in Dallas County, Texas, to apologize for neglecting to turn in her schoolwork.

Her school's principal, Eleanor Webb, said Barber told her teacher she hadn't been feeling well.

"She said, 'As soon as I feel better, because I'm feeling really, really sick, I'm going to turn in my missed assignments,'" Webb told NBC affiliate station KXAS.

The next day, Webb said, Barber died of complications from COVID-19. She was 17.

Barber's case is rare; only a handful of pediatric deaths related to the coronavirus have been reported in the United States. However, the exact numbers for kids are hard to pin down: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention told NBC News that it does not track COVID-19 deaths in children under age 18 the way it does for the flu.

Early data on pediatric COVID-19 cases suggested that, for the vast majority of children, the illness is relatively mild.

Recently, however, reports of potential serious complications specific to children have begun to emerge in the



Jameela Barber. Lancaster Independent School District

U.S. and Europe: A handful of kids have developed dangerous inflammation around the heart and other organs. It's similar to a rare condition called Kawasaki disease, which causes swelling of the coronary arteries, primarily in children. Efforts to gather data on how the virus affects children are in their early stages. The Pediatric Infectious Diseases Transplant Network, in

coordination with St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and other major children's hospitals across the country, have just begun to collect data on kids diagnosed with COVID-19.

It's unclear why most kids appear to be spared. It could be that kids tend not to have the same chronic health problems, such as high blood pressure or Type 2 diabetes, found in the most serious COVID-19 cases in adults.

It could also be that children's immune systems don't react to this coronavirus infection with the same hyper-inflammatory response that's been documented in adults.

"This is very perplexing," Dr. Adrienne Randolph, a senior critical care physician at Boston Children's Hospital, said. "What is it about their immune system and their immune reaction to this virus that is making it so they're really not getting sick?"

Randolph is leading a nationwide research project that aims to figure out why the virus acts differently in kids, and why a few, like Barber, have more serious and even deadly outcomes. The goal is to enroll 800 children and young adults up through age 25. (Read full story at [www.theindianpanorama.news](http://www.theindianpanorama.news))

# WHO should be ashamed of itself; it is like a PR agency for China, says Trump

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** U.S. President Donald Trump Thursday, April 30, said the World Health Organisation should be "ashamed of" itself, as he likened it to a public relations agency for China.

The Trump Administration has launched a probe into the role of the WHO on coronavirus, and has temporarily suspended the U.S.' financial assistance to it.

"I think that the World Health Organization should be ashamed of themselves because they are like the public relations agency for China," Mr. Trump told reporters in the East Room of the White House.

The United States, he reiterated, pays the WHO almost \$500 million a year and China pays them \$38 million a year. "Whether it's a lot more, it doesn't matter. They shouldn't be making excuses when people make horrible mistakes, especially mistakes that are causing hundreds of thousands of people around the world to die."

"I think the World Health Organisation should be ashamed of themselves," said the President.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo alleged the WHO failed to deliver and misled the world on coronavirus. "The World Health Organisation simply failed to respond in this case," he told Scott Sands of The Scott Sands Show in an interview.

"With respect to the WHO, we know that



*I think that the World Health Organization should be ashamed of themselves because they are like the public relations agency for China," Mr. Trump told reporters in the East Room of the White House, April 30.*

they had one job, right? A single mission: To prevent the spread of a pandemic. We know that the leader of that organization travelled to China and then declined to declare it a pandemic until everyone in the world knew that was already true," Mr. Pompeo told Fox news in another interview.

"It's unfortunate, but this is not the first time there has been a virus go around the world from inside of China, and it's not the first time the WHO has failed in its mission. We have an obligation to the

American people to do our best to make sure that we fix that, that we prevent those things from ever happening again," he said. Meanwhile, several Republican lawmakers demanding a Congressional hearing alleged that the WHO parroted the Chinese regime's "disinformation" on multiple occasions, including denying human-to-human transmission of the virus.

They alleged the WHO prolonged declaring COVID-19 a Public Health Emergency of International Concern,

chastised efforts to restrict travel, and continued to praise China as a global leader in public health despite mounting evidence to the contrary.

"The WHO's inaction and delay undoubtedly cost American lives. For these reasons, we commend the President's decision to temporarily pause the WHO's funding," the lawmakers said.

Congressman James Comer, Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on The Environment, said it would be an utter failure of the Committee to not investigate the WHO's failures to address the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on the American people.

Congressman Glenn Grothman, Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on National Security, said that like many international organizations, it appears that the WHO has been "infected" by anti-Western bureaucrats.

"Had they stood up to the Chinese and their wet markets at some point in the last 10 years, I believe hundreds of thousands of people would be alive today," he said.

The WHO deserves a thorough congressional investigation for its alleged mishandling of the coronavirus response, and for accepting and promulgating a communist Chinese propaganda, said Congressman Chip Roy, a Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties.

(Source:PTI)

## IRS accepting applications for 2021 grants for Low Income Taxpayer Clinics

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** The Internal Revenue Service today announced that the application period for Low Income Taxpayer Clinic grants for calendar year 2021 will run from April 30, 2020, to June 16, 2020.

The LITC Program is a federal grant program administered by the Office of the Taxpayer Advocate at the IRS, which is led by National Taxpayer Advocate Erin M. Collins. Under Internal Revenue Code Section 7526, the IRS awards matching grants of up to \$100,000 per year to qualifying organizations to develop, expand or maintain an LITC. An LITC must provide services for free or for no more than a nominal fee.

The IRS welcomes all applications and will ensure that each application receives due consideration. The IRS is committed to achieving maximum access to representation for low income taxpayers under the terms of the LITC Program.

Read full story at  
[www.theindianpanorama.news](http://www.theindianpanorama.news)



## USCIS Offices Preparing to Reopen on June 4



### U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** On March 18, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services temporarily suspended in-person services at its field offices, asylum offices, and application support centers (ASCs) to help slow the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). USCIS is readying offices to reopen on or after June 4. Employees in these offices are continuing to perform mission-essential services that do not require face-to-face contact with the public while the offices are closed.

While offices are temporarily closed, USCIS will continue to provide limited emergency in-person services. Please call the USCIS 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 the extended temporary 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 operations for in-person services, USCIS will automatically reschedule ASC appointments due to the temporary office closure. Individuals will receive a new appointment letter in the mail. Those 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 the respective office has been reopened before calling the Contact Center.

## Economic Impact Payments continue to be sent, check IRS.gov for answers to common questions

**WASHINGTON(TIP):** As Economic Impact Payments continue to be successfully delivered, the Internal Revenue Service today reminds taxpayers that IRS.gov includes answers to many common questions, including help to use two recently launched Economic Impact Payment tools.

The IRS is regularly updating the Economic Impact Payment and the Get My Payment tool frequently asked questions pages on IRS.gov as more information becomes available.

Get My Payment shows the projected date when a deposit has been scheduled. Information is updated once daily, usually overnight, so people only need to enter information once a day. Those who did not use direct deposit on their 2018 or 2019 tax return can use the tool to input information to receive the payment by direct deposit into their bank account, so that they can get their money faster.

Frequently asked questions continually updated on IRS.gov

Read full story at  
[www.theindianpanorama.news](http://www.theindianpanorama.news)

# Covid-19 toll in India rises to 1,147; cases 35,043

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** The death toll due to the novel coronavirus pandemic rose to 1,147 with 72 more fatalities and the number of cases climbed to 35,043 in the country on Friday, the Union Health Ministry said.

The active COVID-19 cases stood at 25,007, while 8,888 people have recovered, and one patient has migrated. The total number of 35,043 cases includes 111 foreign nationals, according to the ministry data updated in the morning.

Seventy-two deaths were reported since Thursday evening, out of which 27 fatalities were from Maharashtra, 17 from Gujarat, 11 from West Bengal, seven each from Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, and three from Delhi.

Out of the total 1,147 deaths, Maharashtra tops the tally with 459 fatalities, followed by Gujarat with 214, Madhya Pradesh with 137, Delhi with 59, Rajasthan with 58, Uttar Pradesh with 39, West Bengal with 33 and Andhra Pradesh with 31.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) toll reached 27 in Tamil Nadu, 26 in Telangana, while Karnataka has reported 21 deaths.

Punjab has registered 20 fatalities so far, while the pathogen has claimed eight lives in Jammu and Kashmir, four in Kerala. Jharkhand and Haryana have recorded three deaths each.

Bihar has reported two deaths, while Meghalaya, Himachal Pradesh, Odisha and Assam have reported a fatality each, according to the ministry data. The highest number of confirmed cases are from Maharashtra at 10,498, followed by Gujarat at 4,395, Delhi at 3,515, Madhya Pradesh at 2,660 infections.

Rajasthan has reported 2,584 infections, Tamil Nadu 2,323 and Uttar Pradesh at 2,203 cases. The COVID-19 cases have gone up to 1,403 in Andhra



## Expect some announcement next week on return of stranded Indians, says Centre

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** People can expect some announcement next week on the return of Indians stranded abroad due to non-operation of flights amid the ongoing lockdown to combat the novel coronavirus, Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan said on Thursday.

Talking to PTI over the phone, he said that there were so many Indians stranded. "Flights should

be available for them. Unless the international flights are operated we can't do anything for their travel back to India," he said.

However, the respective Indian embassies and consulates, in cooperation with the governments there, are helping all those Indians seeking assistance by way of food, medical facilities and accommodation in every possible way, he said.

Pradesh and 1,038 in Telangana.

The number of confirmed cases has risen to 795 in West Bengal, 614 in Jammu and Kashmir, 565 in Karnataka, 497 in Kerala, 418 in Bihar and 357 in Punjab.

Haryana has reported 313 coronavirus cases, while Odisha has 142 cases. A total of 109 people have been infected with the deadly virus in Jharkhand and 57 in Uttarakhand.

Chandigarh has reported 56 cases, Assam has 42, while Himachal Pradesh and Chhattisgarh have registered 40 infections each so far.

Andaman and Nicobar Islands has 33 COVID-19 cases while Ladakh has reported 22 infections so far.

Meghalaya has reported 12 cases, Puducherry has eight cases, while Goa has seven COVID-19 cases.

Manipur and Tripura have two cases each, while Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh have reported a case each.

"Our figures are being reconciled with the ICMR," the ministry said on its website, adding, "291 cases are being assigned to states for contact tracing."



## 145 NANDED PILGRIMS AMONG 164 TEST POSITIVE IN PUNJAB IN A DAY

**CHANDIGARH (TIP):** Punjab witnessed the sharpest single-day in Covid-19 cases on Thursday as the state recorded 164 infections, including 145 Hazur Sahib pilgrims who were brought back from Nanded in Maharashtra over the last four days. This is first ever three-digit jump in Covid-19 cases in a day in the state, which has now 544 infections.

Amritsar, Ludhiana and SAS Nagar were the main contributors to the Thursday tally with 76, 48 and 13 cases, respectively.

Seventy-six people tested positive for Covid-19 at Amritsar's Government Medical College (GMC) on Thursday and all of them are Hazur Sahib pilgrims, Punjab medical education and research Minister OP Soni confirmed. With this, the district's count went up from 14 to 90.

Ludhiana recorded 48 cases on Thursday, of which 37 patients are Hazur Sahib-returnees, while 10 of the 13 people who tested positive in Mohali also had Nanded link.

The border district of Tarn Taran recorded seven Covid-19 cases, including three women, and all had returned from Hazur Sahib in the recent days. With this, the total number of patients in the district has risen to 14.

Four cases were reported in Kapurthala and three of them have Nanded link. Three members of family, including a 12-year-old, who tested positive on Thursday in Gurdaspur, had also returned from Nanded.

Of the two infections detected in Sangrur, one was Hazur Sahib pilgrim. Muktsar reported three cases and all of them had been brought back from Nanded recently. One person was declared positive for the virus on Moga and another in Ferozepur.

One of the three cases reported in Jalandhar also has Nanded link, while a pilgrim was found positive in SBS Nagar. Rupnagar recorded two cases on Thursday and both of them are Hazur Sahib pilgrims and Patiala also recorded a patient with Nanded pilgrim history.

## Railways serves 30 lakh meals to needy amid lockdown

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** The Indian Railways has provided cooked meals to over 30 lakh people during the nationwide lockdown, announced to combat the coronavirus infection.

"We have distributed free, hot cooked meals to 30 lakh people during the lockdown due to Covid-19," said the Railway Ministry spokesperson here on Thursday.

On April 20, the railways had reached 20 lakh-mark in distribution of free meals. In the last 10 days, 10 lakh more free meals have been distributed.

The official said the railways staff from a number of rail organisations were working tirelessly since March 28 to provide cooked meals to the needy.

The distribution of food to the needy is being done with the help of RPF, GRP, commercial departments of zonal railways, state governments, district administrations and NGOs even beyond the station vicinity and in areas surrounding the railway stations.

## CENTRE ALLOWS INTERSTATE TRAVEL OF MIGRANT WORKERS, TOURISTS

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** The Union home ministry on Wednesday issued fresh guidelines for interstate movement to allow stranded migrant labourers, tourists and students to return to their homes.

It said the new guidelines will come into effect from 4 May, "which shall give considerable relaxation to many districts."

So far, only interstate movement of essential commodities has been allowed, while migrant workers could travel to their workplaces within city limits if they showed no symptoms for coronavirus.

Wednesday's guidelines says all stranded people can return to their home towns after undergoing strict medical screening both at the source and destination cities. States must also organize thermal testing units and quarantine facilities for all those who are stranded, in order to clear asymptomatic cases, before sending them back. However, the movement of migrants, tourists and students will be restricted to non-containment zones.

States must arrange for sanitized buses for transportation, it said.

The decision comes just two days after a meeting



between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and chief ministers, wherein the issue of stranded migrant labourers and students was discussed. Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal, states where large numbers of migrants come from, had requested that they be allowed to return home. The Odisha government said that the Centre must set standard operating procedures (SOP) for people who are returning.

# Govt bats on 'plug and play' infrastructure, attract more foreign investment

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** Amid the coronavirus menace which has led to the nationwide lockdown hitting the economy hard, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday held a comprehensive meeting with Home Minister Amit Shah, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and other senior government officials to discuss the steps to attract more foreign investment and boost the economy.

The meeting was held to discuss measures to attract more foreign investment as well as promote local investment to boost the economy amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It was discussed that a scheme should be developed to promote more plug and play infrastructure in the existing industrial lands/plots/estates in the country and provide necessary financing support," said the statement released by the government.

"During the meeting, the PM directed that the action should be taken for a more proactive approach to handhold the investors, to look into their problems and help them in getting all the necessary Central and State clearances in a time-bound manner," it added.

"Various strategies to bring investments into India in a fast-track mode and to promote Indian domestic sectors were discussed. Detailed discussions were held on guiding states to evolve their



strategies & be more proactive in attracting investments," it said.

It was also discussed that the reform initiatives undertaken by the various Ministries should continue unabated and the action should be taken in a time-bound manner to remove any obstacles which impede the promotion of investment and industrial growth.

After the meeting, PM Modi tweeted, "Chaired a high-level meeting to discuss ways to boost investment, both international and domestic. Issues relating to India's reform trajectory were also discussed so that growth can be accelerated."

The meeting came amidst the prolong lockdown leaving the economy almost crippled. On Tuesday, rating agency Moody forecasted India's growth to 0.2 per cent which was earlier 2.5 per cent.

India is in the second phase of complete lockdown which will end on May 3. The uncertainty over the extension of lockdown is still not called off as the cases are nowhere near to containment.

However, last week, after a meeting with 13 chief ministers, the government re-started some economic activity in parts of the country least affected by the virus.

## Indigenous COVID-19 testing kits will be available in May: Minister



**NEW DELHI (TIP):** Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan on Tuesday said that the country will be able to produce indigenous coronavirus-testing kits by May.

"We will be able to produce RT-PCR and antibody test kits in India by May. All processes are in advanced stage and production will start after getting approval from ICMR. It will help us in meeting our target of one lakh tests per day by May 31," the Union Health Minister said.

Earlier, Dr Harsh Vardhan held a review meeting via video conference with the Delhi LG, Delhi Health Minister, MCD Commissioners, DMs and DCPs of all districts of Delhi and Central/State and District surveillance officers and heads of government hospitals.

A total of 29,435 confirmed cases of COVID-19 have been reported in India. 6,869 persons have recovered or migrated, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare said on Tuesday.

There are 21,632 active cases of COVID-19 in the country. 934 people have lost their lives due to the coronavirus in the country to date.

## Pune-based defence institute develops microwave steriliser

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** Pune-based Defence Institute of Advanced Technology (DIAT) has developed a microwave steriliser 'Atulya' that can disintegrate the novel coronavirus, the Defence Ministry said on Thursday.

"The virus gets disintegrated by differential heating (of Atulya) in the range of 56 degrees to 60 degrees Celsius," the ministry said in a release.

The DIAT is a deemed university under the ministry's Defence Research and Development Organisation. Atulya is a cost-effective solution that can be operated in portable or fixed installations, the ministry said.

"This system (steriliser) was tested for human/operator safety and has been found to be safe. Depending upon the size and shape of various objects, time of sterilisation is from 30 seconds to one minute," it said.

Atulya weighs around three kilograms and it can be used for sterilisation of non-metallic objects only, the ministry said.

## States seek trains to move migrants as lockdown nears end

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** A day after the Centre allowed movement of migrant workers and directed states and Union territories to use sanitised buses to transport them, many states including Bihar, Punjab, Rajasthan and Telangana have demanded that special trains be deployed as it is very difficult to operate buses for long-distance travel.

Telangana Animal Husbandry Minister T Srinivas Yadav went a step ahead and asked the Centre to bear the full cost of transportation of migrant workers. The Maharashtra government, too, made similar suggestions saying the travel cost should be either borne by the central government or by the native states of the migrant workers.

According to sources, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), which is supervising the Covid-19 shutdown across the country, is likely to take a call on this soon.

Meanwhile, sources also said the railway ministry has already lined up a plan to operate 400 special trains, if necessary.

## 65% OF COVID DEATHS IN INDIA ARE MEN, SHOWS GOVT DATA

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** Fewer women are dying of the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) in India as compared to men, and at least half of those who died were over the age of 60, according to data from the union health ministry.

Of the 1,074 Covid-19 deaths reported from across the country till April 30 afternoon, 65% are men, which is in line with the evidence so far that Covid-19 kills more men than women.

According to an April 22 study published in the peer reviewed American journal, JAMA (Journal of the American Medical Association), an analysis of 5,700 Covid-19 patients hospitalised in 12 hospitals in New York City showed that at least 60% were men, and of the 373 patients who were undergoing treatment in the intensive care unit (ICU), 66.5% were men. The most common comorbidities were diabetes, hypertension, and obesity among critically ill patients.

Age and underlying medical



conditions, such as diabetes, hypertension, kidney or heart disease, are also being seen as risk factors for developing a severe form of the disease in Indian patients. As many as 78% of those dead were suffering from some form of chronic health condition, and 51.2% were above 60 years of age.

Of the 51.2% of those above the

age of 60, 42% are between 60 and 75 years of age, and 9.2% were above 75 years of age.

"The data clearly shows that the elderly people and those with underlying medical conditions need to be extra careful as they tend to develop a severe form of the disease," said Lav Agarwal, joint secretary, Union health ministry.

# MOTHER'S DAY

Mother's Day is a holiday honoring motherhood that is observed in different forms throughout the world. In the United States, Mother's Day 2020 occurs on Sunday, May 10. The American incarnation of Mother's Day was created by Anna Jarvis in 1908 and became an official U.S. holiday in 1914. Jarvis would later denounce the holiday's commercialization and spent the latter part of her life trying to remove it from the calendar. While dates and celebrations vary, Mother's Day traditionally involves presenting moms with flowers, cards and other gifts.

## History of Mother's Day

Celebrations of mothers and motherhood can be traced back to the ancient Greeks and Romans, who held festivals in honor of the mother goddesses Rhea and Cybele, but the clearest modern precedent for Mother's Day is the early Christian festival known as "Mothering Sunday."

Once a major tradition in the United Kingdom and parts of Europe, this celebration fell on the fourth Sunday in Lent and was originally seen as a time when the faithful would return to their "mother church"—the main church in the vicinity of their home—for a special service.

Over time the Mothering Sunday tradition shifted into a more secular holiday, and children would present their mothers with flowers and other tokens of appreciation. This custom eventually faded in popularity before merging with the American Mother's Day in the 1930s and 1940s.

## Mother's Day Around the World

While versions of Mother's Day are celebrated worldwide, traditions vary depending on the country. In Thailand, for example, Mother's Day is always celebrated in August on the birthday of the current queen, Sirikit.

Another alternate observance of Mother's Day can be found in Ethiopia, where families gather each fall to sing songs and eat a large feast as part of Antrosht, a multi-day celebration honoring motherhood.

In the United States, Mother's Day continues to be celebrated by presenting mothers and other women with gifts and flowers, and it has become one of the biggest holidays for consumer spending. Families also celebrate by giving mothers a day off from activities like cooking or other household chores.

At times, Mother's Day has also been a date for launching political or feminist causes. In 1968 Coretta Scott King, wife of Martin Luther King Jr., used Mother's Day to host a march in support of underprivileged women and children. In the 1970s women's groups also used the holiday as a time to highlight the need for equal rights and access to childcare.

In the UK and Ireland, Mother's Day can be confused with Mothering Sunday, as the two share the same date. In the 16th century, Mothering Sunday began as a Catholic and Protestant Christian holiday, where people would visit their 'mother' church – the church in which they were baptised or the one they grew up attending – for Laetare Sunday, the fourth Sunday of Lent.

This was potentially the only day in the year on which families could all be together, as servants were only allowed a respite from their duties on Laetare Sunday. On the way to church, children would pick flowers to make bouquets to



give to their mothers, and this eventually evolved into a tradition of gift giving. Mothering Sunday became less practised through the early-20th century, until the 1950s when merchants noticed a commercial opportunity, paving the way for today's traditions in the UK.

Mother's Day traditions in the United States began with Anna Jarvis. She once overheard her mother, a social activist who formed clubs to promote peace and friendship during the American Civil War (1861-65), pray for a commemoration day to acknowledge the service mothers give to humanity. After her mother's death, Jarvis spent the early years of the 20th century campaigning relentlessly – and, eventually, successfully – for Mother's Day to be a recognised holiday honouring all mothers. Similarly to citizens of Australia and South Africa, Americans celebrate the special day annually on the second Sunday in May, and gifts usually consist of carnations, the official flower of the day.

Many other countries around the world also celebrate on the second Sunday of May – including New Zealand, Canada and India – with festivities, dinners, pampering and gifts. In Mexico, colourful Mother's Day celebrations occur on 10 May, where children hand-make their presents, and churches hold special masses.

Egypt and several other Middle Eastern countries celebrate on 21 March, the first day of spring, and on 12 August, Thailand holds prodigious festivities in honour of its Queen. In Russia, people used to celebrate on 8 March, which is International Women's Day, but now do so on the last Sunday of November, though still typically giving presents in March.

All traditions, however, do share characteristics and ultimately honour mothers and women who have brought peace and improvement to the world. Despite consumerism gradually overpowering authenticity, the day will





SEPTEMBER 4, 1952-APRIL 30, 2020

# RISHI KAPOOR, BOLLYWOOD'S EVERGREEN HEARTTHROB, DIES AT 67

Actor Rishi Kapoor died on April 30 after a two-year battle with leukaemia. He was 67. Rishi breathed his last at the Sir HN Reliance Foundation Hospital in Mumbai. His wife and actor Neetu Kapoor was by his side.

Rishi was always fated to be a star. Born in Bollywood's first family long before the industry was overrun by nepotism debates, Rishi Kapoor announced his arrival with a National Award as Best Child Artiste for his role in the 1970 gem, "Mera Naam Joker". Three years later when his father, showman Raj Kapoor, launched him as a hero in teenybopper romance "Bobby", he was the hottest young star in town. The chocolatebox hero was born.

For nearly three decades after that Rishi Kapoor was synonymous with romance, becoming Bollywood's face of mush as no other actor has managed to be. From the naive romantic of "Bobby" to the loverboy prankster of "Rafoo Chakkar" and "Khel Khel Mein", from being cast in the more classic backdrop of Bollywood romance in "Kabhi Kabhie" or "Laila Majnu", to the unconventional lover with grey shades in "Zehreela Insaan", it didn't take him long to establish himself as the king of masala mush.

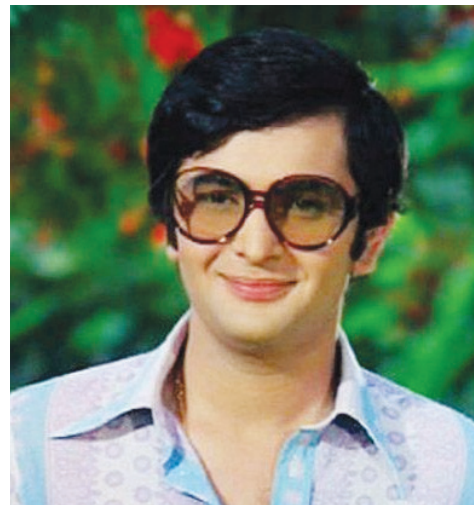
In all this, he discovered the power of song and dance to prop the endearing glamour as a romantic hero in that early phase. Rishi Kapoor emerged as a super dancer in the songs of "Hum Kissise Kum Nahin", "Yeh Vaada Raha", "Sargam", "Dhan Daulat" "Zamaane Ko Dikhana Hai" and "Karz".

The romantic-musical star tag was important for Rishi, because he was out carving a niche in an era that primarily belonged to the Angry Young Man. Sure he did get on with the occasional guntotting antic or some good old-fashioned filmi dishoom-punch, but that wasn't his image. The audience went in to watch him romance, and dance.

Yet, Rishi was quietly reorganising his image with his roles -- at least as much as the restrictive commercial Hindi cinema of the seventies and the eighties would let him. He carved a unique comic style for himself ("Rafoo Chakkar", "Amar Akbar Anthony") that was, quite unlike what worked back then, without over-the-top tendencies.

By the turn of the decade and into the eighties, it was abundantly clear that Rishi Kapoor would not fade away -- unlike most other chocolatebox heroes. As much as he loved romancing and dancing, he also realised the market for such heroes was shrunken at that point of time. He quickly latched on to the multistarrer bandwagon -- the new in-thing for the Bollywood big screen.

Therein lies the secret of Rishi Kapoor's survival and success. Above all else through the decades, he has been a master of reinvention. It is the sort of strategy that underlines abundant versatility, not just on screen but off it, too. On screen, because matching up to action heroes such as Amitabh Bachchan, Dharmendra or Vinod Khanna



in scripts primarily written for the machomen demanded lots of screen presence. Kapoor came up trumps every time, despite never losing his essential characteristic as a loverboy in films such as "Naseeb", "Coolie" or "Katilon Ke Kaatil".

Yet the multistarrer phase would pass, and by the late eighties it would be time for Rishi Kapoor to reinvent again.

There was a rough phase around this time. As the eighties were drawing to a close, a whole new generation of stars and directors moving in. An aging romantic hero doesn't find many takers in a fickle world as Bollywood. Rishi did what few expected him to -- he started signing up heroine-oriented projects in the later eighties through the early nineties, opposite top actresses of the era such as Sridevi ("Nagina", "Chandni"), Rekha ("Sheshnag", "Azad Desh Ke Gulam"), Madhuri Dixit ("Yaarana"), and Juhi Chawla ("Daraar").

Qualitatively, Bollywood had hit an unprecedented low in this era, and the sole criterion of success seemed to be visibility. These films, as well as the multistarrers that he continued doing, helped him stay in the limelight. Very few of his solo hero projects back then made any impact.

By the 2000s, having made a move into supporting role, Kapoor had taken to playing the daddy roles in films like "Yeh Hai Jalwa" and "Kuch Khatti Kuch Meethi". An era in Bollywood had

## CONDOLENCES POUR IN

The news of Rishi's tragic demise has shocked and saddened the nation. Prime Minister Narendra Modi called the actor a 'powerhouse of talent' and wrote, "Multifaceted, endearing and lively...this was Rishi Kapoor Ji. He was a powerhouse of talent. I will always recall our interactions, even on social media. He was passionate about films and India's progress. Anguished by his demise. Condolences to his family and fans. Om Shanti."

Amitabh Bachchan, who worked with him in films such as Amar Akbar Anthony, Kabhie Kabhie and most recently, 102 Not Out, tweeted, "He's GONE .. ! Rishi Kapoor .. gone .. just passed away .. I am destroyed !"

Akshay Kumar remembered the 'legend' and wrote on Twitter, "It seems like we're in the midst of a nightmare...just heard the depressing news of #RishiKapoor ji passing away, it's heartbreaking. He was a legend, a great co-star and a good friend of the family. My thoughts and prayers with his family."

Aamir Khan mourned the loss of the 'amazing actor' and 'wonderful human being'. "We have lost one of the greats today. An amazing actor, a wonderful human being, and 100% a child of Cinema. Thank you for all the joy you brought to our lives. Thank you for being the actor and human being that you were. You will be badly missed Rishiji. Love. a," he wrote.

Priyanka Chopra shared a picture with Rishi and his wife Neetu Kapoor, taken while he was undergoing cancer treatment in New York. "My heart is so heavy. This is the end of an era. #Rishisir your candid heart and immeasurable talent will never be encountered again. Such a privilege to have known you even a little bit. My condolences to Neetu maam, Ridhima, Ranbir and the rest of the family. Rest in peace Sir," she wrote.

I've had the honour of working with Rishi ji. A larger than life person, so outspoken yet so warm. We have lost a brilliant actor today. Still can't believe it.. absolutely heartbroken. My prayers are with the family during this tough time, said Madhuri Dixit.

changed with the millennium, medium of infotainment was changing and, just when people started saying that playing the heroine's dad was the first sign of an actor's end, Rishi Kapoor sprung his most glorious twin surprises.

First, he reorganised his image. With the advent of the 2010s, Kapoor moved away from all things nice that had ever defined his image. As the sinister face of evil in "Agnepath" and "D-Day", he was suddenly reinventing villainy, in the same way he had redefined the hero all those years ago, arriving as the teen sensation in "Bobby".

But more interesting was Kapoor's reinvention off screen. He took to social

media. When he joined Twitter in January of 2010, people expected just another wise old Bollywood star, who would spew niceties and knowledge. What they got was a firebrand who would take on any and everybody. Rishi Kapoor, always known to have spoken his mind, found a natural space to let off some steam. Sure, it got him trolled often, but it also did leave social media impressed with his guts.

That streak of guts defines everything he has ever lived for. It is something that resonates in his autobiography "Khullam Khulla" -- published in 2017. It is the guts that let the moviestar embrace career changes as smoothly as his mind and spirit took on the fight against cancer head-on.

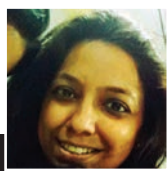
Who could've predicted that Khan would, like his character in the film, *The Namesake*, leave us young and without much warning



# Alvida IRRFAN!!



"An incredible talent, a gracious colleague, a prolific contributor to the World of Cinema ... left us too soon,"  
Bachchan tweeted.



By Jaskiran Saluja

In 1986, when director Mira Nair was scouting for her film *Salaam Bombay!* at the National School of Drama in New Delhi, she fixed her gaze on a young man from Jaipur. "I noticed his focus, his intensity, his very remarkable look-his hooded eyes," she later recalled of seeing Irrfan Khan. Though she cast him, she soon decided that he was too towering at more than six feet, that he seemed too well fed to convincingly play a malnourished child. To Khan's dismay, Nair pared his role down to scraps. "I remember sobbing all night when Mira told me that my part was reduced to merely nothing," the actor told the Indian magazine *Open* in 2015. "But it changed something within me. I was prepared for anything after that."

The actor died Wednesday in Mumbai, two years after being diagnosed with neuroendocrine cancer. On Wednesday when Irrfan breathed his last, his last words reflected how much he missed his mother. "See, amma has come. She is sitting next to me. Amma has come to take me," was Irrfan Khan's last words. He then adds, "But what is the choice apart from being positive in tough situations. We have made this film with the same positivity. And I hope this film will teach you, make you laugh, make you cry and then make you laugh again. Enjoy the trailer and be kind to each other...And yes wait for me".

Khan's final movie, *Angrezi Medium*, was the last Bollywood film released in theaters before the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a nationwide

lockdown. Irrfan recorded an audio message for his fans during the trailer release of *Angrezi Medium*. His last message played along with a promotional clip of his film. "There is a saying... 'When life gives you lemons, you make lemonades out of it. It sounds good. But when life actually puts lemon in your hands, it becomes really tough to make lemonade,'" Irrfan says.

The film ended up being the bookend to a singular body of work that had begun in 1988 with *Salaam Bombay!* After that movie, Khan spent more than a decade appearing in television serials and supporting roles on film, before breaking through with his dynamic lead performance as a feudal soldier in Asif Kapadia's *The Warrior* (2001). That performance kick-started a career that has no precedent in Indian film history.

Khan's featherlight touch made the job look simple, distracting you from the fact that acting is, at its core, work. He could play the romantic lead with flushed ardor, as he did in Shoojit Sircar's *Piku* (2015), but he knew how to cede the spotlight as a supporting player too. His style was free of the vanity or self-consciousness that could've made him seem larger than life. As his fame grew, he retained the essential quality that endeared him to viewers: a sense of relatability. Khan was an everyman who, improbably, became a star.

He was born Sahabzade Irfan Ali Khan—just one R—to a middle-class Muslim family in the city of Jaipur, Rajasthan, in 1967. A shy and gentle kid, he'd wanted to be an actor since he was small, according to a recent biography by the writer Aseem Chhabra. Khan's immediate family didn't watch many movies, though, forcing him to nurture his dreams in secret. He understood that his physical attributes, including his darker complexion, could be professional limitations, but he went on to attend the National School of Drama, where he arrived as a bundle of raw potential.

On-screen, Khan's most vital instrument may have been that pair of soulful eyes that captured Nair's imagination three decades ago. They could exude menace or innocence, depending on the role. His eyes helped him bring sensual urgency to his early performance as Rahul, a young musician who has an affair with a married woman named Sandhya (played by Dimple Kapadia) in Govind Nihalani's *Drishti* (1990). When the two lovers lock gazes, whatever's transpiring between them feels electric. The film offers Khan just a few short scenes before he more or less evaporates from the narrative, yet the memory of his character lingers long after he's gone. That role was just a preview of the great work Khan would deliver after the turn of the millennium. Trying to pick highlights from this era is a fool's errand. He shone in bigger releases such as Vishal Bhardwaj's *Maqbool* (2003), a riff on *Macbeth* set in the Mumbai underworld, and Anurag Basu's *Life in a Metro*

(2007), a collage of intersecting tales.

When it comes to independent cinema, Ritesh Batra's *The Lunchbox* (2013) features one of his most moving performances. The film, which documents an epistolary bond between two lonely souls, gives Khan a role that bears amusing parallels to his *Salaam Bombay!* character. He plays a widower named Saajan who marches through each day listlessly. Yet he forges a connection with a stranger, an equally forlorn housewife named Ila (Nimrat Kaur), when they begin exchanging letters by accident. The correspondence seems to awaken Saajan, and Khan makes the character's decision to gradually let his guard down feel organic. Much of the performance depends on voice-over, and Khan was blessed with a honeyed voice that recalls the tired maxim about an actor being able to recite the phone book without sacrificing a viewer's attention.

His talents would ferry him to American and British cinema in the late aughts. These films mostly cast Khan in supporting roles, such as his wordless cameo as a villager in Wes Anderson's *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007) or his part as a scientist in *The Amazing Spider-Man* (2012), that only suggested the depth of his talent. (Television, in contrast, gave him a rich showcase in Season 3 of HBO's *In Treatment*, where he once again played a widower, this time an immigrant from Kolkata.) These movies didn't deserve him, but Khan dignified them with his presence, refusing to sink with the flimsy material he was given.

Unlike those works, Nair's *The Namesake*, a 2006 film adaptation of Jhumpa Lahiri's novel of the same name, gave his skills more breathing room. As the professor Ashoke Ganguli, Khan embodies an ideal of the Bengali immigrant father in the eyes of his son, Gogol (Kal Penn). He is at once a figment of memory and a person whose struggles and desires feel achingly real. Ashoke is a specific kind of person, a Bengali intellectual who adapts to life in America after a rough period of adjustment. The eventual tragedy at the heart of the narrative—Ashoke's sudden death—is piercing because of how vividly Khan portrays this man.

Who could've predicted that Khan would, like his character in that film, leave us young and without much warning? It's tempting to wonder what characters Khan would've introduced us to as he eased into old age, as his hair began to gray. That viewers are deprived of knowing feels like theft. Among *The Namesake*'s most arresting moments is a scene in which Ashoke narrates the story of how he named his son. The sequence plays on Khan's strongest devices: You see those eyes glimmer

contd on Page 19



Irrfan with friend and wife Sutapa. "If I get to live, I want to live for her. She is the reason for me to keep at it still," he said towards the dusk of his life.

contd from Page 18

with pain and pride, and Khan's voice shepherds you through this man's past. His is a love you recognize as human, but Khan expresses the sentiment with restraint. It's a kind of beauty, in other words, that you only see in movies.

**The Bollywood superstar wrote this open letter that was published by Times of India before starting his treatment for cancer in 2018.**

"It's been quite some time now since I have been diagnosed with a high-grade neuroendocrine cancer. This new name in my vocabulary, I got to know, was rare, and due to fewer study cases, and less information comparatively, the unpredictability of the treatment was more. I was part of a trial-and-error game.

I had been in a different game, I was travelling on a speedy train ride, had dreams, plans, aspirations, goals, was fully engaged in them. And suddenly someone taps on my shoulder and I turn to see. It's the TC: "Your destination is about to come. Please get down." I am confused: No, no. My destination hasn't come. No, this is it. This is how it is sometimes.

The suddenness made me realise how you are just a cork floating in the ocean with unpredictable currents! And you are desperately trying to control it.

In this chaos, shocked, afraid and in panic, while on one of the terrifying hospital visits, I blabber to my son, "The only thing I expect from ME is not to face this crisis in this present state. I desperately need my feet. Fear and panic should not overrule me and make me miserable'.

That was my intention. And then the pain hit. As if all this while, you were just getting to know pain, and now you know his nature and his intensity. Nothing was working; no consolation, no motivation."

Irrfan also wrote about finding peace during this painful time and said the only thing certain is the uncertainty.



"The charisma you brought to everything you did was pure magic," tweeted Indian actor and model Priyanka Chopra Jonas

"As I was entering the hospital, drained, exhausted, listless, I hardly realised my hospital was on the opposite side of Lord's, the stadium. The Mecca of my childhood dream. Amidst the pain, I saw a poster of a smiling Vivian Richards. Nothing happened, as if that world didn't ever belong to me.

This hospital also had a coma ward right above me. Once, while standing on the balcony of my hospital room, the peculiarity jolted me. Between the game of life and the game of death, there is just a road. On one side, a hospital, on the other, a stadium. As if one isn't part of anything which might claim certainty - neither the hospital, nor the stadium. That hit me hard.

I was left with this immense effect of the enormous power and intelligence of the cosmos. The peculiarity of MY hospital's location - it HIT me. The only thing certain was the uncertainty. All I could do was to realise my strength and play my game better.

This realisation made me submit, surrender and

trust, irrespective of the outcome, irrespective of where this takes me, eight months from now, or four months from now, or two years. The concerns took a back seat and started to fade and kind of went out of my mind space.

For the first time, I felt what 'freedom' truly means. It felt like an accomplishment. As if I was tasting life for the first time, the magical side of it. My confidence in the intelligence of the cosmos became absolute. I feel as if it has entered every cell of mine.

Time will tell if it stays, but that is how I feel as of now."

Irrfan also talked about his well-wishers and those praying for him across the world.

**"Throughout my journey, people have been wishing me well, praying for me, from all over the world. People I know, people I don't even know. They were praying from different places, different time zones, and I feel all their prayers become ONE. One big force, like a force of current, which got inside me through the end of my spine and has germinated through the crown of my head.**

**It's germinating - sometimes a bud, a leaf, a twig, a shoot. I keep relishing and looking at it. Each flower, each twig, each leaf which has come from the cumulative prayers, each fills me with wonder, happiness and curiosity. A realisation that the cork doesn't need to control the current. That you are being gently rocked in the cradle of nature."**

In his recent interview to Mumbai Mirror, Irrfan said "It's been a roller-coaster ride, a memorable one. Happy moments were underlined because of the inherent uncertainty. We cried a little and laughed a lot. We became one huge body," he said.

Khan went on to talk about how crucial it was for him keep his thoughts from wandering. "You screen out noises. You are selective about what you want to filter in. I have gone through tremendous anxiety but have somehow managed to control it, then, let go. You are playing hopscotch all the time," he said.

On the subject of his wife Sutapa, Khan called her "the reason" he's still able to power through. "What to say about Sutapa (wife)? She is there 24/7. She has evolved in care-giving and if I get to live, I want to live for her. She is the reason for me to keep at it still," he said.

Sutapa had previously written a post on Facebook where she discussed the family's year long struggle with Khan's cancer. "Longest year of our life . Time was never measured with pain and hope at the same time ever. While we take our baby steps back to work, to life I am submerged in prayers wishes and faith from friends ,relatives, strangers and a connection with universe which gives us a small chance for this new start."

She added, "It seems unbelievable never ever I realized the meaning of the word unpredictable so well never ever I could feel peoples wishes on my bones my breath my heartbeat which helped me to stay focused and kicking.. I can't take names because there are names and there are names I don't even know who played angels. Sorry for not been able to answer individually but I know what you mean to us."

He leaves behind a wife and two children. **T**he whole world, it appears, is mourning the loss of Irrfan Khan. In New York, many, already cooped in their homes because of lockdown, watched Irrfan's movies over and over again, as if they wanted neve to be separated from the man.

"Irrfan Khan's demise is a loss to the world of cinema and theatre," tweeted Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "He will be remembered for his versatile performances across different mediums. My thoughts are with his family, friends and admirers."

Other prominent politicians, like Home Minister Amit Shah and former Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, also shared their condolences



: "You fought and fought and fought. I will always be proud of you.. we shall meet again" Tweeted Award-winning filmmaker Shoojit Sircar

online.

**"THE CHARISMA YOU BROUGHT TO EVERYTHING YOU DID WAS PURE MAGIC," TWEETED INDIAN ACTOR AND MODEL PRIYANKA CHOPRA JONAS.**

**AWARD-WINNING FILMMAKER SHOOJIT SIRCARALSO POSTED A TRIBUTE ON TWITTER, WRITING, "YOU FOUGHT AND FOUGHT AND FOUGHT. I WILL ALWAYS BE PROUD OF YOU.. WE SHALL MEET AGAIN."**

**AMITABH BACHCHAN, ANOTHER BOLLYWOOD ICON, SAID IN A TWEET THAT KHAN'S DEATH CREATED "A HUGE VACUUM."**

**"AN INCREDIBLE TALENT, A GRACIOUS COLLEAGUE, A PROLIFIC CONTRIBUTOR TO THE WORLD OF CINEMA ... LEFT US TOO SOON," BACHCHAN TWEETED.**



"Irrfan Khan's demise is a loss to the world of cinema and theatre," tweeted Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "He will be remembered for his versatile performances across different mediums. My thoughts are with his family, friends and admirers."

*Alvida Irrfan!!  
Cinema won't be the  
same without you!*



## SUSHMITA SEN CREATES MEDITATIONAL TUNE WITH BOYFRIEND ROHMAN SHAWL

**S**ushmita Sen, along with daughters Renee and Alisah and boyfriend Rohman Shawl, have created a special tune for soothing the mind and the heart. The actor shared an audio which seems to be music for mediation and has the actor reciting 'Om' throughout the tune in the most soothing manner.

Sharing it on Instagram, she wrote, "We are all #energy. HEADPHONES PLEASE. Physical distancing doesn't mean emotional distancing. In fact our energies are much more in synch & better aligned than ever before!! Great time to realise that despite being quarantined, we don't live in isolation. Sending you something to help keep your spirits high for 'low' is not an option.. created by the Inhouse technical crew of Alisah, Renee @rohmanshawl & #yourstruly. we of course used a background track that you all love so much...by #roudeep called "Desert Rose". #sharing #faith #hope #love #happyvibrations #duggadugga...I love you guys!!!!"

The actor is quarantining with her family at her Mumbai residence and practices yoga to stay fit. Sushmita and Rohman have also shared several glimpses of their tough yoga challenges they throw at each other.

# 14 YEARS OF KANGANA RANAUT: FANS MARK ACTRESS' FILMY ANNIVERSARY

**K**angana Ranaut's first film, *Gangster*, had released on 28 April in 2006 and the actress completes 14 years in Bollywood today. Her fans took to social media to show some love. Check out their reactions.

Kangana Ranaut is one of the fiercest actress in Bollywood and has risen to the ranks with her impressive filmography. From playing varied characters to speaking her mind on issues of national importance, Kangana has managed to win many hearts. The actress completes 14 years in Bollywood today and her fans took to social media to show some love. Kangana's first film, *Gangster*, released on 28 April in 2006 and the actress back then had received praise from all quarters for her performance.

Today, as she completes 14 years, Kangana has lot to cheer about. From acting to directing, Kangana has been climbing the ladder of success for quite sometime now. With absolutely no filmy background, the 'Tanu Weds Manu' actress is remembered for her fun and crazy roles. While she floored us with her act in *Manikarnika*, Kangana won hearts in *Queen* which further catapulted her into stardom.

Apart from her impressive filmography, Kangana's personal life has also hit the headlines. From relationships to her take on nepotism in Bollywood, Kangana has never held back and often conveyed what she truly feels. Today, as she completes 14 years, fans shared their favourite Kangana moments on Twitter. From photos and video to quotes, the actress has quite a fan following.



## KRITI KHARBANDA SHOWS OFF BOYFRIEND PULKIT SAMRAT'S COOKING SKILLS

**A**mid the nationwide lockdown due to the outbreak of coronavirus in the country, Bollywood celebrities have been flaunting their culinary skills on social media. Actor Pulkit Samrat treated his actor-girlfriend Kriti Kharbanda to some prawns.

Kriti took to Instagram, where she shared a photograph of the prawn curry made by Pulkit and she captioned it: "And then, death by amaze food happened! @pulkitamrat showing off his cooking skills."

Recently, Kriti shared a post where she could be seen enjoying a champi (oil massage on the head) by her boyfriend Pulkit Samrat. She also jokingly claimed that her new motto in life is to make Pulkit give her a champi!

Meanwhile Pulkit took to Instagram and posted a black and white picture of himself along with his dog -- a husky. "Ek Dooje Ke Liye (for each other)" he captioned the image.

On the work front, Kriti and Pulkit were together seen in Anees Bazmee's comedy caper *Pagalpanti*. Kriti will next be seen in *Taish*. Pulkit will next be seen in *Haathi Mere Saathi* and *Taish*.



## KATRINA KAIF DISPLAYS PERFECT CHOPPING SKILLS IN NEW VIDEO

**W**ith the nation is in lockdown mode due to the coronavirus pandemic, many are using the downtime to learn a new skill, and Katrina Kaif is no different. She has been sharpening her culinary skills and displayed the perfect chopping technique in a new video shared on her Instagram account.

In the clip, Katrina smiles at the camera, before it pans to her chopping board on which she is seen chopping like a pro. From the looks of it, Katrina has picked up some skills since the last cooking video she shared with her sister Isabelle Kaif earlier this month. The two were seen wearing matching aprons as they experimented in the kitchen, making what appeared to be a pancake. "We're not sure what it is either...we'll let you know when we do," she joked in her caption, as fans' guesses ranged from dosa to omelette. Katrina has been sharing glimpses of her daily activities from quarantine, be it her home workout or her 'professional tutorial' on how to wash dishes.





## Shakira graduates in Ancient Philosophy during lockdown

**S**hakira has graduated with a degree in Ancient Philosophy from the University of Pennsylvania.

The 'Hips Don't Lie' hitmaker has taken to Instagram to reveal she managed to complete the long-distance four-week course alongside being a full-time mother to kids Milan, seven, and Sasha, five.

The 43-year-old singer - who is married to soccer star Gerard Pique - took to the photo-sharing platform to pose with her certificate, which revealed she had studied a module about "Plato and his predecessors".

Alongside the picture, Shakira - who is fluent in Spanish, English, Arabic and Portuguese - wrote: "I just graduated from my 4 week Ancient Philosophy course with the University of Pennsylvania (@uofpenn).

"I know ... my hobbies are very impractical, but it took a lot of hours after the kids were asleep. Thank you Plato and predecessors for all the "fun" over the past month! (sic)"

# SCARLETT JOHANSSON SAYS SHE'S MADE A CAREER OUT OF BEING SECOND CHOICE

**H**ollywood star Scarlett Johansson confessed that she was "rejected constantly" in her professional life, adding that she has "made a career out of being second choice". In an interview with Parade, the Avengers actor looked back at her career.

"Since a very young age, I've been rejected constantly ... the best call you can receive is after you are rejected for something and then you get it. You appreciate it more. I've basically made a career out of being second choice," she added.

Johansson became one of the highest paid actresses in the world after playing Black Widow in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, but she wasn't originally cast in the role. She got the part after Emily Blunt had to drop out due to scheduling reasons.

In the past, the Oscar nominee has expressed frustration at roles she had to turn down. She also stepped down from the project Rub And Tug after criticism that a transgender actor should have been cast as the trans character.

At that time, in an interview to As If magazine in 2019, she said: "You know, as an actor I should be allowed to play any person, or any tree, or any animal because that is my job and the requirement of my job. There are a lot of social lines being drawn now, and a lot of political correctness is being reflected in art."

Johansson's next release will be Black Widow, which is slated to release on November 6.



## WHEN KATE WINSLET WAS RECOGNISED AS ROSE FROM TITANIC IN HIMALAYAS

**H**ollywood star Kate Winslet says she was overwhelmed when an old man in the Himalayas recognised her as Rose from Titanic during her trip to India. The 44-year-old actor, who starred alongside Leonardo DiCaprio (Jack Dawson) in the 1997 blockbuster as Rose DeWitt Bukater, said the moment made her emotional.

"Titanic was everywhere. A couple of years after it come out, I went to India. I was walking in the foothills of the Himalayas, just me with my backpack on my back and a man came towards me with a walking stick - he must have been 85 and was blind in one eye.

"He looked at me and said, 'You - Titanic'. I said yes and he just put his hand on his heart and said, 'Thank you'. I burst into tears. It really helped me understand how much that film had given to so many people," Winslet told Candis magazine.

The actor said she is proud of the James Cameron-directed movie, but the "huge success" made her uncomfortable. "I was leading quite a public life, which I was not prepared for at all. All of a sudden, people were looking at me, talking about me - I would read or hear



things about me which were just untrue. I'm only human and that hurt!

"My twenties were a bit of a roller coaster, in fact, with some amazing times but some hard times too. These days I look back and think, 'Whew - I went through all of that?'" she said.

## EXTRACTION 2 ON THE CARDS, CHRIS HEMSWORTH COULD RETURN FOR MORE ACTION

**D**irector Sam Hargrave has said that there is potential for a sequel to his film, Extraction. Hargrave, who made his feature debut with the Netflix action thriller, added that it wasn't always a part of the plan, but discussions about a follow-up began after studio executives saw potential in the story.

He told Collider, "It wasn't something (discussed) on set. As soon as it got mentioned, that thought of a sequel — because, I guess, Netflix was enjoying the dailies and things were coming together and people were like, 'Oh, this could be...'. You know, you talk about all these things. Is it a franchise? Is it all these things? Who knows until the movie comes out and the audience responds. They'll be the ones who decide. But it was talked about."

Hargrave added, "As soon as it was, Joe brought up an interesting point that most of the time, you get a sequel. Rarely do you go back in time into prequels. [...] You get the sense that Chris and Harbour have a great chemistry [...] so we thought that was a very interesting way — if you were to go



backwards in time — that you could play with the prequel to a story like this."

The filmmaker was referring to the dynamic between Chris Hemsworth's character, the mercenary Tyler Rake, and his old ally, played by David Harbour. The film ends ambiguously, and Hargrave had previously spoken about how Netflix had mandated that he leave the story open-ended, perhaps to leave room for a sequel.



## South African anti-apartheid activist Denis Goldberg dies

**JOHANNESBURG (TIP) :** South African anti-apartheid activist Denis Goldberg has died at his home near Cape Town, aged 87.

Goldberg was a prominent member of the now-ruling African National Congress and stood trial alongside Nelson Mandela. He spent 22 years in prison for his involvement with the ANC's fight against apartheid, the racist system of oppression imposed by the white minority government.

When his fellow accused were sent to Robben Island, as a white prisoner Goldberg was separated from them and imprisoned in the capital, Pretoria.

Goldberg's niece, Joy Noero, said the liberation stalwart died peacefully Wednesday after having lung cancer and diabetes.

Goldberg had continued his activism in post-apartheid South Africa and was a critic of former president Jacob Zuma, who stepped down in 2018 and faces multiple allegations of corruption.

Goldberg was a critic of the ANC's performance in government and the socio-economic conditions of the largely black poor majority in South Africa, one of the world's most unequal countries.

Tributes poured in Thursday for Goldberg, with many acknowledging the role he played in the fight against apartheid.

"His commitment to ethical leadership was unflinching and even during his advanced age he formed part of the movement of veterans of the struggle calling for reassertion of moral center of society," President Cyril Ramaphosa said.

"We will hold him in our thoughts and prayers as we say farewell at a time when we are not allowed to gather in numbers to say our goodbyes." "He was a member of a generation of leadership which shaped the country's history in profound ways," said Nelson Mandela Foundation chief executive Sello Hatang.

The ANC also paid tribute to Goldberg, saying "his was a life well-lived in the struggle for freedom in SA. We will miss him." — AP

# Europe still 'in the grip' of virus: WHO leader

**GENEVA (TIP):** The head of the World Health Organization's European office is warning the continent remains "in the grip" of the coronavirus pandemic even as about three-fourths of the region's countries are easing restrictive measures.

Dr Hans Kluge noted a reduction of cases in the region thanks to social distancing measures, adding: "We must monitor this positive development very closely."

He said Italy, Britain, France, Germany and Spain still have high numbers of cases, and pointed to increases in cases in Belarus, Russia, Kazakhstan and Ukraine.

Of the 44 countries in WHO Europe's region that have enacted domestic restrictions, 21 have already started easing those measures and another 11 plan to do so in the coming days, Kluge said.

"This virus is unforgiving. We must remain vigilant, persevere and be



patient, ready to ramp up measures as and when needed," he said. "COVID-19 is not going away anytime soon.

"The European region accounts for

46 percent of cases and 63 percent of deaths globally," he added. "The region remains very much in the grip of this pandemic." AP

## UK admits it could miss 100,000 daily virus tests target

**LONDON (TIP):** The British government has acknowledged that it may miss its self-imposed goal of conducting 100,000 tests for coronavirus a day by the end of Thursday.

But officials insist the UK is rapidly expanding the country's testing capacity as it prepares to gradually ease a nationwide lockdown.

The government has been criticised for failing to catch most cases of COVID-19 and now says wide-scale testing will be key to controlling the virus and lifting restrictions on business and daily life that were imposed more than a month ago.

Earlier this month, the government vowed to perform 100,000 tests a day by April 30.

The number has been climbing steadily, but the highest daily total reached so far is 52,000 on Wednesday.

Justice Secretary Robert Buckland said that "we're well on our way to ramping this up ... even if the target isn't met today".

He told the BBC that "100,000 is an important milestone, but frankly we need more". Britain's Conservative government is facing growing criticism as it becomes clear the country will have one of the world's highest coronavirus death tolls. On Wednesday the UK's official death toll from the virus leaped to more than 26,000 after several thousand deaths in nursing homes were added to the hospital total.

Only the United States and Italy have higher tolls, though not all countries use the same measures.

Chris Hopson, who heads NHS



**"What we need to know is what are we going to do in terms of the testing regime over the next six, eight, 10, 12 weeks as we come out of lockdown," Hopson said.**

Providers, an umbrella group for UK hospitals, said the 100,000-a-day target was a "red herring," and urged the government to set out a detailed strategy for who would get tested and when.

"What we need to know is what are we going to do in terms of the testing regime over the next six, eight, 10, 12 weeks as we come out of lockdown," Hopson said. He said 800,000 healthcare workers will need to be tested regularly to ensure they remain free of the virus.

Meanwhile, as other European countries begin to reopen businesses and schools, Prime Minister Boris Johnson is under pressure to reveal when and how the government will ease a nationwide lockdown that was imposed on March 23.

The restrictions are due to last at least until May 7. Johnson is due to speak at a news conference later and may give hints about the path ahead. He has warned that lifting restrictions too soon risks a second, even deadlier, wave of the outbreak.

Johnson, 55, only returned to work on Monday after recovering from a bout of COVID-19 that put him in intensive care.

On Wednesday his fiancée, Carrie Symonds, gave birth to the couple's son. AP

# UK Announces Fifth Round of Charter Flights from India

**NIRPAL SIHERGILL IN LONDON**

**LONDON (TIP):** The UK has announced seven further charter flights to bring over 2,000 stranded British travelers' home from India.

Once these flights are completed, over 15,000 British travelers will have been brought back from India on 59 flights chartered by the Government.

## Details of the flights are:

o Amritsar to London Heathrow on 5 May, 6 May, 7 May, 8 May, 9 May, 10 May, 11 May

Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon said:

"Our charter programme has already helped more than 10,000 British travelers return home from India by ensuring flights to the UK have run every day since 8 April, with thousands more due to depart in the coming days.

"These additional flights will help over 2,000 more people get back to their loved ones here in the UK. I would like to thank the Government of India for their help in making it happen."

Jan Thompson, Acting High



Commissioner to India, said:

"This fifth round of flights brings the total number of planes we have organized from India to 59. There have been daily departures from across the country for weeks, which have helped thousands of people get back to their friends and families in the UK.

"My team and I will continue to do all we can to support British people who remain in India."

As with the last round of flights, seats on the planes will be allocated to those who have already registered via the

government's online booking portal - CTM. Staff at the British High Commission in India will continue to provide assistance to those waiting to return to the UK.

Since the coronavirus outbreak began, the UK has worked consistently with governments, air carriers and travel companies to minimize disruption and help British travelers return home safely - supported with £75 million for special charter flights to priority countries like India, focused on helping the most vulnerable people.

## \$45 mn aid for global students in Australia

**MELBOURNE (TIP):** Australia's Victoria state on Wednesday announced a 45 million dollars relief package for international students facing economic hardships due to the coronavirus related restrictions, a move which would benefit thousands of students including Indians.

Over 40,000 overseas students, including those from India, are expected to receive a relief payment of up to 1,100 Australian dollars (\$716) as part of a state emergency support package.

State premier Daniel Andrews, while making the announcement, said to ensure Victoria's international students can buy the basics and get through to the other side of the crisis, the state government will establish a \$45 million International Student Emergency Relief Fund.

Another state of Australian Capital Territory (ACT) on Tuesday announced a new \$450,000 package to support vulnerable people living in ACT on temporary visas and international students who have lost their income. —PTI

## Johnson, Carrie announce birth of son

**LONDON (TIP):** The British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and fiancée Carrie Symonds on Wednesday announced the birth of a 'healthy baby boy'. The birth is believed to be slightly premature but both mother and baby are said to be doing well.

Johnson, who has just recovered from coronavirus, was present throughout the birth, at a government-run hospital in London. Johnson is set to miss his first Prime Minister's Questions (PMQs) in the House of Commons with the newly-elected Opposition Labour Leader Keir Starmer, who congratulated the UK PM on the "wonderful news".

The news comes days after Johnson, 55, returned to 10 Downing Street after hospitalisation for complications from COVID-19.

The baby becomes the third to be born to a British Prime Minister in office. —PTI

## 38 killed in S Korea fire

**SEOUL (TIP):** At least 38 people were killed on Wednesday when one of South Korea's worst fires in years broke out at a construction site near the capital, officials said. They said the death toll could rise because more people could be trapped inside the warehouse that was under construction in Icheon, just south of Seoul.

The blaze erupted early in the afternoon and hundreds of firefighters took several hours to put it out.

Officials were investigating the cause of the fire, which was possibly triggered by an explosion while workers were working on an underground level at the site. — AP

# China's battle against coronavirus major strategic achievement: Xi Jinping

**BEIJING (TIP):** Chinese President Xi Jinping has termed China's battle against COVID-19 as a major strategic achievement, as the ruling Communist Party is all set to hold the postponed Parliament session on May 22 amid a steady decline in the coronavirus cases.

China's National Health Commission (NHC) on Thursday said the country reported only four new confirmed COVID-19 cases on Wednesday, taking the total number to 82,862, while no death due to the disease was registered. The virus has claimed 4,633 lives in the country.

China's arduous efforts to contain the coronavirus have brought a decisive outcome to the fight of defending Hubei and its capital city Wuhan, Xi told a high-powered Central Committee meeting of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) on Wednesday.

The nationwide battle against the epidemic has gained major strategic achievements, the state-run Xinhua news agency quoted Xi as saying.

Xi said Hubei, including Wuhan, should continue strengthening community-level epidemic prevention and control. He asked officials to make efforts to contain the virus case at Heilongjiang Province bordering Russia, where a large number of Chinese returning from Russian cities were tested positive for coronavirus.

The meeting emphasised the need to accelerate work resumption and business reopening, help companies



especially micro, small and medium-sized enterprises address difficulties, and promote the recovery of pillar industries such as auto manufacturing, electronic information, new materials and bio-medicine, the report said.

The meeting stressed accelerating farm production and expanding sales channels for agricultural products to boost income for farmers.

The Hubei province and its capital Wuhan—where the COVID-19 first emerged in December last year—were the epicentres of the deadly virus, which later turned into a pandemic, bringing the world to a standstill.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues its explosive growth overseas, Xi said, noting the mounting pressure to prevent imported infections and the growing complexity of stemming domestic epidemic resurgence.

Xi demanded no relaxation in epidemic control to safeguard the hard-earned achievements, the report said.

According to the NHC, all the four COVID-19 patients reported on

Wednesday were imported cases.

The number of imported cases rose to 1,664, including 13 patients in severe condition, it said.

The CPC Central Committee meet was held amid mounting pressure for an international inquiry into the origin of coronavirus and the allegations that the deadly virus was originated from the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) before it spread across the world and wreaked havoc.

China has come under increasing global pressure over lack of transparency in its handling of the coronavirus pandemic, which has so far infected over 3,193,960 people and claimed more than 227,640 lives across the world.

State-run CGTN TV on Wednesday reported that American scientists are working with their Chinese counterparts to investigate the origin of the novel coronavirus, a prime demand of US President Donald Trump and several other countries.

The report said the China Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CCDCP) is facilitating the cooperation between Dr Ian Lipkin, Director for Centre for Infection and Immunity of Columbia University, and Prof Lu Jinhai of Sun-Yat-Sen University of Guangzhou to conduct the probe. "The two are working together to determine whether the virus emerged elsewhere in China before Wuhan in December" last year, the report said. PTI

# HERBAL PASTES, OIL MASSAGES TO COLOR YOUR GREY HAIR

**T**ired of applying chemical dyes to colour your grey hair?? Here are a few homemade pastes and mixes that you can use to naturally colour your hair. Natural colouring causes less damage to the hair say experts. Skin care expert Vasundhra Ravi suggests a few oil massages and herbal mixes to darken your hair. "They will not darken your hair like a chemical mix, but they will colour your hair and help keep it healthy," she says.

## HOMEMADE OIL

Take 50ml coconut oil, 50ml gingelly oil and 50ml olive oil. Mix all these and heat on low flame. In kadai, spurt 10gm mustard, 20gm curry leaves, 20gm dry amla and 20 henna leaves. Saute till they are almost dry. Now, add the oil and heat this mixture for another 10 minutes. Store it in an airtight bottle and keep it in direct sunlight for four days. Let the ingredients settle at the base. Now, use this oil and massage your scalp and hair every day. This oil helps darken your greying hair.

## HENNA PASTE

Make a paste out of henna and apply over the hair for two hours and rinse. After a few hours, mix 100g of indigo (auri) powder with warm water and make a paste. Apply this paste all over the hair. Leave it on for 45 minutes and rinse. You will be surprised to see that your grey hair has turned black to an extent. Apply this paste once a week.

## HAIR PACK

Make your own hair darkening pack by mixing the following together: henna leaves 50gm, aloe vera gel 20ml, haritaki or kadukkai skin 5gm, fresh seedless amla 20gm.



Grind all the above to a smooth paste, add the juice of half a lemon to this mixture and apply on the hair. Apply 10ml olive oil on hair prior to applying this pack. Leave on for 20 minutes and rinse to get a reddish-brown tint to your hair.

## OLIVE OIL MASSAGE

Olive oil is an excellent hair darkener. Slightly warm 20ml of olive oil and apply it on the scalp and give a gentle massage for eight minutes. Leave it on for one hour. Wash with homemade shikakai. Apply this twice a week to get back your beautiful dark hair.

## HENNA-AMLA-KADUKAI PASTE

Take henna powder 200gm, amla powder 25gm, kadukai powder 10gm, tulsi powder 10gm, tea decoction 100ml, eucalyptus oil 2ml, curd 100ml, lemon juice 10 drops, and olive oil 2tsp. Mix all the ingredients in an iron vessel and soak overnight. Next morning, apply this mixture on the scalp and hair. Leave it on for two hours, and rinse. Do not apply shampoo while

washing the hair. This paste gives a beautiful maroon tint to your hair. It also prevents further greying.

## TO GET NATURAL BURGUNDY TINT

Henna leaves 100gm, beetroot one (small), aloe vera 100gm and multani mitti 2tsp. Make a hair pack by blending henna leaves, beet root and aloe vera. Mix some multani mitti to the mixture. Apply this on your hair and leave it on for one hour. This paste gives a burgundy tint to hair.

## PREVENT PREMATURE GREYING

Take a handful of curry leaves, hibiscus leaves, karisalai leaves, coriander leaves and grind them together into a smooth paste. Add five drops of lemon juice to this paste. Apply on the scalp and the hair. Leave it on for an hour and then wash. Apply this paste once a week. Regular application of this pack can darken existing grey hair and it also prevents PREMATURE GREYING.

## FOOD CORNER



# Bread Biryani

## Ingredients

Basmati rice - 1 cup  
Coconut milk - 1 1/2 cup  
Green peas - 1/4 cup  
Radish - 1/4 cup, grated  
Carrot - 1/4 cup, grated  
Coconut - 1/4 cup, grated  
Onions - 2, chopped  
Bread slices - 4, crusts removed, sliced in small pieces  
Cashews - 5  
Almonds - 5, soaked, peeled  
Black pepper powder - 1/2 tsp  
Cumin powder - 1/2 tsp  
Gasa gasa - 1 tsp  
Cardamom - 1 Cloves - 1  
Cinnamon - 1  
Ginger garlic paste - 1 tblsp  
Ghee - 3 tblsp  
Curry leaves - few  
Coriander leaves - few  
Salt as per taste

## Method

- Dry roast and grind the cardamom, cloves and cinnamon to a fine powder.
- Heat little ghee in a pan. Fry the basmati rice for 30 to 45 seconds. Remove and keep aside.
- Add a little ghee to the pan and fry the bread pieces till crisp. Keep aside.
- Grind the almonds, cashewnuts, coconut and gasa gasa to a smooth paste.
- Heat a little ghee in a pressure cooker.
- Add the cinnamon powder, ginger garlic paste, onions, salt and curry leaves. Saute well for a minute or two.
- Add the radish, carrot, green peas and ground coconut paste.
- Stir well and add the coconut milk. Bring to a boil.
- Add the rice and pressure cook till 2 whistles.
- Add the cumin powder, pepper powder, bread slices, coriander leaves and mix well. Serve.

# COMPARING PARTNER COULD MAKE OR BREAK YOUR RELATIONSHIP



**Y**our happiness in a relationship and how much energy you devote to maintain that relationship depend on how the partner compares with other potential mates you may have, suggests new research.

The findings suggest that how well our partner fulfils our ideal preference is not very important. "We do not need ideal partners for relationship bliss. Instead, satisfaction appears to come, in part, from getting the best partner available to us," said one of the researchers Daniel Conroy-Beam from the University of Texas at Austin in the US.

For the study, published in the journal *Evolution and Human Behavior*, the researchers surveyed 259 adults -- 119 men and 140 women

-- who had been in relationships for an average of seven and a half years. Each participant rated the importance of 27 traits in an ideal mate and the extent to which they felt each trait described both their actual partner and themselves.

Participants also reported their relationship satisfaction and happiness.

The study discovered that satisfaction was not reliably dependent on how a partner compared with a person's idea of the perfect mate, but rather whether other potential mates better matched a person's ideal preferences. Those with partners more desirable than themselves were satisfied whether or not their partners matched their ideal preferences. But, participants with

partners less desirable than themselves were happy with their relationship only if their partner fulfilled their ideal preferences better than most other potential mates in the group, Conroy-Beam said.

In a follow-up study, the researchers again tested relationship satisfaction but also surveyed participants' mate retention efforts -- energy devoted to maintaining their relationships. They found that people with partners difficult to replace, either because their partner was more desirable than themselves or their partner more closely matched their ideal preferences than others in the group, reported being happier and devoted more effort to mate retention.



# SIGNS, TREATMENT AND PREVENTION OF LEUKEMIA

**R**ishi Kapoor, who was admitted to H N Reliance Hospital, Mumbai on 29 April 2019 after he complained of having breathing problems, passed away today. He was diagnosed with leukemia in 2018 and died after battling the disease for 2 years. Bollywood's original chocolate boy died at the age of 67. After Irrfan Khan's death, another beloved celeb's death has sent shock waves through the Bollywood industry and the nation. It has left people wondering what exactly is leukemia and how dangerous could it be?

Leukemia is a type of cancer that affects the blood and bone marrow. It is caused by the elevated number of white cells in the body. White blood cells protect our body from the invasion of harmful bacteria and other pathogens and control the growth of the abnormal cells. When they don't function properly, it leads to the growth of unnecessary white blood cells in the body. The excess growth starts to affect the organs and the body becomes unable to fight infections.

## Common Symptoms

- Excessive sweating
- Lethargy and weakness
- Sudden weight loss
- Night sweats
- Shortness of breath
- Headaches
- Pain in the bones
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Red spots on the skin
- Fever or chills
- Tendency to get bruises or bleeding easily
- Swollen spleen (pain under the left lower ribs)
- Frequent infections



## Risk Factors

The causes of this disease are not known, as reported by Healthline. But there are some risk factors that may lead to the disease:

- Smoking
- A genetic disorder like Down syndrome
- Blood disorders
- Continuous exposure to radiation
- Exposure to chemicals
- Family history of leukemia

## Types of leukemia

There are several types such as acute lymphoblastic leukemia, acute myeloid leukemia and chronic lymphocytic leukemia.

## Treatment

The treatment depends on the

type and stage of cancer. The treatment includes chemotherapy, radiation therapy, stem cell transplantation, biological or immune therapy. If the treatment doesn't work or cancer comes back, the doctor may go for gene therapy along with medications.

## Prevention

While some risk factors can't be avoided, so there is no permanent way to prevent the disease. However, you can do certain things to alleviate the risk:

- Avoid smoking or stop completely.
- Limit exposure to radiation.
- Do not have close contact with high-risk chemicals.
- Eat a healthy diet and exercise to support a strong immune system.



## LOCKDOWN CHALLENGE: GUIDE TO LOSE FACE FAT WITH HOME REMEDIES

**L**osing face fat and that double chin is no easy task and it takes time and effort to do so. If you are confused about what plan to follow to lose those chubby cheeks and get the jawline of your dreams, follow this ultimate guide to chisel your face. This list will walk you through a detailed 21 Day plan. Each day follow a skin care home remedy and a simple exercise, following which you will notice a visible change in your face. However, you have to make sure that there are no cheating moments involved while following this rigorous plan. The best part is that you can continue following this even after the lockdown.

### Coconut Oil Massage

Rich in vitamin E, coconut oil is an excellent skin moisturiser. Not just that, it keeps the skin hydrated which is necessary for your skin flexibility and elasticity. Apply this oil on your face and neck instead of face cream and let it stay for an hour. Then take warm water and lightly rinse your face to remove the excess coconut oil and let the remaining sit for the whole day.

### Chew A Sugar Free Gum

Chewing gum is the best when it comes to losing face fat, in the form of a workout. It keeps the face muscles active and keeps the skin toned. It cuts down the calories from your chubby cheeks. Do it for at least 20 minutes twice a day.

### Turmeric Face Pack

This king of spices has curcumin which has anti-aging properties. These properties help in maintaining healthy skin. Mix some turmeric powder with gram flour or besan and some curd to make a paste. Apply it on your face and leave it for 30 minutes. Wash it off with cold water. This will ensure a good tight skin texture.

### Rotating Tongue Exercise

The easiest face exercise to lose fat, this workout requires you to rotate your tongue with the mouth closed. Your tongue should touch the outer surface of your lower and upper teeth. Do this for 15 minutes both anti-clockwise and clockwise.

### Cucumber Peel Mask

Want to reduce a bloated face? Cucumber is your answer. This vegetable or salad is amazing for refreshing your skin and livening up. For face fat, all you got to do is make a paste of cucumber peels and apply that on your face.

## How our phones might be 'Trojan horse' for COVID-19

**I**f you've been wondering what to blame for the coronavirus' rapid spread, there's a good chance you're looking at it right now.

Scientists say our phones are "five-star hotels with premium heated spas, free buffet for microbes to thrive on" which should be washed as often as we wash our hands.

"You can wash your hands as many times as you like - and you should - but if you then touch a contaminated phone you are contaminating yourself all over again," said Australian molecular geneticist Lotti Tajouri.

He led a team which reviewed 56 prior studies on phone contamination, and concluded at the very least, our "third hand" should be cleaned at least once a day - preferably with the kind of hand sanitiser that's been in short supply lately, or devices which blast them with UV rays.

Phones are ideal breeding grounds for microbes, he said.

"They have temperature control, we keep them in our pockets, we are addicted to them. We talk into them and deposit droplets that can be full of viruses, bacteria - you name it. We eat with them, so we give nutrients to micro-organisms. And nobody - absolutely nobody - washes or decontaminates their phone."



In addition, while border control officers can ask questions and even check for symptoms of disease, they typically aren't in the habit of taking swabs from our phones away for testing - making them an ideal "Trojan horse" for bringing the virus in, Dr Tajouri claims.

SARS-CoV-2, the virus behind COVID-19, eventually dies if it can't infect a new host. But research earlier this year found it can survive three or four days on plastic and glass surfaces. Soap, strong UV light and sanitisers of at least 70 percent alcohol are effective killers when used correctly.

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### DR. SATISH AND GITANJLI ANAND



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## CANON SOFTWARE TURNS YOUR EOS CAMERA INTO AN OVERPOWERED WEBCAM

If you've been video chatting more often during the pandemic, you've probably noticed that most PC webcams are... not great. Canon might have a solution if you have one of its cameras hanging around, at least. Its newly released (via DPReview) EOS Webcam Utility Beta turns supporting DSLRs, mirrorless cameras and point-and-shoots into USB webcams for Windows 10 users. Yes, if you have an EOS-1D X Mark III hanging around, you can have one of the most professional-looking Zoom chats on the planet.

The beta currently only supports 25 cameras, although they include some of Canon's more popular interchangeable-lens cameras. These include more affordable cameras like the EOS Rebel series (such as the T100 and T6), the EOS M200. The PowerShot G5X Mark II, G7X Mark III and SX70 HS will also work. As we hinted earlier, though, you can also use higher-end cameras like the full-frame EOS R mirrorless.

This concept isn't completely new. It's common to see many livestreamers on Twitch and other services using DSLRs to boost the production quality of their feeds. Canon's utility makes that upgrade not only much more accessible, however, and expands it to a wider range of apps. If you happen to have compatible hardware and want a more flattering view of yourself than the mediocre cam built into your laptop, this might do the trick.

## Google's Zoom rival, called Meet, is now free to consumers

Google on Wednesday said it's making its teleconferencing service, called Google Meet, free to consumers. The move takes aim at Zoom, the rival video chat service that's become a household name during the stay-at-home era spurred by the novel coronavirus.

Previously, Meet was only available to paying customers of G Suite, Google's line of enterprise apps that includes Gmail, Drive and Docs. Until now, anyone could join a meeting by clicking on a link, but creating a meeting required a G Suite membership.

The free version of the product requires a Google account, and video calls have a 60-minute cap. But Google said it won't enforce that rule until after Sept. 30. The free version will also allow up to 100 participants and include features such as screen sharing and real-time captions.

The move underscores how crucial video chatting has become for a world stuck in physical isolation. Around the globe, schools, libraries, bars and other businesses deemed nonessential in a time of contagion crisis have closed their doors.

As millions of people shelter in place, Google says usage of Meet has surged. On Tuesday, CEO Sundar Pichai said the service is adding 3 million new users a day during the pandemic, up from 2 million new users a day earlier this month. Pichai said the service has 100 million meeting participants a day.

Still, the breakout product of the coronavirus lockdown has undoubtedly been Zoom. The service has ballooned from 10 million daily users in December to 300 million daily users now. But the service has been plagued by data-sharing issues, as well as "Zoom bombing," in which uninvited participants invade a video session. The drop-ins are sometimes coordinated attacks, filled with hate speech and harassment.

# RESEARCHERS DEVELOP HYDROGEL TO COOL DOWN ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Using electronic devices for too long can cause them to overheat which might slow them down but now researchers have developed a hydrogel that can both cool down electronics, such as cell phone batteries, and convert their waste heat into electricity.

According to the study, published in the Nano Letters, some components of electronic devices, including batteries, light-emitting diodes (known as LEDs) and computer microprocessors, generate heat during operation.

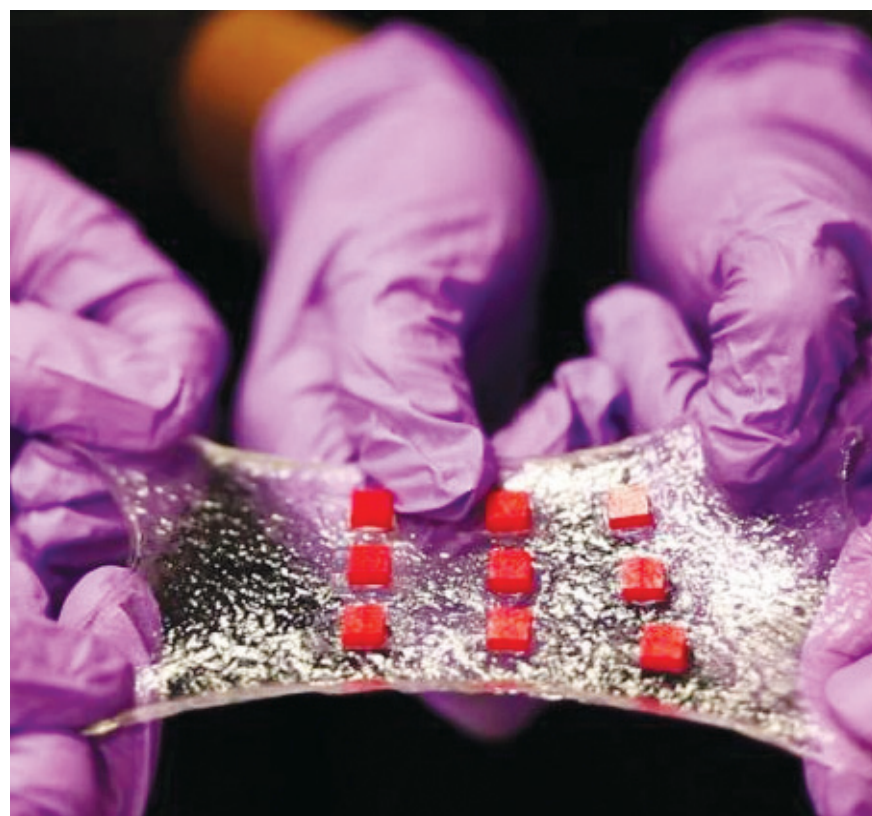
Overheating can reduce the efficiency, reliability and lifespan of devices, in addition to wasting energy.

The researchers from Wuhan University in China wanted to design a smart thermogalvanic hydrogel that could convert waste heat into electricity, while also lowering the temperature of the device.

So far, scientists have developed devices that can do one or the other, but not both simultaneously.

According to the findings, the research made a hydrogel consisting of a polyacrylamide framework infused with water and specific ions.

When they heated the hydrogel, two of the ions (ferricyanide and ferrocyanide) transferred electrons between electrodes, generating electricity. Meanwhile, water inside



the hydrogel evaporated, cooling it.

After use, the hydrogel regenerated itself by absorbing water from the surrounding air. To demonstrate the new material, the researchers attached it to a cell phone battery during fast discharging.

Some of the waste heat was converted into five microwatts of

electricity, and the temperature of the battery decreased by 68 Fahrenheit.

The reduced working temperature ensures safe operation of the battery, and the electricity harvested is sufficient for monitoring the battery or controlling the cooling system, the researchers noted.

# WHATSAPP CALLS TO NOW SUPPORT UP TO EIGHT PARTICIPANTS

WhatsApp on Tuesday said it will now allow up to eight people to connect on a group video call as an increasing number of people turn to digital platforms to connect with friends and family amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Facebook-owned company said over the last month, people on average are spending over 15 billion minutes talking each day on WhatsApp calls, well above a typical day before the pandemic.

"...we see that people all over the world are turning to voice and video calling on WhatsApp more than ever before. Group calling has been particularly useful and our users have asked to connect with more people at once," WhatsApp said in a blogpost.

Starting Tuesday, the company is doubling the number of participants one can have on a WhatsApp video or voice call from 4 to 8 people at a time, it added.

WhatsApp emphasised that like written messages, all calls on its platform are protected with end-to-end encryption.



"We have built group calling in a way that makes it available for as many users as possible, including people on lower-end devices and slow network conditions," it added.

WhatsApp said that to access the new, higher participant limit on WhatsApp calls, all participants in a call need to update to the latest version of WhatsApp available on iPhone or Android.

Video calling tools like Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, Zoom and

others have also seen a significant jump in user base and traffic as people connect while maintaining social distancing amid the coronavirus outbreak.

Last week, Facebook had introduced Messenger Rooms that will soon hold up to 50 people with no time limit.

It had added that the company will also add ways to create rooms from Instagram Direct, WhatsApp and Portal.

# RBI's liquidity support for mutual funds may struggle to be effective: Fitch

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** The Reserve Bank of India's liquidity support for mutual funds may struggle to be effective, as its success will hang on banks' appetite to take up the risks involved, amid low capital headroom and a likely increase in fresh non-performing loans, according to Fitch.

The RBI's Rs 50,000 crore Special Liquidity Facility for Mutual Funds (SLF-MF) will provide 90-day repo funding to banks, to extend liquidity to -- or purchase commercial paper and debt securities from -- local mutual funds.

The size of the SLF-MF appears broadly commensurate with the scale of the funds most at risk, Fitch notes.

"The official support measures announced for mutual funds in India may struggle to be effective, as undercapitalised banks are unlikely to be tempted to extend liquidity to the sector without capital relief on the facilities," Fitch Ratings said in a statement.

The facility's structure places the onus on banks to absorb the associated credit and capital risk, which may hinder their willingness to participate, it added.

The move by the banking regulator followed the suspension of redemptions in six Franklin Templeton bond funds, with combined assets under management (AUM) of approximately USD 4.1 billion equivalent, on April 23, 2020, and outflows from other funds in March 2020.

Fitch further said that "the success of the SLF-MF will hang on banks' appetite to take up the risks involved, against the system-wide backdrop of low capital headroom and a likely increase in fresh non-performing loans."

Indian open-end mutual funds saw aggregate outflows of almost 20 per cent in March. Within this, overnight funds, the most conservative variant in



India, saw assets jump by almost 50 per cent, whereas most other fund types saw outflows.

"Fitch believes funds classified as "Credit Risk Funds" are most at risk if redemptions continue (their AUM declined by 10 per cent in March), particularly where funds have exposure to less liquid securities, such as unlisted securities, and/or have demonstrably higher risk appetite through exposure to defaulted entities such as IL&FS, Religare Finvest, and/or Dewan Housing," it said.

Fitch said Mutual funds form a conduit between retail and institutional investors and financial markets. Most mutual funds assume liquidity risk, through offering investors the ability to redeem daily, while investing only a limited portion of their portfolios only in risk-free assets or cash.

## INDIA NEEDS TO OPEN ECONOMY IN MEASURED WAY: RBI EX-CHIEF RAJAN

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** India needs to be cleverer in lifting the lockdown and open up its economy in a "measured way" soon as it does not have the capacity to support people across the spectrum for too long, former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan said on Thursday.

He was deliberating on the economic impact of the COVID-19 in a conversation with former Congress president Rahul Gandhi.

Rajan also asserted that India cannot afford to be a divided house especially in times when "challenges are so big".

The dialogue between Gandhi and Rajan was a first of its kind initiative that was broadcast on Congress' social media handles.

To Gandhi's question on how much money would be needed to help the poor in the current situation, the former RBI chief said India needs Rs 65,000 crore to help the poor in the times of pandemic and considering its total GDP, it can afford to do that.

## Indians buy US stocks as markets slump at home

**MUMBAI (TIP):** More Indian investors are turning to US stocks to escape tumbling markets at home and pick up exposure to global technology giants that are rising through the coronavirus-led market turmoil.

With more mom-and-pop investors chasing overseas stock investments that were until now a hobby of the wealthy, brokers that help investors navigate these trades through India's highly restrictive cross-border investment rules are thriving.

Vested Finance, an investment firm that helps Indians buy or sell US stocks, opened 4,000 new accounts in March, double than in February. The company usually sees a 30% rise in account openings each month.

Pranav Mehta, who owns an electronic parts manufacturing company, is one such investor. As his business hit a downturn, Mehta bought one share each of Amazon.com, Adobe, Microsoft, NVIDIA and Mastercard last year.

"Technology is the future," Mehta said. "If you want exposure to technology, you have to bag US stocks."

## Oil prices rise amid early signs of fuel demand picking up

**O**il prices jumped on Thursday, buoyed by signs that the US crude glut is not growing as quickly as expected and that fuel demand battered by Covid-19 restrictions is starting to pick up.

West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures climbed to a high of \$17.75 a barrel and were up 9.2%, or \$1.39, at \$16.45 at 0640 GMT. The US benchmark surged 22% on Wednesday.

Brent was up 5.6%, or \$1.27 at \$23.81 a barrel in light trading, with the June contract expiring on Thursday. The contract hit a high of \$25 earlier in the session, having posted a 10% gain on Wednesday.

The most active Brent crude contract for July was up \$1.15 or about 5%, at \$25.38 a barrel.

US crude inventories grew by 9 million barrels last week to 527.6 million barrels, US Energy Information Administration data showed, well below the 10.6 million-barrel rise analysts polled by Reuters had expected. US gasoline stockpiles fell by 3.7 million barrels from record highs the previous week, with a slight rise in fuel demand offsetting a rebound in refinery output.

"If we see a continuation of this trend in the coming weeks, it could suggest the worst might be behind the oil market," ING's head of commodities strategy Warren Patterson said. Adding to positive sentiment, China Petroleum & Chemical Corp (Sinopec) said on Thursday its daily sales of refined oil products have risen to more than 90% of levels seen before the coronavirus outbreak.

"WTI could quickly move to \$20 a barrel and Brent to \$30 a barrel in this environment," said Jeffrey Halley, senior market analyst at OANDA brokerage in Singapore.

## Google ad sales steady after coronavirus drop; Alphabet leads tech share rally

**SAN FRANCISCO/BENGALURU (TIP):** A drop in Google ad sales steadied in April and some consumers returned to using the search engine for shopping in addition to finding novel coronavirus information, parent Alphabet Inc said on Tuesday, sparking an 8% rally in shares.

The share rally to \$1,329.81 after hours brought the stock almost back to where it started the year.

Some financial and advertising analysts had estimated ad sales declines of up to 20% in the coming quarters, with hotels, airlines, film studios and other big spenders cutting ad buys because of the coronavirus pandemic.

But Alphabet said search ads, its most lucrative business, saw revenue decline by a mid-teens percentage in late March compared with a year earlier and that the slowdown did not worsen this month.

The company also is working to lure money from advertisers that normally sponsor sporting events canceled by the coronavirus. "While, obviously, there's an impact on the economy and we're not immune to that, the engagement from advertisers across our products and with our teams has been very robust," Alphabet Chief Executive Sundar Pichai told analysts on Tuesday.

Alphabet Chief Financial Officer Ruth Porat still warned that she anticipated "the second quarter will be a difficult one" because the early April trends may not hold.

But Nicole Perrin, an analyst at ad consultancy eMarketer, said the first-quarter results matched "relatively optimistic scenarios" and left her "cautiously optimistic" about the current quarter.

Alphabet's overall revenue in the first quarter was \$41.2 billion, up 13% compared with the same period last year. The average estimate among financial analysts tracked by Refinitiv was \$40.29 billion, up 10.87%, expecting the slowest growth since 11.1% in the second quarter of 2015.



## 305 mn may lose job due to Covid: Int'l Labor Organization

**GENEVA (TIP):** The United Nations' main labour body again raised its prediction of job losses due to the coronavirus pandemic, estimating the equivalent of 305 million full-time jobs could be lost in the second quarter alone.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) says the expansion of longer lockdown measures has underpinned the increase from its previous estimate of losses 195 million full-time job equivalents — based on an average 48-hour work week — in the current quarter.

The agency, which unites business, labour groups and governments, estimated how many work hours are likely to be lost, and calculated how many full-time jobs that would make.

The International Labor Organization also projects that 1.6 billion workers in the "informal economy," which includes work without proper contracts or oversight by government regulation and taxes, "stand in immediate danger of having their livelihoods destroyed." That's nearly half the global workforce of 3.3 billion people.



## 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@bejandaruwalla.com](mailto:info@bejandaruwalla.com) and on phone**

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**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 May 4 - May 10, 2020

**ARIES:** Ganesha says Balance, peace, a sense of equipoise are all there for you from the beginning. You are in greater harmony with your environment - both at home and at work. There is far less tension as a result. Loved ones, family and spouse see the tender, caring side of you and love it, as you do! You're virtually willing to go out on a limb to do things for those who matter to you. It makes the domestic scene comfortable, happy, relaxed.

**TAURUS:** This period it's all about people, your reactions to, as well as interaction with them. There's a greater depth in all relationships. Even if you don't get on with someone, you will be intense about it. So also, with those you love / care for / are affectionate with, there is greater intensity. In any case, you have to think about and keep busy with your own keenness, not only to handle money matters, but to create / explore new avenues of earning.

**GEMINI:** Hard work is your mainstay now. You want to get places - and in a real hurry, too. You're happy at the workplace and it's easy to put in your best. Effort and enterprise fuse beautifully. It's all the result of your own changed attitude which is more attuned to, and in harmony with, those around you. A good start, indeed, says Ganesha. Harmony at work reflects on the home front too.

**CANCER:** You're thinking big, and operations are now definitely on the mega - scale for you, says Ganesha. Larger financial issues like funds / loans / taxes / stock options are handled, perhaps for the office / business. You need to continue to be realistic and also gentle in your handling of all this. However, the main trend for this month is strongly and squarely on family and money matters, though not necessarily in that order.

**LEO:** You realise that your future happiness depends on choices made now - it is your own attitude that will decide whether you're a winner or not. Once again, there will be a preoccupation with extra income - you think of extra work, moonlighting, even a job - switch if it will help matters. BUT there is no selfish motive in the spurt in your creativity and inventiveness. You gain much in terms of strength and support as well as inspiration.

**VIRGO:** An about - turn seems to come over you in this phase. Your mood is one of rashness, or certainly a keenness to take calculated risks, in an attempt to brighten future prospects. Perhaps you need to think seriously and pray for inspiration to make the right choices. It's not a time for bluster and bravado. You are convinced that you (and by extension your family) want a better lifestyle and so embark seriously on shifting to a better house / locality.

**LIBRA:** Ganesha sends you a time in which you will bend every sinew to get things just right. Ideas flood in and preoccupy your mind greatly, mainly regarding new ventures / deals. Your thinking has put you dead - centre on the right track! It will reflect most strongly in those aspects of life where equality of partners is desirable - both love / marriage and business. Also, in striving to balance income and expenditure.

**SCORPIO:** You're energized, enthusiastic, forward - looking. In this phase, your plans may go into top gear. A marvellous boost to your creativity as I've just said. You also derive strength and support as well as inspiration from close friends, family and your spouse / partner. Closeness, bonding, "good vibes", and therefore, meaningful achievements all come to you. You are open to new ideas, new approaches.

**SAGITTARIUS:** A time when you will re - think your priorities, and two strong concerns - achievements at work, and pleasurable times with family - emerge as equally balanced. It's what most people strive for. You continue to be more restrained, more low - key in all your activities. Funds and finances are low - key, but are approaching a point of either clearer investment or shared use so that there is a sense of achievement.

**CAPRICORN:** A period of daring, courage and determination. You are willing, even eager, to take risks, chance your arm and your heart. You are willing to lay down your heart for your sweetheart to trample over, if it gets you what you want, but it just may not. This realisation will come and it mellows you, so that you will be less demanding and more reasonable in your approach to both work and relationships.

**AQUARIUS:** Courage came to you last period, and the testing times comes now. The reasons are: a) sky - high expenses and outflow of money; b) extra assignments, perhaps even a stint of moonlighting to cope with expenses; in short, extra work, c) putting yourself out on a limb in your efforts to help someone else whom you have sympathy for. Risks and chances need to be weighed carefully.

**PISCES:** A sense of ease and relaxation comes to you in this phase; you are far less keyed - up, much more laid - back than before. It could be because the theme of the new monthly trend is family, and family matters. This is partly because of your own sympathetic handling of matters that pertain to your property, house and home, ancestral property / wealth / assets shared with other members / relatives / kin.

## Birthday Horoscope May 4 - May 10, 2020

**MAY 4:** Ganesha says Thinking carefully about what you say and how you're going to say it before you open your mouth can keep you out trouble on this day when communication can set off a powder keg.

**MAY 5:** Venus could draw you some positive attention. You'll also be more inclined to treat yourself nicely, and that's not such a bad idea.

**MAY 6:** The stability of home is apt to have been forcefully, tensely challenged.

Residential, family, or partnership difficulties require attention, but then you should be able to have some fun.

**MAY 7:** If social interactions feel tense, backing off will help you regain your comfort level. Saturn's station puts you on the path to expressing yourself more responsibility - emotionally, creatively, and sexually.

**MAY 8:** A considerate gesture can promote harmony. Still, as the day progresses, you may

find it beneficial not to involve others so much in your undertakings.

**MAY 9:** You may find yourself saddled with obligation or overwhelmed by choices, which could put you in a defensive mood. Don't surrender so much in your undertakings.

**MAY 10:** If you're not completely off the hook, you'll at least have more of an instinct about what to do. The important thing is to keep busy.

# KEDARNATH: THE DOOR TOWARDS SALVATION

**K**edarnath is amongst the holiest pilgrimages for the devout Hindus. It is set amidst the stunning mountainscape of the Garhwal Himalayas at the head of the Mandakini River. Kedar is another name of Lord Shiva, the protector, and the destroyer. Shiva is considered the embodiment of all passions – love, hatred, fear, death and mysticism which are expressed through various forms. The shrine of Kedarnath is very scenically placed and is surrounded by lofty, snow – covered mountains, and during summer grassy meadows covering the valleys. Immediately behind the temple, is the high Kedar dome peak, which can be sighted from great distances. The sight of the temple and the peak with its perpetual snows is simply enthralling.

Due to extreme weather conditions, the temple is open only between the end of April (Akshaya Tertiya) to Kartik Purnima (the autumn full moon, usually November). During the winters, the vigrahas (deities) from Kedarnath temple are brought to Ukhimath and worshiped there for six months. Lord Shiva is worshiped as Kedarnath, the 'Lord of Kedar Khand', the historical name of the region.

All of us remember Kedarnath to be the worst affected area during the 2013 flash floods in North India. The temple complex, surrounding areas, and Kedarnath town suffered extensive damage, but the temple structure did not suffer any "major" damage, apart from a few cracks on one side of the four walls which was caused by the flowing debris from the higher mountains. A large rock among the debris acted as a barrier, protecting the temple from the flood. The surrounding premises and other buildings in the market area were heavily damaged.

The unstable temple is not directly accessible by road and has to be reached by 14 kilometers (8.7 mi) uphill trek from Gaurikund. Pony and manchan service are available to reach the structure. The temple was built by Pandavas and revived by Adi Sankaracharya and is one of the twelve Jyotirlingas, the holiest Hindu shrines of Shiva. It is one of the 275 Paadal Petra Sthalams, expounded in Tevaram.

The presiding image of Kedarnath in the form of lingam is of irregular shape with a pedestal 3.6 m (12 ft) in circumference and 3.6 m (12 ft) in height. There is a small pillared hall in front of the temple, that has images of Parvathi and of the five Pandava princes. There are five temples around namely Badari-year; Madhya Maheswara, Tunganatha, Rudra Nath and Kallesvara. The first hall inside Kedarnath Temple contains statues of the five Pandava brothers, Lord Krishna, Nandi, the vehicle of Shiva and Virabhadra, one of the guards of Shiva. Statue of Draupadi and other deities are also installed in the main hall. An unusual feature of the temple is the head of a man carved in the triangular stone fascia. Such a head is seen carved in another temple nearby constructed on the site where the marriage of Shiva and



Parvati was held. Adi Shankara was believed to have revived this temple, along with Badrinath and other temples of Uttarakhand; he is believed to have attained Mahasamadhi at Kedarnath. Behind the temple is the samadhi mandir of Adi Sankara.

According to Hindu mythology, during the Mahabharata war, the Pandavas killed their relatives; in order to absolve themselves of this sin, the Pandavas undertook a pilgrimage. But Lord Vishweshwara was away in Kailasa in the Himalayas. On learning this, the Pandavas left Kashi. They reached the Himalayas via Hardwar. They saw Lord Shankara from a distance. But Lord Shankara hid from them. Then Dharmaraj said: "Oh, Lord, You have hidden yourself from our sight because we have sinned. But, we will seek You out somehow. Only after we take your Darshan would our sins be washed away. This place, where You have hidden Yourself will be known as Guptkashi and become a famous shrine." From Guptakashi (Rudraprayag), the Pandavas went ahead till they reached Gaurikund in the Himalayas valleys. They wandered there in search of Lord Shankara. While doing so Nakul and Sahadev found a he-buffalo which was unique to look at. Then Bheema went after the buffalo with his mace. The buffalo was clever and Bheema could not catch it. But Bheema managed to hit the buffalo with his mace. The buffalo had its face hidden in a crevice-in the earth. Bheema started to pull it by its tail. In this tug-of war, the face of the buffalo went straight to Nepal, leaving its hind part in Kedar. The face of the buffalo is

Doleshwar Mahadev located in Siptol, Bhaktapur, Nepal.

On this hind part of Mahesha, a JyotirLinga appeared and Lord Shankara appeared from this light. By getting a Darshan of Lord Shankar, the pandavas were absolved of their sins. The Lord told the Pandavas, "From now on, I will remain here as a triangular shaped JyotirLinga. By taking a Darshan of Kedarnath, devotees would attain piety". A triangular shaped rock is worshipped in Garbhagruha of the temple. Surrounding Kedarnath, there are many symbols of the Pandavas. Raja Pandu died at Pandukeshwar. The tribals here perform a dance called "Pandav Nritya". [citation needed] The mountain top where the Pandavas went to Swarga, is known as "Swargarohini", which is located off Badrinath. When Darmaraja was

leaving for Swarga, one of his fingers fell on the earth. At that place, Dharmaraj installed a Shiva Linga, which is the size of the thumb. To gain Mashisharupa, Shankara and Bheema fought with maces. Bheema was struck with remorse. He started to massage Lord Shankara's body with ghee. In memory of this event, even today, this triangular Shiva JyotirLinga is massaged with ghee. Water and Bel leaves are used for worship. When Nar-Narayan went to Badrika village and started the worship of Parthiva, Shiva appeared before them. Nar-narayan wished that for the welfare of the humanity, Shiva should remain there in his original form. Granting their wish, in the snow-clad Himalayas, in a place called Kedar, Mahesha himself stayed there as a Jyoti. Here, He is known as Kedareshwara.

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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."**

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contd from page 1

## Indian-American-led clinical...

Trump told reporters in response to a question on the latest result of the clinical trial of remdesivir.

The White House described the development as "quite good news".

The pharma company also said that it is also aware of positive data emerging from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases' (NIAID) study of the investigational antiviral remdesivir for the treatment of the COVID-19.

"We understand that the trial has met its primary endpoint and that NIAID will provide detailed information at an upcoming briefing," it said.

Remdesivir is not yet licensed or approved anywhere globally and has not been demonstrated to be safe or effective for the treatment of the COVID-19.

The study sought to determine whether a shorter, five-day course of remdesivir would achieve similar efficacy results as the 10-day treatment regimen used in multiple ongoing studies of remdesivir, the company said.

"These data are encouraging as they indicate that patients who received a shorter, 5-day course of remdesivir experienced similar clinical improvement as patients who received a 10-day treatment course," said Aruna Subramanian, MD, Clinical Professor of Medicine, Chief, Immunocompromised Host Infectious Diseases, Stanford University School of Medicine, and one of the lead investigators of the study.

"While additional data are still needed, these results help to bring a clearer understanding of how treatment with remdesivir may be optimized, if proven safe and effective," Subramanian said.

The company said it will share additional remdesivir data from the company's open-label Phase three SIMPLE trial in patients with severe COVID-19 disease shortly.

Dr Anthony Fauci, a key member of the White House coronavirus task force, told reporters at a media briefing with Trump that Gilead results from the remdesivir clinical trial for treating the disease showed "quite good news".

"So that's something that will go with 31 per cent improvement, doesn't seem like a knockout, 100 per cent, it is a very important proof of concept," Fauci said.

"This is very optimistic, the mortality rate trended towards being better in the sense of less deaths in the REM designate group. Eight per cent versus 11 per cent in the placebo group. So bottom line. You're going to hear more details about this this will be submitted to a peer reviewed journal, and will be peer reviewed appropriately," said Fauci.

In an earlier interview to Stanford Medicine, Subramanian said that during normal times, a phase three clinical trial typically takes months of planning, after years of research before it is underway.

"But these aren't normal times. With a fast-moving pandemic bearing down and no approved treatments available, researchers are, like everyone else, desperate for answers, and they have ramped up their efforts to find solutions. Remdesivir jumped to the top of the list of potential treatments in part because it was farthest along in the approval process," Subramanian said.

By the end of February, as the virus spread in the United States, there were at least five clinical trials of remdesivir underway.

China initiated the first two studies in February, followed later that month by the Gilead trials for severe and moderate patients and the NIH trial. By the end of

March, Gilead had expanded to 100 testing sites both in the United States and abroad, and the NIH trial had expanded to 60 sites, 50 of those in the United States, Stanford Medicine reported.

A coronavirus infection occurs when the germ enters the body's airways through the nose, mouth or eyes, then lodges in the cells in the lining of the lung's airways, where it quickly starts to make millions of copies of itself, wreaking havoc on the lungs, Subramanian told the Medical publication.

The virus makes copies of itself by inserting its own genes into the human cell's genetic machinery, basically hijacking the replication process of the human cell.

Remdesivir, like other anti-virals, is designed to target the system the virus uses to replicate, acting as a cap that prevents the virus from making new copies of itself or infecting other cells, she said. (Source: PTI)

## Indian Origin Long Island Man...

Brentwood, New York, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, and price-gouging customers of his retail store in Plainview, New York. If convicted, Singh faces up to one year in prison.

Incidentally, it is the first case in the country under the DPA.

According to the complaint, beginning in mid-March 2020, Singh - who operates a retail store selling sneakers and apparel - began accumulating that merchandise at his store and a nearby warehouse. At the same time, he set aside a section of his store for so-called "COVID-19 Essentials," which he then sold to the public at inflated prices, including but not limited to N-95 filtering face piece respirators, PPE face masks, PPE surgical masks, PPE face shields, PPE gloves, PPE coveralls, medical gowns and clinical-grade sanitizing and disinfecting products.

Between March 25, 2020 and April 8, 2020, Singh allegedly received deliveries at his retail store and warehouse of 40 shipments of disposable face masks weighing more than 1.6 tons, 14 shipments of disposable surgical gowns weighing more than 2.2 tons, six shipments of hand sanitizer weighing more than 1.8 tons and seven shipments of digital thermometers weighing approximately 253 pounds. These and other items - some of which had been officially designated as scarce - were advertised and sold at Singh's retail store at prices far in excess of prevailing market prices. For example, records obtained during a judicially-authorized search of the store indicate that three-ply disposable face masks that Singh purchased for a per-unit price of \$0.07 were resold by Singh for a per-unit price of \$1.00 - a markup of approximately 1,328 percent. The seized records also reveal that Singh completed bulk sales at inflated prices to organizations serving vulnerable senior citizens and children battling the virus.

On April 14, 2020, Postal Inspectors executed a search warrant at Singh's retail store and a consensual search of the warehouse and seized 23 pallets containing more than 100,000 face masks, 10,000 surgical gowns, nearly 2,500 full-body isolation suits and more than 500,000 pairs of disposable gloves.

Richard P. Donoghue, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, Craig Carpenito, head of the Department of Justice's nationwide COVID-19 Hoarding and Price Gouging Task Force, and Philip R. Bartlett, Inspector-in-Charge, United States Postal Inspection Service, New York Division (USPIS), announced the filing of the complaint.

(Read full story at [www.theindianpanorama.news](http://www.theindianpanorama.news))

## Congress questions 68,607...

The party cited a reply of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to a Right to Information (RTI) query Act and claimed that until September 2019, the government has waived loans worth ₹6.66 lakh crore since 2014.

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi in a tweet said though the government had refused to answer him in Parliament, the RBI has now put out the list, including the BJP's friends.

"I asked a straight question in Parliament - state the names of the 50 top bank loan defaulters in the country. The Finance Minister refused to answer the question. Now the RBI has given the names of Nirav Modi, Mehul Choksi and many of BJP's 'friends' in the list of bank frauds. That is why this truth was held back from Parliament," Mr. Gandhi tweeted in Hindi.

Addressing an online press conference, Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said, "This is a classic case of promoting the 'dupe, deceive and depart' policy of the Modi government, which can no longer be accepted and the Prime Minister has to answer."

Mr Surjewala said while the entire country is fighting the coronavirus, the Centre doesn't have money to pay to States but still decided to write off ₹68,307 crore of defaulters.

"This reflects the misconceived priorities and dishonest intentions of the Modi government," he said.

Former Union Finance Minister P. Chidambaram on Thursday said banks should show loans taken by fugitives Vijay Mallya, Mehul Choksi and Nirav Modi as 'outstanding loans' in their account books instead of writing them off.

"The only way to undo the monumental error is for RBI to direct the banks concerned to reverse the entries and continue to show the unrecovered loans from the fugitives as 'outstanding loans' on their books and take steps to recover them," said Mr. Chidambaram in a series of tweets.

"The debate on waiver or write-off is academic. People who are mighty pleased are Nirav Modi, Mehul Choksi and Vijay Mallya! Rules are made by human beings. If a rule can be made, it can be unmade too," he added.

## Open up economy in measured way: Raghuram Rajan

In a video conversation with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, Rajan said it was all too easy to have a lockdown forever but obviously that was unsustainable for the economy. "We need to open up in a measured way but as fast as possible so that people start having jobs. We do not have the capacity to support people across the spectrum for too long," Rajan said.

On a question from Gandhi about which part of the economy could be opened up, Rajan said, "While trying to bend the curve of infections, we have to start thinking about restarting people's livelihoods. First, open places where you can maintain distancing, not just at the workplaces but also distancing to and from the workplace. A lot of work needs to be done both on creating structures, as well as ensuring that the workplace is relatively safe."

On opening the lockdown given the country's limited Covid testing capacity, Rajan said: "We have to be cleverer about opening up. Perhaps do mass testing. Take a mass sample, say 1,000 samples and check if there is any sign of the virus in those mass samples, go deeper."

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# UTTARAKHAND: NESTLED IN THE LAP OF THE HIMALAYAS

Uttarakhand is one of the most beautiful northern states of India located on the southern slope of the Himalayan range. Mighty Himalayan peaks and glaciers are on its north where it borders Tibet. Nepal is on its east, Indian state of Uttar Pradesh is on south and Himachal Pradesh lies on its west and northwest. 65% of its area is covered by dense forests that are home to Royal Bengal tiger, leopards and many other endangered animal and plant species. The glaciers of two of the most important rivers—Ganga and Yamuna—are located here.

It has something to offer to every kind of traveller. For wildlife lovers, Jim Corbett National Park—the oldest national park of the Indian subcontinent is a must visit. Many rare Himalayan birds can also be spotted here besides Pangot and Sattal. For adventure seekers there are some of India's best trekking trails like Valley Of Flowers, Roopkund, and Chopta-Chandrashila. It also provides immense opportunities for adventure sports, such as skiing at Auli and white water rafting at Shivpuri. Popularly known as the 'Land of Gods', it is home to numerous holy places like Gangotri, Yamotri, Kedarnath, Badrinath, Rishkesh and Haridwar. Therefore, thousands of pilgrims through the state every year. Amazing hill stations like Chakrata, Mukteshwar, Dhanaulti and Munsiyari make Uttarakhand a sought after tourist destination for leisure trips. Here's a list of destinations in Uttarakhand that every nature lover would love to visit.

## CHAKRATA

Having breakfast with the view of snow-covered Himalayan peaks on a lazy morning while soft rays of winter sun embrace your body and soul while cool breeze kisses you is something city people always crave for. Chakrata located at a distance of 330 km from Delhi, is a tiny hamlet which is a perfect place to do so. There are two routes to drive from Delhi to Chakrata, one is via Panipat and Kurukshetra and the second one is via Loni and Saharanpur, which supposedly is more beautiful and has less traffic.

Chakrata is a small cantonment town in Dehradun district resting at an elevation of about 7500 ft. The town gets a magnificent view of the snow covered Himalayas and is covered in deodar, Himalayan oak and rhododendron forest. Many day trips to places like Deoban, Koti, Kanasar can be done with Chakrata as base. There are some easy treks also around Chakrata that your hotel guys can arrange for you. There are not many hotels in the area so make sure to book your accommodation in advance. Chakrata is a year round destination; the winter season is perfect to experience snow, greenery is at its best during the monsoon season and the summer season too is quite pleasant.

## AULI

Auli is one of the most beautiful places of Uttarakhand. Bordered by snow-covered Himalayan peaks, Auli is enveloped in dense golden oak and pine forest with



green meadows and slopes ranging from a height of 2519 m to 3049 m. It is considered to be a world-class spot for skiing. GMVN winter resort here provides skiing facility, besides ski training for aspirants. Almost from everywhere in Auli, you can enjoy stunning views of the lofty mountain ranges—Nanda Devi, Mana Paravat and Kamat. The golden rays of sun on the snow-laden peaks fill the atmosphere with a divine glow. The 3rd highest peak of the world—Nanda Devi gleams like the crown of the region. There is an open cable-car to go up to the spot where skiing is done. Even if you do not want to ski, you have plenty of things to do. Climb up the slopes, play with snow, ride a sledge and who knows you might feel like trying skiing too. The best time to visit Auli is in between December and March.

## CORBETT

Spread across an area of 520.8 sq km, Jim Corbett National Park is located in Nainital district of Uttarakhand. It is the oldest national park, and is named after Jim Corbett who was the main person behind this establishment. The park is divided in 5 zones—Bijrani, Jhirna, Durgadevi, Dhikala, Sitavani—and is inhabited by royal Bengal tiger, leopard, jungle cat, barking deer, hog deer, cheetal, sloth bears, otters, Himalayan goral,

Indian pangolins, langur and many other wild animals. Many rare birds can also be spotted in the region.

Gorgeous Corbett National Park is one of the favourite destinations equally for wildlife lovers and weekenders. It is just 235 km away from capital city and can be reached in couple of hours. It features splendid landscapes and offers a good amalgam of hills, rivers, forests, marshlands and grasslands. The park is open from the months of November through June. The park is kept closed in the monsoon season as the roads inside the park get washed away due to rain. After the monsoon season, repair work starts and ends only by November.

## TEHRI DAM

A beautiful uphill drive through the hills covered in pines and small villages will take you to this dam. It is built on the Bhagirathi River in Uttarakhand and is the tallest dam in India. It is counted amongst 5 highest dams in the world, with 855 ft high rock and earth-fill embankment that makes it an engineering marvel. Its length is 1886 ft, crest width is 66 ft and base width is 3701 ft and generates 2400 MW of power. There is a viewpoint near the Bhagirathipuram bus stop from where you can have a majestic view of the entire dam. During the construction of the Tehri

Dam, a huge water body was created. The tourism department has developed this 44 sq km artificial lake, as a tourist spot with arrangements of various water sports like jet-ski, kayaking, canoeing, boating, diving, snorkelling etc on the lake. You can also visit the botanical garden, located at New Tehri, that features a range of beautiful flowers.

## MUKTESHWAR

Staying in middle of fruit orchards in tents and eating garden fresh meals while looking at the Himalayan peaks covered in fresh snow are a few of the many beautiful memories I have of Mukteshwar. You can walk through the dense pine forest and enjoy stunning views of the mighty mountains. Situated at an altitude of 7500 ft in the lap of Kumaon hills, Mukteshwar is an ideal nature get away from Delhi. It just takes 7 hrs from Delhi to reach Mukteshwar via Gajraula, Rampur, Haldwani and Bhowali. Summer months (March to July) are the best months to visit Mukteshwar. If you want to experience snow, visit during Jan or Feb when the whole area is covered in snow and looks stunningly beautiful. If you happen to visit this place around the month of June, the harvesting season, you'd find many fruits like peaches, plum and apricot.

# Japan's PM says impossible to hold Olympics unless coronavirus contained

**TOKYO (TIP):** It will be impossible to host the Tokyo Olympic Games next year unless the coronavirus pandemic is contained, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said on Wednesday.

The International Olympic Committee and the Japanese government postponed the Games last month until July 2021 because of the impact of the coronavirus outbreak.

With the epidemic's worldwide infection rate climbing and experts suggesting a vaccine is still a long way off, questions are being asked about whether the huge setpiece event might need to be delayed further.

"We've been saying the Olympic and Paralympic Games must be held in a complete form, in that athletes and spectators can all participate safely. It would be impossible to hold the Games in such a complete form unless the coronavirus pandemic is contained," said Abe.

He was replying to a query from an opposition lawmaker whether Tokyo could host the Games next year, after this year's delay caused by the pandemic.

Tokyo confirmed 112 new infections on Tuesday, said national broadcaster NHK. The national tally stands at 13,895 infections, including 413 deaths, according to NHK.

That tally is still low compared to other nations, but critics say Japan is not doing enough testing to reveal the scope of a problem that has driven some hospitals to the brink.



"When we look at what we face now, we must brace for a protracted battle against the pandemic ... We will be in close contact with the IOC, the Tokyo organising committee and the Tokyo gubernatorial government," said Abe.

He added that the Olympics "must be held in a way that shows the world has won its battle against the coronavirus pandemic. Otherwise, it will be hard to hold the Games."

The comments echoed statements made by other senior Japanese officials earlier this week.



## SANIA MIRZA NOMINATED FOR FED CUP HEART AWARD

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** Indian tennis star Sania Mirza on Thursday became the first Indian to be nominated for the Fed Cup Heart Award from the Asia/Oceania zone along with Indonesia's Priska Medelyn Nugrorho.

Sania had recently made a comeback to Fed Cup after four years.

With her 18-month son Izhaan present in the stands, Sania had helped India qualify for the play-offs for the first time.

"Stepping on to the court for the first time in India colours was a moment of pride for me, back in 2003. It has been an eighteen year long journey since then and I feel extremely proud and privileged to have contributed to the success of Indian tennis," Sania was quoted as saying in an AITA release.

"The Fed Cup result at the Asia/Oceania tournament last month is one of the greatest achievements of my playing career. These are the moments an athlete plays for and I am grateful to the Fed Cup Heart Awards selection panel for this recognition," added the 33-year-old.

The winners of the Heart Awards will be determined by online voting by fans which will go live on May 1 and continue till May 8.

# INDIA'S LEGENDARY FOOTBALLER CHUNI GOSWAMI NO MORE

**KOLKATA (TIP):** Subimal 'Chuni' Goswami, one of India's sporting giants who captained the 1962 Asian Games gold-winning football team and also played First-Class cricket, died here on Thursday after suffering a cardiac arrest.

The versatile sports veteran was 82 and is survived by his wife Basanti and son Sudipto.

"He suffered a cardiac arrest and died at the nursing home at around 5 pm. He was brought here for a routine check-up," said Sudipto.

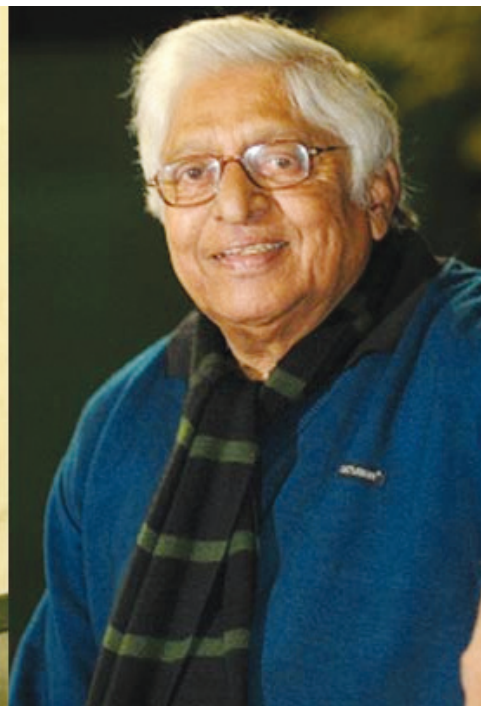
Goswami was also battling underlying ailments, including sugar and nerve problem.

Goswami needed daily dose of insulin and due to the lockdown, his medical supervisor was not able to attend to him regularly, forcing his wife Basanti to administer the medicine.

Born in undivided Bengal's Kishoreganj District, which is now in Bangladesh, the striker played 50 international matches, 36 of them official, between 1956 and 1964, including the 1960 Olympics in Rome. He netted 13 goals during his international career.

India's 1948 Olympic coach BD Chatterjee, who was also in charge of the Mohun Bagan team, picked a 13-year-old Goswami during a trial for the Mariners' junior side.

Under his tutelage Goswami grew up



to become one of India's finest midfielders after making his debut in 1954. He played his first Santosh Trophy in 1955.

As India's football captain, he led the team to the Asian Games gold medal in 1962, and a silver in the 1964 Asia Cup in Israel, both of which remain the country's best performances in the continental showpieces till date.

As a cricketer, he represented Bengal in 46 First-Class games between 1962 and 1973. A right-handed middle order batsman, Goswami could also bowl medium pace and was a very good fielder.

Goswami, PK Banerjee, who also died recently, and Tulsidas Balaram formed a deadly forward-line during the 'Golden Era' of Indian football when the

country was considered one of the Asian powerhouses.

Goswami won the Best Striker of Asia Award in 1962.

For his service to Indian football, he was conferred with Arjuna Award (1963) and Padma Shri (1983).

The Indian Postal Department came out with a commemorative stamp on his 82nd birthday in January to recognise his contribution to the game in the country.

Goswami played for a single club, Mohun Bagan, throughout his career before his retirement in 1968.

He captained the club in five seasons from 1960 to 1964. He was conferred with Mohun Bagan Ratna in 2005.

In 1966, he took eight wickets with his medium pace for the combined Central and East Zone team, which handed an innings defeat to Gary Sobers' West Indies.

He also captained Bengal to the 1971-72 Ranji trophy final, which the side lost to erstwhile Bombay at the Brabourne Stadium.

Goswami also served Indian football as a selector in the 1970s and was part of an advisory committee when the National Football League began in 1996.

West Bengal Sports Minister Aroop Biswas visited the bereaved family, while Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee called his son to convey her condolences.

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## STOP THE SPREAD OF COVID-19! LEARN HOW TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF AND OTHERS AT HOME.

### WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19?

- The most common symptoms are fever, cough, sore throat and shortness of breath. Other symptoms include feeling achy, loss of taste or smell, headache, and diarrhea.
- Most people with coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) will have mild or moderate symptoms and can get better on their own.

### WHO IS MOST AT RISK FOR SERIOUS ILLNESS?

- People age 50 or older (people age 65 or older are at the highest risk)
- People who have other health conditions, such as:
  - Lung disease
  - Obesity
  - Liver disease
  - Asthma
  - Diabetes
  - Cancer
  - Heart disease
  - Kidney disease
  - A weakened immune system

### WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I GET SICK WITH COVID-19 SYMPTOMS?

**If you are sick with COVID-19 symptoms, assume you have it.**

**When you are sick:**

- If you have trouble breathing, pain or pressure in your chest, are confused or cannot stay awake, or have bluish lips or face, **call 911** immediately.
- Call your doctor if you are age 50 or older or have a health condition that puts you at increased risk, or if you do not feel better after three days.
- Always contact a doctor or go to the hospital if you have severe symptoms of COVID-19 or another serious health issue.
- Do not leave your home except to get necessary medical care or essential food or supplies (if someone cannot get them for you).
- If you must leave your home:
  - Avoid crowded places.
  - Stay at least 6 feet from others.
  - Cover your nose and mouth with a bandana, scarf or other face covering.
  - Wash your hands before you go out, and use alcohol-based hand sanitizer while outside.
- Household members can go out for essential work and needs but should monitor their health closely.

**If you or someone in your home is sick:**

- Create physical distance:
  - Do not have visitors.

- Stay at least 6 feet from others.
- Sleep head-to-toe if you share a bed with someone who is sick, or sleep on the couch.
- Keep people who are sick separate from those at risk for serious illness.
- Cover up:
  - Cover your nose and mouth with a bandana, scarf or other face covering when you are within 6 feet of others.
  - Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or your inner elbow.
- Keep it clean:
  - Throw tissues into the garbage immediately after use.
  - Wash your hands often with soap for 20 seconds, especially after you cough or sneeze.
  - Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if you are unable to wash your hands.
  - Frequently clean surfaces you touch, such as doorknobs, light switches, faucets, phones, keys and remote controls.
  - Wash towels, sheets and clothes at the warmest possible setting with your usual detergent, and dry completely.
  - Do not share eating utensils with others, and wash them after every use.

### WHEN CAN I LEAVE MY HOME AFTER BEING SICK?

- If you have been sick, stay home until:
  - You are fever-free for three days without Tylenol or other medication **and**
  - It has been at least seven days since your symptoms started **and**
  - Your symptoms have improved
- **Reminder:** New York is on PAUSE. This means that even if you have been sick, you should only leave your home for essential work or errands, or to exercise, while staying at least 6 feet from others.

### NEED HELP?

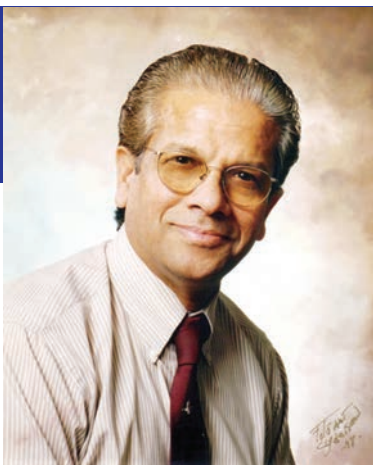
- If you are having a medical emergency, **call 911**.
- If you do not have a doctor but need one, **call 844-NYC-4NYC (844-692-4692)**. New York City provides care, regardless of immigration status, insurance status or ability to pay.
- For more information, **call 311** or visit [nyc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.nyc.gov/coronavirus).

The NYC Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves. 4.20

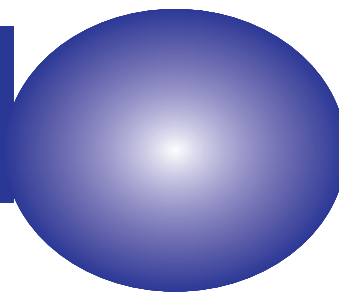


## CORONAVIRUS HELPLINE

Dr. VK Raju and Dr. Leela Raju of the Eye Foundation of America will be glad to answer any eye related concerns of the readers of The Indian Panorama during this difficult period of Coronavirus onslaught



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