

## HERE'S HOW YOU CAN TEACH KIDS ABOUT CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

The novel Coronavirus has not just left our medical practitioners and researchers searching for solutions, but its also parents who find it hard to explain the phenomenon to young children, in a creative, calm way. As per ontological coach and author Geeta Ramakrishnan, while this Virus crisis will have a psychological effect on all of us, you want to make it as soft and digestible as possible for the little ones. "You can explain to your kids that Coronavirus is the name of an evil flu virus. When you usually get sick with flu, you get fever, cold and cough, and the doctor gives you medicines and you get better."

## News Digest

### Omar Backs PM Modi On Lockdown

Srinagar- National Conference leader Omar Abdullah on Tuesday said the decision to extend the lockdown till May 3 was a necessary step in view of the threat posed by COVID-19. "The extension of lockdown till May 3 isn't something we all wanted but given the threat we face from COVID-19, it's a necessity. Let's do everything we can to cooperate with authorities to avoid a further extension in May," he tweeted after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the extension of nationwide lockdown. Abdullah also urged people to help poor and weaker

### Chief Electoral Officer Calls On LG

Jammu: Chief Electoral Officer, Jammu and Kashmir Hirdesh Kumar on Tuesday called on Lieutenant Governor, Girish Chandra Murmu here at the Raj Bhavan. Kumar briefed the LG about various activities undertaken for generating awareness of electoral process and sensitizing the voters and other ongoing activities of the Election Commission in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, an official spokesperson said. The LG asked the CEO to stress on the high importance of educating the voters about the value of their vote, besides increasing the enrolment of

### Shopian Fruit Dealer Found Dead

Srinagar: Police recovered body of a fruit dealer under mysterious circumstances in south Kashmir's Shopian district on Tuesday. Reports said that the locals found the body of a man lying near a stream in Sedow area of the district this morning. The locals informed the police who reached the spot and took the body into custody. The slain man has been identified as Mohammad Maqbool Lone of Landora village of Shopian. A police official said that the cause of death was being ascertained.

### Woman Among 4 held For Drug Peddling

Srinagar: Police on Tuesday claimed to have arrested four alleged drug peddlers, including a woman from twin districts of Srinagar and Kupwara. In Srinagar, a police team intercepted three people at a checkpoint in Shergari area and recovered contraband substance from their possession, a police spokesperson said. All the three were arrested from the spot and shifted to the police station. The police spokesperson identified the trio as Madina, Zubair Ahmed Bhatt and Mudasiir Ahmed Sheikh, all residents of Allochibagh "Case FIR No. 20/2020 under relevant sections of law has been registered in police Station Shergari and further investigation into the matter has been initiated," the spokesperson said. In similar circumstances,

### J&K Records 5 New Covid-19 Cases, Tally Reaches 278

SRINAGAR: Two more contacts of a deceased covid-19 man from north Kashmir's Bandipora were among five more people, who tested positive to the dreaded disease on Tuesday, taking the count of infected people across the Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory to 278. "For now our luck seems to be holding!!! 8 new cases, 14 recoveries. New cases- 06 from Kashmir and 02 from Jammu Division. 14 recoveries, all from Kashmir," government spokesperson Rohit Kansal Tweeted. However, on Monday Kashmir Observer had reported about the three cases from Srinagar, two from Chattabal and one Zoonimar. On Tuesday, Valley recorded just three new cases, lowest in the recent days, while two fresh cases were reported from Jammu, reports said. Gund Jehangir and Naidkhai area of Bandipora district recorded two fresh cases of Covid-19. One among

### LG Interacts With Doctors, Seeks Suggestions

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor G C Murmu on Tuesday interacted with doctors and sought their suggestions on the ways to contain the spread of COVID-19, a spokesperson said. Reaching out to the doctors through a video conference, Murmu called for sustained efforts across the board and escalating the preventive efforts to fight against coronavirus effectively, he said. The Lt Governor asked the doctors and paramedics to ensure their own safety while treating the patients and assured that administration would provide PPE, N-95 masks, gloves and other protective gear to them, the spokesperson said. Murmu told the doctors that measures are being taken to ensure availability of protective gears and critical equipment, but their use must be rationalized. During the interaction, various

### Man Booked, Quarantined For Hiding Travel History

JAMMU- A man was booked and quarantined after he came to Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district from a COVID-19 red zone in Srinagar but hid his travel history, officials said on Tuesday. Mohinder Lal, a resident of Baradari in Reasi, took lift from cargo vehicles and reached home but failed to inform the authorities, they said. By hiding his travel history he put his family members and general public at risk, the officials said. After receiving information about Lal, police and health officials immediately put him under quarantine and registered a case against him, they said. The district administration had issued an advisory that people coming the Reasi must inform the authorities about their travel history,

### LOCKDOWN EXTENDED

## Relaxation in Regions Sans Hotspots After April 20

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday extended the nationwide lockdown for another 19 days till May 3, and proposed certain relaxations after April 20 in places with no hotspots as also which have less likelihood to turn into a hotspot.

In a 25-minute televised address on the last day of the ongoing three-week lockdown, he said extensive guidelines on the second phase of the lockdown will be issued on Wednesday, asserting that his biggest priority is to save lives and minimise the hardships being faced by daily wagers and farmers.

Admitting that the lockdown has come at a huge economic cost, Modi, however, asserted that India has chosen the correct path, and managed to avert to a large extent the damage caused by the pandemic in many countries. He also noted that most of the state governments, experts and other stakeholders recommended the extension of the lockdown to contain the spread of COVID-19 pandemic. There are 10,363 confirmed cases of coronavirus with 339 deaths due to COVID-19 so far in India, as per the Union health ministry data.



A CRPF TROOPER STANDS GUARD IN THE RED ZONE declared locality of uptown Srinagar on Tuesday. Pic Abid Bhat

### Govt Issues SOP For 'Red Zones'

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Government on Tuesday issued standing operating procedure (SOPs) to be followed in the areas declared as 'Red Zones' in an attempt to combat spread of coronavirus in the Union Territory. In an order issued by the Chief Secretary, B.V.R. Subrahmanyam guidelines have been issued for the areas notified as Red Zones by the UT administration, an official spokesperson said. According to the SOPs, the Red Zone will see a 100% lockdown and shall be completely sealed for any movement across its boundaries, whether outward or inwards. The Red Zone will possibly have only one opening which will be manned by Naka party and Magistrate. "Stickers indicating Red Zone would be present at the point of entry / exit. The only movement across the red zone boundaries would be for medical supplies, essential commodities, medical emergencies, fumigation/sanitation, and enforcement/survey personnel," the official spokesperson said.

**DURING THIS TIME (TILL MAY 3), WE MUST CONTINUE MAINTAINING discipline in the same way we have been doing so far. A single new patient anywhere, should be a matter of concern for us... Any new hot spot will pose a new challenge,"**

### 204 Prisoners Released From J&K Jails

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: As many as 204 prisoners, including 45 who were arrested under the stringent Public Safety Act (PSA), were released this month to decongest jails across Jammu and Kashmir in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic, a senior government official said on Tuesday. In addition, the Home department has also revoked the PSA of 41 prisoners who are held in different jails outside the Union Territory and ordered their release, the official said. "A total of 204 prisoners have been released from various jails of the Union Territory between April 1 and 13. They include 45 prisoners arrested under the PSA, 78 undertrials through the undertrial review committee, nine undertrials falling under section 107, 109, 151 of the CrPC," a senior government official said. Among the 204, 16 prisoners were released on parole, he said. On April 1, a three-member high powered committee headed by Executive Chairman J-K State Legal Services Authority (SLSA), Justice Rajesh Bindal along with Principal Secretary,

### Bring Back Students, Pilgrims Or We Quit: LAHDC, Kargil

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The elected members of Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC), Kargil on Tuesday threatened mass resignation if the pilgrims and students of the Union Territory quarantined in the country and abroad are not brought back within a week. A meeting of the elected representatives was held at the office of Chairman LAHDC, Kargil in which three resolutions were passed unanimously and the demands were sent to Lieutenant Governor Radha Krishna Mathur for quick perusal. The meeting was also held by President Municipal Committee Kargil and President and General Secretary of Panchayat Coordination Committee Kargil. The first resolution sought evacuation of pilgrims who have completed their quarantine period and those who are stranded in Iran. The second resolution called for evacuation of students and other citizens from outside UT and permission for stranded passengers to move within the UT. "In the meantime, if any untoward incident happens to any citizen of Ladakh anywhere in the country

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### 13 Patients Discharged After Recovery

SRINAGAR- Thirteen persons, who had tested positive for COVID-19 were discharged from Srinagar Hospital on Tuesday, after they recovered from the infection following treatment, said an official. "More Positive Developments: 13 more COVID +ve patients discharged from CD (Chest Diseases) Hospital Srinagar after treatment/recovery. Good Job everyone." Government spokesman Rohit Kansal said in a tweet. Leading pulmonologist of Kashmir Dr Naveed Shah, who is heading the COVID team at Chest Disease Hospital, said while it was a satisfying moment, there should be no lowering of the guard. "A satisfactory moment... relieved 13 covid patients for home quarantine... not to lower our guard... stay home .. stay safe, maintain social distance, obey advisories. Together v can overcome all challenges," he tweeted. Two minor sisters, who had contracted the infection from their grandfather, were released for home quarantine in Monday.

### Helpline For Covid-19 Related Issues Set Up

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Tuesday established a helpline to address Covid-19 related issues in the Valley. The facility set up on the directions of Advisor to Lieutenant Governor Baseer Ahmad Khan will look after all the issues, grievances, complaints and other matters related to Covid-19 particularly in the Kashmir division, an official spokesperson said. Two officers, Syed Farooq Ahmad (7006776586) and Anil Gupta (9797776541), have been detailed for the helpline/helpline which can be reached at 0191-2549353 or covid-carekashmir@gmail.com. The helpline/helpline can also be approached for redressal of administrative, collaborative and coordination matters by all the concerned.

### Aggressive Sampling Picking Up: Health Dept

SRINAGAR: The health department said on Tuesday that an aggressive sampling process has been launched in all the districts across Kashmir division and the department was aiming to take 800 samples per day. "The process will provide a big relief to the COVID-19 patients and we will also be able to provide rapid response in their treatment," Director Health Services Kashmir, Dr Samir Mattoosaid today. He said that the sample collection across the province has risen significantly in the last five days as the Directorate of Health Services Kashmir has trained 157 Lab technicians from the Valley. "It has enormously decreased the burden of shifting of suspects to CD hospital and SKIMS for testing," he said, adding "Special Collection

## Uneasy Calm In Kupwara As Guns Fall Silent

Agencies

SRINAGAR: An eerie silence prevailed along the Line of Control (LoC) as the mortar guns of India and Pakistan armies remained quiet during the last 48 hours in north Kashmir. Three civilians, including a woman and child, were killed on Sunday when the two estranged armies engaged in a fierce firefight along the LoC in frontier Kashmir district of Kupwara. Despite Pakistani guns fell silent since Sunday afternoon, people are reluctant to go back to their homes. Meanwhile, the residents of affected areas, who didn't leave, are praying for peace and demanded construction of bunkers. The villagers said that it was the heaviest shelling by Pak troops in the area since ceasefire agreed by

India and Pakistan in 2003 on LoC and International Border (IB) in Jammu and Kashmir. "This was the first time that shells have fallen deep inside Kupwara villages," they said. Five heavily-armed militants and as many soldiers were killed in an encounter which ensued after alert troops foiled a major infiltration bid from Pck in Keran sector on April 5. Official sources said that Pakistan troops are violating ceasefire to facilitate militants to infiltrate into Kashmir valley. "A large number of militants are waiting at launch pads in Pakistan occupied Kashmir (Pck) to sneak into this side," they said. However, they said despite facing all odds, Indian troops remained on high alert along the Line of Control (LoC) to foil any militant attempt to infiltrate into this side.

### JKAP Demands Concrete Bunkers In Border Areas

SRINAGAR: Expressing serious concern over the loss of precious lives due to frequent skirmishes along the Line of Control (LoC) in north Kashmir, Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party (JKAP) on Tuesday demanded immediate construction of underground bunkers in order to save the life of inhabitants of forward areas in Jammu and Kashmir. In a joint statement issued here, the JKAP leaders extended solidarity with the bereaved families of three deceased including a minor boy



A GIRL STUDENT DOWNLOADING STUDY material at her house in Natipora area of the City on Tuesday. Pic AbidBhat

## DC Orders Police Probe Into Trucker's Assault

Observer News Service

BARAMULLA: The district administration has directed police to probe the alleged assault on a trucker by government forces in Sopore town of this north Kashmir district last week. According to reports, Deputy Commissioner Baramulla G.N Itoo shot a letter to SSP Sopore expressing his anguish over the alleged assault on an Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) tanker driver identified as Babu Ram near the sub-district hospital Sopore on Saturday last. The trucker was on way to Jammu from Kupwara when he was intercepted by government forces, reports said. The probe was ordered by Itoo after receiving an email complaint from DGM, Retail Sales, IOC, Jammu.

# About 3,500 jurists, artists slam FIR against Varadarajan, call it attack on media freedom

**NEW DELHI:** About 3,500 jurists, academics, actors, artists, writers as well as people from other walks of life on Tuesday slammed the Uttar Pradesh government and police for filing an FIR against Siddharth Varadarajan, the founding editor of the Wire, and demanded that all criminal proceedings against him be dropped.

In a joint statement, they called it an attack on the freedom of the media.

They also urged the Centre and all state governments not to use the COVID-19 pandemic as a cover to trample upon the media's freedom.

A medical emergency should not serve as the pretext for the imposition of a de facto political emergency, their statement said.

The signatories to the statement include former Supreme Court judge Madan B Lokur, former Madras High Court judge K Chandru and former Patna High Court judge AnjanaPrakash.

Two former Chiefs of Naval Staff -- Admiral Ramdas and Admiral Vishnu Bhagwat -- are also among the signatories along with former finance minister YashwantSinha.

In their statement, they expressed shock at the action of the Uttar Pradesh government under Yogi Adityanath and police in filing criminal charges against The Wire and one of its founding editors, for an "entirely factual story on the COVID-19 and religious events".

"This attack on media freedom, especially during the COVID-19 crisis, endangers not just free speech, but the public's right to information," the statement said.

The signatories called upon the UP government to withdraw the FIR against Varadarajan and The Wire, and drop all criminal proceedings.

They also called upon the media not to communalise the pandemic.

The Uttar Pradesh police this month booked Varadarajan over comments on Twitter claiming that the day TablighiJamaat held its event in Delhi, Chief Minister Adityanath had insisted that a Ram Navami fair will take place as usual.

The FIR against Varadarajan also mentioned his remark questioning Adityanath's participation in a religious ceremony at the Ramjanmabhoomi site in Ayodhya during the nationwide lockdown to contain the spread of coronavirus.

The statement said that the target of this action is a factual story on the TablighiJamaat and its exposure to COVID-19.

"Towards the end, the impugned article merely pointed out that 'Indian believers' more generally have been late to adopt precautions and avoid congregation, recalling UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's plans, as late as March 18, to proceed with a religious fair at Ayodhya and his flouting of the national lockdown and social distancing norms by taking part in a religious ceremony along with others on March 25," the statement said.

Two FIRs were filed under various sections of the law on April 1, one on a complaint by a resident of Ayodhya and the other on the basis of a complaint by the SHO of the Kotwali Nagar police station, Faizabad, it noted.

A plain reading of the sections invoked in the FIRs makes it clear they cannot possibly apply to the article in question, the statement said.

"The FIRs were followed up with a gross display of intimidation on April 10 when policemen arrived in a black SUV with no number plates at Varadarajan's residence in Delhi to issue a legal notice ordering him to appear in Ayodhya on April 14 at 10 am," it said.

That the Uttar Pradesh government sent policemen driving across 700 kilometres during the national lockdown to issue this summons when the postal system is still operational speaks volumes for its priorities, the statement said.

"The UP police's action is just the latest in a series of attempts by the ruling establishment, or persons close to them, to entangle The Wire and its editors in legal cases in an effort to shut them down," it said.

## Delhi To Fully Implement Lockdown, Says Kejriwal

**NEW DELHI:** Delhi will fully implement the extended lockdown as it is very essential to contain the spread of coronavirus, Chief Minister ArvindKejriwal asserted on Tuesday as 51 more cases and two deaths were reported in the national capital

The total number of coronavirus cases in the national capital increased to 1561, the highest after Maharashtra, and the death toll was 30, according to Delhi authorities. The number of containment zones in the city reached 55. Sources said an Army doctor was among those who tested positive for COVID-19.

On Monday, the national capital had reported a sharp rise in the number of COVID-19 cases in a day with 356 testing positive, taking the tally to 1,510, while four people died of the disease within 24 hours. After hundreds of migrant workers gathered in Mumbai and Surat on Tuesday after extension of lockdown, Kejriwal, in a video message, appealed to the daily wagers from different states that they should not fall prey to rumours of bus arrangements being made to ferry them to their native places.

He assured them that the Delhi government has made arrangement of their food and accommodation. To ensure that such incidents do not take place in the national capital, Delhi Chief Secretary Vijay Dev also directed police and district magistrates to not allow "any large gatherings" in the national capital. Earlier, welcoming Modi's decision to extend the nationwide lockdown till May 3, Kejriwal urged people to strictly adhere to the restrictions so that the city gets rid of coronavirus. "Delhi will fully implement PM's lockdown measures," he tweeted. Addressing an online briefing, Kejriwal said it is a matter of concern that cases of COVID-19 are increasing in the national capital.

**Rlys Set To Cancel Around 39 Lakh Tickets Booked For Apr 15-May 3 Due To Lockdown Extension**

**NEW DELHI:** Railways is set to cancel around 39 lakh tickets booked for travel between April 15 and May 3 due to extension of the nationwide lockdown and suspension of passenger trains till then in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

The national transporter said a full refund of fare would be automatically provided to its online customers for trains cancelled up to May 3, while those who booked the tickets at the counters can claim the refund till July 31.

Customers will also get full refund in case of advance bookings for trains not yet cancelled, it said.

With the railway allowing tickets to be booked during the 21-day lockdown for journeys after April 14, around 39 lakh bookings were made by passengers hoping that trains will be in operation post-lockdown, sources said.

However, with the announcement of the extension of the lockdown period, railways on Tuesday not only cancelled all its passenger services till May 3, but also stopped all advance bookings.

Even as the announcement stalled railways' over 15,000 passenger trains, thousands of migrant workers converged near the Bandra railway station in Mumbai hoping to catch trains back to their home states.

## Relaxation in Regions..

At least eight states --Tamil Nadu, Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha, Punjab, Maharashtra, Telangana, West Bengal and Karnataka-- have already extended the lockdown till April 30, and Union government sources pointed out that it has been stretched till May 3 as May 1 is a public holiday, and May 2 and 3 is a weekend.

Just a thought of how much harm could have been caused to the country if his government had not followed a "holistic and integrated" approach gives him "goosebumps", he added.

Amid demands from certain quarters that economic activities be allowed to start, Modi said the lockdown will be strictly implemented for a week, and every area will be evaluated before a decision on allowing some "select necessary activities" will be taken.

"Areas that will succeed in this litmus test, which will not be in the hot-spot category, and will have less likelihood to turn into a hot-spot maybe allowed to open up select necessary activities from 20 April. However, keep in mind, this permission will be conditional, and the rules for going out will be very strict. Permission will be withdrawn immediately if lockdown rules are broken, and spread of coronavirus risked," he asserted.

Noting that India is in a much better position in terms of the loss of lives than several developed nations, Modi said,"our experience makes it clear that the path we have chosen is the right way."

While BJP president J P Nadda and Union ministers urged people to support government's decision, Modi's address drew strong criticism from the Congress, which termed it as "rhetoric and hollow on specifics", saying there was no mention of a financial package or concrete steps to revive the economy.

Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala asked where is the country's roadmap to fight coronavirus while his senior party colleague P Chidambaram tweeted "the poor have been left to fend for themselves for 21+19 days, including practically soliciting food. There is money, there is food, but the government will not release either money or food. Cry, my beloved country."

After Modi's address, the civil aviation ministry also announced that all international and domestic commercial passenger flights will remain suspended till midnight of May 3. Domestic and international commercial passenger flights were earlier suspended from March 25 to April 14.

The railways also extended suspension of all its passenger services till May 3 while movement of goods and parcel trains will remain operational to ensure essential supplies in various parts of the country.

The railways also said that all counters for booking of rail journey tickets for reserved/unreserved travel at railway stations and outside railway station premises shall remain closed till May 3 midnight.

Modi appeared on television with his face covered with a 'gamcha' (Indian stole for men) which he removed at the start of his address. His personal Twitter handle also posted the photograph of him wearing a face cover.

Asserting that India's fight against the coronavirus has been moving ahead with great strength and resolve, the prime minister lauded citizens for their "restraint and sacrifice" to "save your India".

"During this time (till May 3), we must continue maintaining discipline in the same way we have been doing so far. A single new patient anywhere, should be a matter of concern for us... Any new hot spot will pose a new challenge," Modi said.

With critics, including opposition leaders, often questioning his government's alleged delay and lack of preparedness in tackling the crisis, Modi strongly defended its approach, noting that India began screening travellers from corona-affected countries even before it has reported any case of its own.

"When we had only 550 Corona cases, then itself India had taken the big step of a 21-day complete lockdown. India did not wait for the problem to aggravate. Rather, we attempted to nip the problem in the bud by taking quick decisions," he asserted.

The prime minister said several countries were at par with India in terms of the number of corona infections but the cases in those countries are 25 to 30 times more now compared to it.

He also sought the support of the people in seven areas, including taking care of the elderly people, maintaining social distancing and helping the poor.

Stressing on the need to follow lockdown guidelines, he said every town, every police station, every district, every state will be tested on how much they are adhering to them before being allowed certain relaxations.

Modi assured citizens that there is adequate stock of medicines and rations in the country, and it has also ramped up its health infrastructure to deal with the crisis.

Noting that global experience shows that 1500-1600 beds are required for every 10,000 patients, he said India has already made arrangements for over 1 Lakh beds, with over 600 hospitals dedicated for coronavirus treatment.

The catastrophic effect of the lockdown on the country's economy and livelihoods of migrants and daily wage workers has triggered concerns, with a number of chief ministers in their video conference with Modi on Saturday seeking relaxation for a number of sectors.

Meanwhile, India Inc supported the nationwide lockdown extension, saying it was necessary to avert a humanitarian crisis, but insisted on the need for a stimulus package to rebuild the economy hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Late last month, the government announced a Rs 1.7 lakh crore package aimed at providing relief to those hit hard by the lockdown.

Acknowledging the pain it has inflicted on people, especially the poor, Moidi said, "I am well aware of the problems you have faced, some for food, some for movement from place to place and some due to staying away from their homes and families. However, for the sake of your country, you are fulfilling your duties like a disciplined soldier."

Invoking B R Ambedkar, the architect of India's constitution whose birth anniversary falls on Tuesday, the prime minister said the nation has paid true tribute to him by displaying its collective strength.

This is the power of "We, the People of India" that our constitution talks about, he said.

**Govt Issues SOP...**

"All entry and exit to the zone would be with red zone passes and proper fumigation of vehicles, safety of personnel and safety tunnels. Surrounding villages/ habitations will be declared as Buffer Zones," he added.

The spokesperson further said that the entire Red Zone will be under surveillance and the people will be contacted periodically for rechecking for symptoms.

"There would be a 100% survey and screening of all persons in the red zone. The Surveillance procedure has already been issued and will be reissued with improvements," the spokesperson said.

He said that there would be intensive testing of all contacts, of neighbours and of all those with symptoms. "In addition, there would be random sampling testing. A detailed health screening of the contacts and all souls within 300m will be carried out, the survey results would be geo-mapped," he said.

He added that separate teams will be constituted for contact tracing, so that the doctors can handle medical load.

"Tehsildar or other suitable officer will be overall administrator of concerned Red Zone and system of passes for essential services or emergency will be set up and all necessary precautions before entering/leaving red zones shall be followed," the spokesperson said.

He further added that dedicated Control Rooms will be established for all Red Zones individually or in groups depending upon size of the Red Zone which can also be integrated with helpline/Call centre to address the needs of residents.

"Designated officers will ensure provision of essential commodities while taking necessary precautions and using protective gear," the spokesperson said, adding "All public places within the red zone will be fumigated twice a day. Banking arrangements such as a mobile ATM or any other facilitation will be ensured,"

In-case of any Emergency, whether medical or otherwise, the spokesperson said the permission for movement will be provided by concerned SDM / Tehsildar.

"A medical team shall be placed in the adjoining buffer zone to cater to any medical emergency that might arise," he added.

**J&K Records 5 New...**

them is a 27-year-old woman and another and a 35-year-old man. Both of them are said to have come into contact with the deceased Covid-19 man from Bandipora. They are currently being treated at the SKIMS here.

A man in his early forties, hailing from Shangus area of Anantnag district has also tested positive to coronavirus at the Chest Disease hospital here. He is said to have contracted disease after coming into contact with a Covid-19 patient.

Two people also tested positive to the dreaded disease in Jammu, including a doctor, reports said.

The fresh five cases have taken the officially confirmed tally in Jammu and Kashmir to 278. While 228 have been reported from Valley, fifty others have surfaced in Jammu.

Meanwhile, the media bulletin issued by the government today said that out of 278 positive cases, 244 are active, 30 have recovered and 4 have died. The bulletin said that till date 55498 travellers and persons in contact with suspected cases have been put under surveillance, including 7760 persons in home quarantine, 365 in hospital quarantine, 244 in hospital isolation and 30952 under home surveillance.

"Besides, 16173 persons have completed their 28-day surveillance period. Out of 4619 test reports available, 4341 samples have tested as negative till April 14, 2020," the bulletin adds.

**LG Interacts With...**

suggestions were received on the measures to be taken while treating the patients ailing from diseases other than COVID-19 infection, the spokesperson said.

The Lt Governor observed that the non-COVID patients also require the necessary attention and would not be neglected at any level.

**Man Booked...**

failing which strict action will be taken.

**Aggressive Sampling ..**

booths have been set up for the safety of healthcare workers wherein trained technicians with proper protection suits scientifically take the samples, preserve them and send them in COVID-19 designated ambulances for testing."

The Directorate of Health Services also trained different technicians for donning and doffing who are working in all districts headquarters.

DrMattoo has directed all Chief Medical Officers to increase the sampling process which he said can go to 600-800 per day as the Directorate has adequate stock of VTM and other logistics.

"We want to test more people in order to identify the COVID positive patients and isolate them at the earliest," he added.

It may be recalled here that 10 hospitals have been designated as COVID only facilities by DHSK. These exclude facilities created for hospital quarantine.

"Bed capacity is being increased to 1000 beds for level-I Isolation," he said. "We are receiving more ventilators which will augment our present medical infrastructure," he said.

**204 Prisoners ...**

Home Department, Shaleen Kabra and DGP (Prisons), V K Singh as its members, passed directions for the release of jail inmates except those involved in militancy related cases to decongest the prisons in the Union Territory.

The committee was constituted by the Jammu and Kashmir government following an order by the Supreme Court on March 23, directing the states and the UTs to decongest jails to ensure social distancing among the prisoners, while observing that overcrowding of prisons is a matter of serious concern in the wake of coronavirus outbreak.

The official said the highest number of 39 jail inmates were released from central jail in Srinagar followed by 28 each from central jail in Kot Bhalwal and district jail in Rajouri, 24 from district jail in Anantnag, 19 from district jail in Udhampur, 18 from district jail in Jammu and 16 from district jail in Kupwara.

As many as 15 prisoners were released from sub-jail in Hiranagar, 10 from special jail (correction home) in Pulwama, two from district jail in Bhaderwah and one from district jail in Baramulla, he said.

The official said the process for the release of 41 more prisoners from Kashmir, who are under detention in different jails outside Jammu and Kashmir since August last year, was also set into motion with the Home department revoking their PSA.

The Public Safety Act (PSA) is an administrative detention law that allows detention of any individual for up to two years without a trial or charge. The Act that allows for the arrest and detention of people without a warrant, specific charges, and often for an unspecified period of time has been in vogue in Kashmir since 1978.

The law was introduced by the then Chief Minister Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in 1978 to book timber smugglers but later on it was rampantly used against political opponents and activists seeking Kashmir settlement. Amnesty International has termed it a "lawless law".

The prisoners included 15 from Baramulla, eight from Pulwama, seven from Anantnag, three from Kupwara, two each from Ganderbal, Bandipora and Budgam and one each from Kulgam and Srinagar, the official said.

**Bring Back Students...**

or outside, the administration of UT Ladakh and the government of India shall be solely responsible," the resolution said.

The last resolution passed by the council demanded unrestricted supply of essential commodities via Zojila and keeping the highway open for all kinds of vehicular movement.

In the meeting, the elected bodies also decided to raise quarantine facilities at various levels by pooling in all the combined resources.

"Keeping in view the upcoming month of Holy Ramzan, the meeting also demanded the above mentioned points be realized in a span of one week after which the elected representatives of the district shall not be held accountable for any find of law and order problems," reads the resolution, a copy of which is in possession of Kashmir Observer.

The resolution warned that the democratically elected representatives would submit mass resignation, if the demands are not met within a week.

**JKAP Demands ...**

who lost their lives at Reddi, Chowkibal and Tumna areas of North Kashmir's Kupwara district in cross loC shelling on April 12.

They also prayed for speedy recovery of the people who sustained injuries during the incident. "It is unfortunate that there is no letup in shelling even during the COVID-19 pandemic, causing more worries to the civilian population living in the border areas of Jammu and Kashmir," they said, demanding immediate compensation for the bereaved families.

Referring to a Defence Ministry report indicating an increase in the incidents of ceasefire violations along the LoC in Jammu and Kashmir since August 2019, the JKAP leaders said that in view of the heightened cross-border shelling, the Centre must sanction and order speedy construction of concrete, underground bunkers for all the left out border areas in the Union Territory, especially in Kupwara, Baramulla and Bandipora districts.

They said that the bunkers have been found to be an effective response to cross-LoC shelling, providing the residents a safe place to save themselves during the shelling incidents. "The residents of border/LoC areas of Jammu and Kashmir have been the worst victims of skirmishes and hostilities along LoC. So the government of India should take concrete measures for their safety and security," the JKAP leaders demanded.

They added that people living near the LoC in Kupwara, Baramulla and Bandipora districts and their fellow citizens living in border areas of Jammu province live in constant fear and agony.

"People living in these areas have suffered deaths, injuries and loss of property amid intense firing and mortar shelling. The Ministry of Home Affairs in Government of India must ensure availability of sufficient funds to respective district administrations for construction of bunkers at least meant for two three households jointly in all border areas in Jammu and Kashmir," they said.

They also urged the government of J&K to ensure free food, ration, medicines and other essential items in border areas in view of the COVID-19 lockdown. "The government should ensure free distribution of masks, sanitizers, food and ration to the areas in border districts which have been declared as Red Zones like in Tanghdar, Karnah and Keran areas," they appealed.

**DC Orders Police Probe**

Rajiv Yadav, reports said.

"In the said complaint it has been indicated that the driver Shri Babu Ram driving LPG Truck (JK02F-4075) has been beaten by police and even photographs have been attached with this mail in proof of the claim," writes DC Baramulla to SSP Sopore in a letter vide number DCB/PS/455-60 on April 13

"It is a serious matter and needs to be properly enquired and action needs to be taken against those involved," the letter adds.

The letter further advises SSP Sopore to initiate an enquiry into matter and share the outcome along with action with DC office within 2 days.

**Omar Backs PM Modi..**

sections of the society during these tough times.

"We owe it to the poor and weaker sections of society to do everything we can, whether financially or otherwise, to help them through these tough times. Govts must take the lead but it can't be just their responsibility," he said.

**Chief Electoral Officer..**

eligible voters to strengthen the roots of democratic setup.

"He further asked him to ensure availability of all the related information in the public domain," the spokesperson added.

**Woman Among 4 held.**

police said a drug peddler was arrested at a checkpoint established at Thokerpora crossing in Handwara. The alleged drug peddler has been identified as Suhail Ahmad Dar of Lokipora.

"Officers were able to recover contraband substance from his possession. A case FIR number 39/2020 under relevant sections of law has been registered in police station Kralgund and investigation has been initiated," the police spokesperson added.

# Authorities Dug Roads In Red Zone Areas, People Angry

## Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** People are miffed with the Srinagar authorities for damaging the roads in the name of erecting barricades for sealing the Red Zone areas.

A picture of Natipora area of Srinagar went viral on social networking sites. It shows road has been dug to erect barricades fitted with cross rods to prevent vehicular and pedestrian movement.

A Netizen wrote, "Govt is doing a great job by enforcing lockdown and sealing red zone areas. But is this way to seal areas. They are damaging our roads. This is a typical case of vandalization of resources in the name of COVID control."

A social activist Shabir Ahmed

also questioned the sealing of roads with iron gates.

"We are humans. We can have other medical emergencies. Where will the patient go in case a person from red zone has a medical emergency? If any untoward incident like a fire erupts where will we go. They should have sealed it with barbed wire on roads," he said.

Sealing the areas completely with iron gates is also against the new medical policy of the Government.

"How Govt will provide medical assistance and other essential supplies when they are erecting iron walls on entrances of Red Zones," he added. The only movement across the red zone boundaries would be for supplies (medical, grocery, and vegetables), medical



emergencies, fumigation/sanitation, and enforcement/survey personnel, Medical Strategy reads. The Medical strategy also says

that all entry and exit would be with red zone passes and proper fumigation of vehicles, the safety of personnel and safety tunnels.

Call centres would attend to the needs of Red Zone residents and arrangements would be needed for some deliveries into it." (KNS).

## Restrictions intensified in Red zone areas: DM Ganderbal

2 lakh masks to be distributed free of cost



**GANDERBAL.:** As prohibitory orders under Section 144 of the CrPC, Disaster Management Act and The Epidemic Disease Act are already in place across the district, District Magistrate (DM), Ganderbal, Shafqat Iqbal, today reiterated that there would be no inward and outward movement of any person from the villages declared red zones and the people would stay in their homes to ensure complete lockdown as restrictions are being intensified. The DM made these remarks while chairing the meeting of BDC chairpersons, nominated Administrators and Nodal Officers to discuss .The measure need to be taken for ensuring strict implementation of lockdown in the district which has been extend upto May 03, 2020.

Additional District Magistrate, Farooq Ahmad Baba, ACD and DPO were also present in the meeting.

To stagger the further transmission of the disease, the DM appealed residents of Ganderbal district in general and habitants of Red zone areas in particular to remain indoors and follow the government directions and health advi-

sories. While reviewing the steps taken for increasing the vigil in the district during lockdown, the DM directed the BDC chairpersons and BDOs to constitute local committees involving locals and NGOs who will work with already constituted Awareness Monitoring Committees to increase vigil in their respective areas so that lockdown is implemented strictly in the district.

He said the district administration has put in place a mechanism to ensure uninterrupted supplies and deliveries of essential services to the general public of the district. He said essential commodities are being home-delivered to residents as part of this mechanism.

The meeting also discussed the progress of production and distribution of masks in the light of government order for universal usage of masks. The committee constituted for the purpose informed that District Industrial Unit, KVIB, various local entrepreneurs and self-help groups (SHGs) have been roped in and the raw material is being provided to them for mass production of masks.

## VC Cluster University convenes meet; devises Action Plan amid Covid-19 outbreak

Online lectures being offered through Google Classroom and other virtual platforms

**SRINAGAR:** A meeting of the officers of Cluster University Srinagar and Principals of constituent colleges was convened, here the other day, under the chairmanship of the Vice-Chancellor, to devise an Action Plan in the backdrop of COVID-19 scare and advisories issued by various Government Agencies.

After threadbare deliberations, it was unanimously resolved that all the University employees will contribute one-day salary for the month of April toward the relief fund of the Lt. Governor meant to fight against the scourge of COVID-19.

It was also decided that University will provide volunteers to the district administration for managing quarantine centres and other places designated for COVID-19.

Pertinently, the NSS volunteers of the constituent colleges have already been deployed and are creating awareness regarding safety measures that need to be adopted against the spread of COVID-19. The volunteers are distributing masks and sanitizers in

the different areas of the valley.

The meeting also decided that University will procure 10000 masks and 5000 sanitizers for distribution among the masses besides, manufacturing sanitizers and face masks in its own labora-

being offered by teachers through Google Classroom and other virtual platforms for all enrolled students.

The meeting also decided to defer semester examinations for II and IV-semesters which were scheduled for April. The principals of the constituent colleges have been informed to conduct the Google class rooms for next preceding III and V semesters.

The principals informed that the syllabus for the 6th semester is nearing completion and efforts are being made to expedite the process so that examinations can be conducted as and when conducive.

It was also decided that the students will be encouraged to earn credits from MOOC modules offered by MHRD, Government of India and the list of relevant courses will be made available on the University website.

Sensitization of the students through introduction of Skill based courses on "Basic Hygiene amid Corona virus" was also endorsed.



tories for students, as and when the university re-opens.

Discussing the admission process for the session 2020 for IG, UG and professional courses, it was decided that the process will be completed by developing an "Online Module" and all efforts will be made to complete it by the end of the current month.

Principals of the Colleges informed that online lectures are

## Dy Mayor oversees sanitization drive at Khanqah shrine, adjacent areas

**SRINAGAR:** Continuing its sanitization work, a team of field functionaries of the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) in protective gear and specialized machines today sanitized Khanqah shrine and adjoining areas.

The sanitization drive was supervised by Deputy Mayor, Parvaiz Ahmed Qadri, who was accompanied by Health Officer, SMC, Dr. Javaid Qazi, and Ward Officer, ward no 6, Ni-yaz Ahmad.

On the occasion, chemicals were sprayed in the



shrine premises and its adjacent areas including Shameshwari, Kalashpora, Namchibal and Fateh Kadal. Deputy Mayor, on the

occasion, informed that extensive sanitization is being carried in Srinagar with an aim to break the chain of transmission of COVID- 19.

He added that besides regular sanitization and cleanliness works, the Corporation also sanitized all the government residential quarters in Jawahar Nagar, Fruit Mandi in Parimpora and Press Enclave in Residency Road.

Furthermore, Nowshera and Channohalla areas were also decontaminated where from the positive cases of corona virus were reported. The decontamination chemical mixture was sprayed in 300 meters radius of the houses of the COVID positive cases.

## Police arrest female kingpin selling charas to youth in Srinagar

**SRINAGAR:** Police raided a house in Srinagar and arrested the female kingpin who allegedly was luring youth to drugs and charas.

Police sources told KNT that complaints were pouring in against a female who according to complainants were selling charas and other drugs and was working in this illegal practice in connivance with some of the youth.

A police party headed by Station House Officer, Police Station Shergari, Miss Tanushri (IPS) raided the house of the accused identified as Madina alias Banti wife of late Abdul Majid Sheikh of Khan Mohalla Alochi Bagh and recovered 680 gram charas from her possession.

Confirming this, Miss Tanushri told KNT that besides the female kingpin, two other youth were arrested and an FIR vide number 20/2020 under section 8/20, 29 NDPS Act was registered against him. She identified the arrested youth as Zubair Ahmed Bhat son of Zahoor Ahmed of Alochibagh and Mudasir Ahmed Sheikh son of Mushtaq Ahmed.

## School Education Dept to start online career, mental health counselling for students

**SRINAGAR:** Principal Secretary, School Education Dr Asgar Samoon today said that the department will be starting online career and mental health counselling for students in order to reduce their mental stress and keep them engaged with studies during the lockdown period.

Dr Samoon was speaking at a meeting which was attended by Director School Education Kashmir Younis Ahmed Malik, besides SPD, Samagra Shiksha, Arun Manhas, Director School Education Jammu, Anuradha Gupta, Joint Directors and Chief Education Officers of J&K attended through video conference.

On the occasion, the Principal Secretary launched Manzilen-career guidance module for students, which has been prepared by School Education Department in association with a renowned NGO.

Stressing on the need for keeping children engaged with different activities and learning during the lockdown, Dr Samoon directed the Di-

rectorate School Education Kashmir (DSEK) to engage experts from health department, UNICEF, NIMHANS and career counsellors for counselling and guidance of students. He asked them to engage with students and their parents by holding virtual interaction sessions on social networking sites like WhatsApp.

Later he also took review of the steps taken by the field functionaries while assisting the respective district administrations for the containment of the COVID-19 infection. He impressed upon all the field officers of the Department to reach out to the students through digital platforms during the prevailing circumstance, so that students do not face difficulties in their studies while being confined to their homes during the lockdown period.

He expressed satisfaction over the steps taken by the Directorates of School Education Jammu and Kashmir in making online platforms of learning available to the students



and providing the students, teachers and parents with proper counselling amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr Samoon asked UNICEF to come forward amid the COVID-19 pandemic situation and provide the department with masks and sanitizers so that the volunteers of Education department, who are presently out in the field, do not face any difficulty in assisting the Divisional and District administrations.

During the meeting the Principal Secretary was informed about the

progress achieved in the conversion of RRETS into teacher grade II and Grade III and release of their salaries. Further the liability on account of salaries of Head Teachers / RRETS shall be released shortly. Dr Samoon advised the Directorates of School Education to fill-up all the vacancies of School Education Department on priority basis.

It was enjoined upon all the concerned to conduct the departmental promotion committee (DPCs) meetings at all levels to address the pend-

ing grievances of the employees of School Education Department.

Directors of School education Kashmir/ Jammu were asked to expedite the process for filling up of vacancies of lecturers on academic arrangements basis.

The Principal Secretary was informed about the progress made by the concerned Chief Education Officers regarding distribution of mid-day meals in the form of dry ration and disbursement of cooking cost in the bank accounts of the students through DBT mode. It was informed that free text books have been distributed among all the students in all the educational zones.

Director School Education Kashmir Mohammad Younis Malik informed the meeting about the steps taken by DSEK regarding online classes, audio and tele-classes and counselling of students through a dedicated helpdesk established by the Directorate. Similar actions taken by DSEJ were highlighted on the occasion.

## DIAL-EMMA



- TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686
- PCR: 0194-2452092,2455883
- PDD: 0194-2450213
- FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488,2452222,2452155
- CAPD: 18001807011
- SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081

## AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311 ✈️

## RAILWAYS



- SRINAGAR: 0194-2103259
- ANANTNAG: 01932-228243
- BARAMULLA: 0194-102029
- BJBHERA: 01932-228243
- PAMPORE: 01933-294132
- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

## HIGHWAY STATUS

- Sgr-Jammu highway - ( Open )
- Mughal Road - (Closed)
- Srinagar- Leh- (Closed)

## This Day in History

- 1632 - Battle of Rain; Swedes under Gustavus Adolphus defeat Count Tilly of the Holy Roman Empire during the Thirty Years' War.
- 1654 - England & Netherlands sign peace treaty
- 1689 - French King Louis XIV declares war on Spain
- 1697 - Charles XII succeeds Charles XI as King of Sweden
- 1788 - Britain, Netherlands & Prussia sign peace treaty
- 1858 - Battle of Azimghur, Mexicans defeat Spanish loyalists
- 1865 - Abraham Lincoln dies 9 hours after he is shot attending the play "Our American Cousin" at Ford's Theatre in Washington
- 1892 - General Electric Company formed by merger of Thomas Edison's General Electric Company with Thomson-Houston Electric Company, arranged by J. P. Morgan and incorporated in NY
- 1902 - Rioting and arson continue in Russia with peasants plundering estates to find food.
- 1902 - Russian minister of interior and head of secret police, Sipyengin, is assassinated by the 'Terror Brigade' of the Socialist Revolutionaries
- 1912 - RMS Titanic sinks at 2:27 AM off Newfoundland as the band plays on, with the loss of between 1,490 and 1,635 people
- 1918 - Georges Clémenceau publishes secret French/Austrian documents
- 1923 - Insulin becomes generally available for diabetics
- 1927 - Switzerland & USSR agree to diplomatic relations
- 1940 - British troops land at Narvik, Norway
- 1945 - British Army liberates Nazi concentration camp Bergen-Belsen
- 1945 - US troops occupy concentration camp Colditz
- 1948 - 1st Jewish-Arab military battle, arabs defeated
- 1948 - Indian territory of Himachal Pradesh created
- 1959 - Fidel Castro begins US goodwill tour
- 1969 - North Korea shoots at US airplane above Japanese sea
- 1974 - Military coup in Niger, president Diori Hamani deposed
- 1978 - Great Britain performs nuclear test
- 1982 - Apollo Computer announces DN400, DN420, & landscape display
- 1983 - Tokyo Disneyland opens
- 1984 - USSR performs nuclear test at Eastern Kazakh/ Semipalatinsk USSR
- 1991 - Europe foreign ministers lift most remaining sanctions against S Afr
- 1992 - The National Assembly of Vietnam adopts the 1992 Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

## From KO Archives

## PM agrees to meet Hurriyat

**NEW DELHI:** Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh has agreed to meet All Parties Hurriyat Conference leaders either tomorrow or on Friday. The meeting, however, has not been fixed yet because the Hurriyat leaders are insisting on time on April 17 when the prime minister is scheduled to meet Pakistan President Parvez Musharraf.

Interestingly, the Hurriyat leaders had earlier agreed to meet Dr Singh on either of the two dates proposed by his office. What made them suddenly change their mind is not known. "The decision of the prime minister meeting the, Hurriyat leaders on April 14 or 15 was taken before he went to Kashmir on April 7 to flag-off the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service." sources in the prime minister's office said. The dates were convened to APHC Chief Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and he accepted the same.

Now, however, the Mirwaiz has expressed his inability to be in Delhi before April 16 because of a religious ceremony back home.

Sources say Hurriyat leaders want to meet General Musharraf before interacting with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh as they want to have Pakistan's backing for the proposals they intend to present to GOI.

Officials in New Delhi said the new dates have to be decided depending on the prime minister's availability.

The Hurriyat had adopted a similar approach at the time of the Agra Summit in 2001.

The then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee had given them time to meet before the summit but the separatist conglomerate had expressed desire to meet Musharraf first As a result of which no meeting could take place between them and Vajpayee.

Mirwaiz Farooq told reporters in Srinagar today that the Hurriyat leaders wanted to meet the leaders of India and Pakistan and while Musharraf has given them time on April 17, there was "no positive response" from the Prime Minister's Office as yet.

Farooq, who was speaking after meetings of the Hurriyat's executive committee and general council, said the amalgam wanted to avail the opportunity to impress upon the two countries that a "permanent, honourable and just solution to without the inclusion of representatives of Kashmiris in the dialogue process. Significantly the meeting was abstained by the People's Conference leader Bilal Gani Lone.

(Kashmir Observer, 15 April, 2005)

## KASHMIR OBSERVER

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## Don't Ignore The Poor

As Prime Minister Narendra Modi extends the lockdown up to May 3, the Covid-19 positive cases haven't shot up as expected. It is a little over 10,000 cases which isn't such a big number for a country of India's size. This is nothing when compared with the US which has now 500000 confirmed cases. What is more, according to experts, Covid-19 growth curve is showing signs of flattening. However, things will become further clear in the upcoming two weeks. If the cases don't shoot up steeply, the situation is likely to change for the better.

But at the same time, the less number of positive cases could also be because the testing is not at par with the spread of disease. And more aggressive testing might reveal more cases. However, it is also true if there were more cases, there would have been more deaths of the untested people. But this has not been the case revealing the crisis may not be as grim as believed. This state of affairs augurs well for the country. And hopefully if this trend continues, things should be ok in three weeks. The lockdown will certainly help achieve this objective but this shouldn't be of a sweeping nature it has been so far. There has to be a trade between 'Jaan and Jahan' as articulated by the prime minister Narendra Modi. Around thirty crore who manage their living on a day to day basis can't be left to fend for themselves. They should either be provided for or some mechanism needs to be evolved whereby as far as possible economy, or parts of it, are allowed to function.

More than 1.8 million people have now been detected as covid-19 patients globally and the number is continuing to rise. West has so far borne the brunt of the disease, a result of their deeper connectedness with China through trade and travel. The virus has also made inroads into the Arab world. As of now the situation is deeply uncertain. The world is far from getting a handle on the disease unlike China which is in the process of re-opening its economy after controlling and restricting the spread of virus to Wuhan, the city where it originated. China achieved success by imposing a stringent lockdown, a template that other countries, including India are now following. India is doing it on a gigantic scale, locking down a country of 1.3 billion people. Here's hoping the gamble succeeds. At the same time, it is important that the country looks after its millions of poor who will be most affected.

### OTHER OPINION

## Ease The Pain

It is difficult at this moment to accurately gauge the extent of the economic hurt caused by the lockdown to prevent the spread of the coronavirus in India. The sharp divergence in the various growth projections that have been put out underline this state of uncertainty. For instance, the World Bank expects the Indian economy to grow between 1.5-2.8 per cent in 2020-21. Nomura expects the economy to contract by 0.5 per cent, while Moody's Investors Service has pegged growth at 2.5 per cent for this calendar year. In large part, how deep the slowdown is will depend not only on how and when the lockdown is lifted, but also on how quickly normalcy is restored after that. The informal sector is likely to bear the brunt. But as the GDP numbers do not fully capture the informal economy, they are unlikely to accurately reflect the effect of the lockdown on the informal sector which is now facing its third shock after demonetisation and the GST. Regardless, the headline economic growth for the full year will be well shy of the 10 per cent nominal growth assumed in the Union budget.

Extending the lockdown might well be deemed necessary in the fight against the virus, but it will mean a further loss of output. A gradual opening up will mean that recovery in large parts of the country will be a protracted process. During this period, as firms' cash flows remain constrained, and as balance sheet stress intensifies, some of them will be forced to retrench their labour force — this will have implications for the labour market and domestic demand — while some will not be in a position to repay their loan obligations, which will have implications for the financial system. Thus, policy interventions should be designed to ensure that these disruptions are minimised to the extent possible.

While the government and the RBI have taken several steps so far to deal with the economic fallout, more needs to be done. To begin with, cash transfers to the more vulnerable can be ramped up to ease liquidity constraints. Next, all government dues, especially to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), should be cleared immediately. Credit guarantee funds can be set up to encourage bank lending to MSMEs, and the broader economy, not just to investment grade firms. Further, the timelines for classifying loans as NPAs can be relaxed. And as the finance minister has previously stated, sections 7, 9 and 10 of the IBC, which deal with initiation of bankruptcy proceedings, can be temporarily suspended. The current situation calls for bold steps by both the government and RBI to limit the economic stress. Even after the lockdown is fully lifted, coordinated action will be required to nurse the economy back to health.

The Indian Express

# Right To Dignity And Dignified Burial During And After Corona

ALI MALIK

Another moral dilemma is that in case the doctors and the nursing staff refuse to attend the corona patients in view of the increasing number of infections among them, shall we force them to work, some sort of conscription that we may have to resort to if the numbers of positive cases increases to an extent where we don't have adequate medical staff to attend the patients.



Migrant workers returning from their cities of work amid India's lockdown, were sprayed with disinfectants- Social media

As humanity is collectively fighting the Coronavirus pandemic, it is confronted with critical ethical and moral issues that it has to address as never before and address fast. It isn't the first time that humanity has been put to test and won't be the last.

With each calamity that has befallen the human race, it has come up with a response. The casualties and the cruelties of the two world wars, particularly those that befell the Jews in the second, forced humanity to respond with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It isn't that human rights didn't exist earlier and that such rights didn't evolve during peace times, but it was for the first time that almost the whole global population came up with a consensus for a detailed set of basic and essential human rights. The fundamental theme was that human dignity is paramount and people shall not be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. All this was in response to a situation where the calamity and the cruelty was imposed by visible human agency. Today the situation is equally dangerous except that the enemy/ agency is invisible and our ethics, morality and human values are being tested in novel ways.

Protection and safeguard of basic human rights is as tough a challenge as the fight against this global epidemic. The events of the past few months have shown that the entire global community had not anticipated a catastrophe of this proportion and was completely caught off guard. It was ill equipped mentally as well as in terms of logistics. We can see it

as the tragedy is unfolding in all corners of the globe. While we are working hard on the logistics side, we are confronted with ethical and moral issues of equal proportions.

One of the greatest dilemmas that we are facing, in particular the developing world, is whether to shield the entire population by enforcing complete lockdowns to stop the spread of the disease to save people but that may lead to deaths by starvation and the resultant commotion/ anarchy (that may in turn again lead to more intermingling and faster spread of the virus).

Again while enforcing a lockdown shall we thrash those who break it with thick bamboo sticks or make them crawl or give them some other corporal punishment on the spot without any trial or opportunity to explain. We have already witnessed such punishments at different places. Are we not thereby compromising on human dignity?

Another moral dilemma is that in case the doctors and the nursing staff refuse to attend the corona patients in view of the increasing number of infections among them, shall we force them to work, some sort of conscription that we may have to resort to if the numbers of positive cases increases to an extent where we don't have adequate medical staff to attend the patients.

Another moral dilemma is that in case the doctors and the nursing staff refuse to attend the corona patients in view of the increasing number of infections among them, shall we force them to work, some sort of conscription that we may have to resort to if the numbers of positive cases increases to an ex-

tent where we don't have adequate medical staff to attend the patients. And if we don't resort to such "conscription" we may have to leave patients in distress unattended.

Similarly how do we deal with the people who are Corona positive but we feel or know with some degree of certainty that they have further spread it to others, whether innocently or through negligence. Shall we sympathise with them or vilify them? We have already failed this ethical/ moral test by villifying various groups and, at places, those who have attended and treated Corona patients. Shall we be phobic enough to repeat it? Or shall we be brave enough to treat all these people with empathy and dignity?

### Right to a decent burial

Every human being has this inalienable right that after his death his body be treated with dignity and be given a graceful farewell. While videos on social media showing mass burials of body bags may be and are most probably fake, we still have to come up with an idea as to what could be a dignified burial that can be given to people who die of this virus and how far her/ his religious beliefs as to burial can be allowed to be performed?

While I have absolutely no doubt that humans shall overcome this cruelty, the question remains whether we shall come up with another charter, a more humane one that we shall follow in letter and spirit willingly and without any coercion. We have no choice except to keep the fine print of our next set of moral and ethical standards ready.

## Plight Of Kashmir's College Contractual Teachers

ABID HUSSAIN RATHER

of losing their only earning source of the college contractual teachers moved court for justice during the academic session of 2017-18 and 2018-19. The Honourable High Court of Srinagar directed the concerned authorities to continue their engagement and allow them to work in the colleges till the final judgement of the court comes. The court issued status quo orders in favour of teachers. However despite court orders the authorities have not released their salaries from last eight months, though they continue working in the colleges. This has pushed the contractual teachers to financial ruin. As for most of us this is our only income for survival. We and our families are suffering badly from last eight months. The concerned authorities turning a deaf ear to the repeated orders from courts regarding the salary release of contractual teachers has created a sense of hopelessness among the teachers. Government is giving false justifications for not releasing the salary of contractual teachers from last eight months. I would like to clarify here the false justifications from government authorities for not releasing the salary of college contractual teachers.

### Summer Vacation and Valley Lockdown

Last year the Higher Education Department announced summer vacations from 1st of August in the colleges of the Kashmir Valley and on 5th of August 2019 curfew was clamped on whole of Kashmir following the abrogation of its special status. All the government colleges were officially

closed till 9th of October. The government authorities are claiming that the contractual teachers did not attend the colleges during this period so they can't claim for their salary. I wonder whether permanent faculty and non-teaching staff attended the colleges during this period as their salary has been released for this period. All other departments in Kashmir remained shut during this period, but only the contractual teachers were denied their wages. It is pertinent to mention here that during the turmoil period of 2016, when colleges remained shut for an extended period, our salary was released. One more thing I would like to add here is that our salary was not deducted during previous summer vacations but unfortunately it was denied during this years vacation.

### Meagre Classwork

After 9th of October, 2019 the colleges were officially reopened and the college contractual teachers also resumed their duties but unfortunately some of the college principals didn't allow them to enter the colleges in clear violation of the court orders. Even some principals badly humiliated them and didn't allow them to resume their duties. The authorities are falsely claiming that there was meagre classwork in the colleges at that time which was managed only by permanent faculty but the fact is that the contractual teachers were also delivering lectures wherever principals allowed them. Besides the contractual teachers actively participated

in other college assignments during that period like conducting practical examinations, preparing awards, guiding and counselling students and other likely activities.

### Winter Vacations

The colleges were again closed for winter vacation from 21st of December, 2019 till 7th of February, 2020. As per government orders college contractual teachers are also allowed to observe winter vacation during every academic session without deduction of their salaries. But unfortunately the concerned authorities are stating that contractual teachers can not claim for salary as the colleges were closed because of winter vacation. After 7th of February, 2020, the college contractual teachers again resumed their duties and actively participated in teaching learning process and other assignments in colleges, though firstly they were not allowed to attend classwork by some principals.

The worthy Director of Colleges issued an order on 5th of March this year stating that they have not disturbed the status quo position of college contractual teachers and their engagement continues till the final decision of the Honourable High Court. Despite these facts our salaries have not been released from past eight months which has made our life miserable. During the present disastrous situation in Kashmir aggravated by the pandemic, we are in utter frustration as most of us have no other sources of income and our families are totally dependent on us. It is high time for the concerned authorities to look again into the matter, address our grievances and release our salaries at the earliest, so that they we do not suffer.

Abid Hussain Rather  
A College Contractual Teacher  
Sopat, Devsar, Kulgam  
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# Springtime Amidst Corona!

This is the spring season we had waited for impatiently since crackdown of August 5 last year. Now that spring has come, sun is shining and daffodils are singing under clear blue sky but alas, we are only watching this through half open windows.

NAYEEMA AHMAD MAHJOOR

**I wanted to remind you about the spring we used to celebrate after harsh winters in the past. Remember April 1972 when we had become politically docile and were left without hope after Bangladesh came into existence at the behest of India. Islamic revolution in Iran and Afghan jihad in Kabul had lifted our spirits a little but inside we were broken and bruised. Only deceit and betrayal was left in our destiny.**

Dear Baba,

You will never believe it. Eight billion population of the world is put under lockdown due to the spread of a pandemic spread by a virus called corona. The blossoms of spring are no more infusing new life into us.

Experts say this spiky shaped virus has mutated from two mammals; one of them is a bat. That same creature which would often hover around us in the cool summer evenings while we were watching the moon rising over the shimmering waters of the Dal Lake. You would immediately huddle us up around your loose pheran, shouting, "aech kariv bund, aech kariv bund, yena yi reckh traivi aech manz, ami seth chi katsa tember pevan" (close your eyes, close your eyes or the bat will throw its pooh in your eyes and make you blind forever)". We would laugh uncontrollably and make fun of your stupidity. The bat virus is now killing thousands by choking the lungs and arteries of rich and poor, young and old.

We are not the only people in the world under lockdown now. 8 billion are also self-isolating in solidarity with us. The reason of isolation or lockdown or incarceration can be different but every single soul is feeling the pain of our lockdown. You were the one who would often say that the pain of suppression cannot be felt until you are placed into the same situation. Corona might make people to feel our agony. All mosques, temples and houses of worship have to be abandoned. God has closed all doors of every sacred place. Those who were claiming to destroy the world in a few minutes are counting only bodies and beds and ventilators. Nuclear weapons have become useless and ventilators have become expensive. There is no war in Syria or Afghanistan. Orphans and women are staying calm in their tents near border. A little respite from running from the bullets. They are dreaming to return to their homes which have been turned into rubble.

Had you been around, you would be dreaming of achieving freedom at the time when eight billion people are supporting our fight to end oppression in Kashmir. Dear Baba, the clutches of the oppressor are spikier than the corona virus.

I wanted to remind you about the spring we used to celebrate after harsh winters in the past. Remember April 1972 when we had become politically docile and were left without hope after Bangladesh came into existence at the behest of India. Islamic revolution in Iran and Afghan jihad in Kabul had



lifted our spirits a little but inside we were broken and bruised. Only deceit and betrayal was left in our destiny.

That spring, you stopped teaching us history of Kashmir. Instead you indulged us to rejoice every moment in our lush green back garden which was clean, fresh and life-giving. Those shrill shouts of you are piercing my ears when you would keep calling to get up at the break of light and inhale the cool air coming from Kohi-i-Suleiman amid the cacophony of bird chirping. "You get new lease of life at the onset of spring. The more you inhale the fresh air, the healthier your lungs can become". You would repeat this mantra many times until I would get out of my bed and stay in bone chill spring air of April and breathe all oxygen of Chinara trees. My bones would get empty of marrow. I am yet unsure if I got new lease of life or it was one of your tricks to wake me up early.

Baba, your white stripy pigeon that would only leave the window sill of balcony once he sighted you, has now become too fragile and hardly takes any grains. I make sure to feed him, the only trait I inherited from you. Had it been land or house, this would have also gone to my brother. Maybe feeding pigeons is keeping me close to you so I feel content with this challenge. Most of all, my siblings did not dispute over its inheritance. Since you left, I am taking care of your pigeons including the lazy one we called stripy kotur. For a few days, he is not eating grains. The window sill is full of rice I placed for

him. I think he knows that humans are infecting humans all across the globe. He suspects me or maybe he is on social distancing too. I am not having any symptoms of virus or anybody at home. My apprehension is this pigeon has become suspicious of our character because many of us do lie about symptoms of the virus or run away from hospitals. Our neighbour has left hospital during the middle of the night after he tested positive.

This is the spring season we had waited for impatiently since crackdown of August 5 last year. Now spring has come and sun is shining, breeze is freshening, daffodils are singing and sky is clear blue. But Alas! We are only watching this through half open windows.

Eliot is dead again and nobody is now telling us the cruellest season has come. Wordsworth is no more singing to daffodils, or Mahjoor is no more looking for Gul-o-Bulbul. Their lungs have become choked and breathless. Covid-19 has erased the all memory of plagues of the past.

The tulip tree touching my bedroom window has hundreds of flowers this year. Some blossoms are pushing through the net window to come inside and freshen my soul. I cannot let them in. What if corona virus is still living on petals? This threat is looming over every mind and soul. So, we are not even looking at blossoms or thinking of spring which you believed gives new life and new hope.

No, there is no hope for mankind

now. Many thousands are dying from virus. Those who are spared are dying of hunger. Those spared by hunger are dying of hate. Those who are spared by hate are dying from anti-viral spray.

I feel very bad in telling you that I am on self isolation drive, cannot talk to anybody, or share my misery or listen to anybody. The whole world is hiding. It looks same when we used to close doors and windows in early ninety's. My only comfort is my window, which goes deep into the neighbour's kitchen where tulip tree has made different shapes by its scattered blossoms, I can see them having tea or hot water or talking about running short of supply soon. My skills of rationing have improved. I wish I could share my secrets with my neighbours but security forces are watching us with their eagle eyes. We are facing double lockdown. Nobody has any clue for how long they will keep us incarcerated. And, we never expect any relief even after virus runs without a host.

Many world leaders, some with nuclear weapons are suffering badly due to this virus. Muslims are still waiting for vaccine from West as usual. What else they can do?

! Which virus is deadly? The virus of oppression that we are facing since 1947 or the one which originated from China?

Author is former BBC editor.

Global lockdown is providing a rare opportunity to reflect

Dr. Afroz Ahmad Shah

The story you are reading is about a small family that lives in rural Italy also under Covid-19 lockdown these days. Both parents are working in the government sector with father a cardiologist and mother a school teacher. Their two children are studying at a university. The elder son Marco is pursuing masters in archeology and is in his final year and Sofia, his younger sister is in 2nd year of her chemistry degree course.

The house where they are staying is located in a serene rural area with a very sparse population. The nearby mountains are standing tall with lush green forests in the background, and the village is a world-famous location for tourists that normally come to see the gushing rivers and a variety of flower gardens that are distributed all over the place.

Before the lockdown, the place was buzzing with global tourists but now the place is quiet as tourists had to leave due to restrictions. But amazingly in their absence, new guests are here: wildlife has started to replace the tourists, and that is amazing to watch. Rivers are cleaner with an abundance of birds and animals thriving on it. These scenes have completely changed this little town for good, and people are celebrating this new phase amidst all the sadness that virus disease has imposed on them.

The lockdown has forced offices and institutions to go online, and that is why children are now e-learning, and have few days per week of engagements with teachers where they have to furnish assignments and other related work of the week.

Dad is working as usual but mom is also working from home. However, Marco, who usually helps his family in home chores, is now spending more time on online games and chats with his friends, and that is what is annoying his parents.

## From Kashmir to Italy- How Family Stories Bind Nations

DR AFROZ AHMAD SHAH



They are trying to counsel him that he needs to concentrate on his studies but nothing bothers him. The condition gets worst when his sister discovers that he sleeps very late and is mostly doing everything except studying! And now at home, he is not helping his family either as he spends most of his time online. Parents are now unable to understand what to do and are not in a position to send him to some other place because of lockdown.

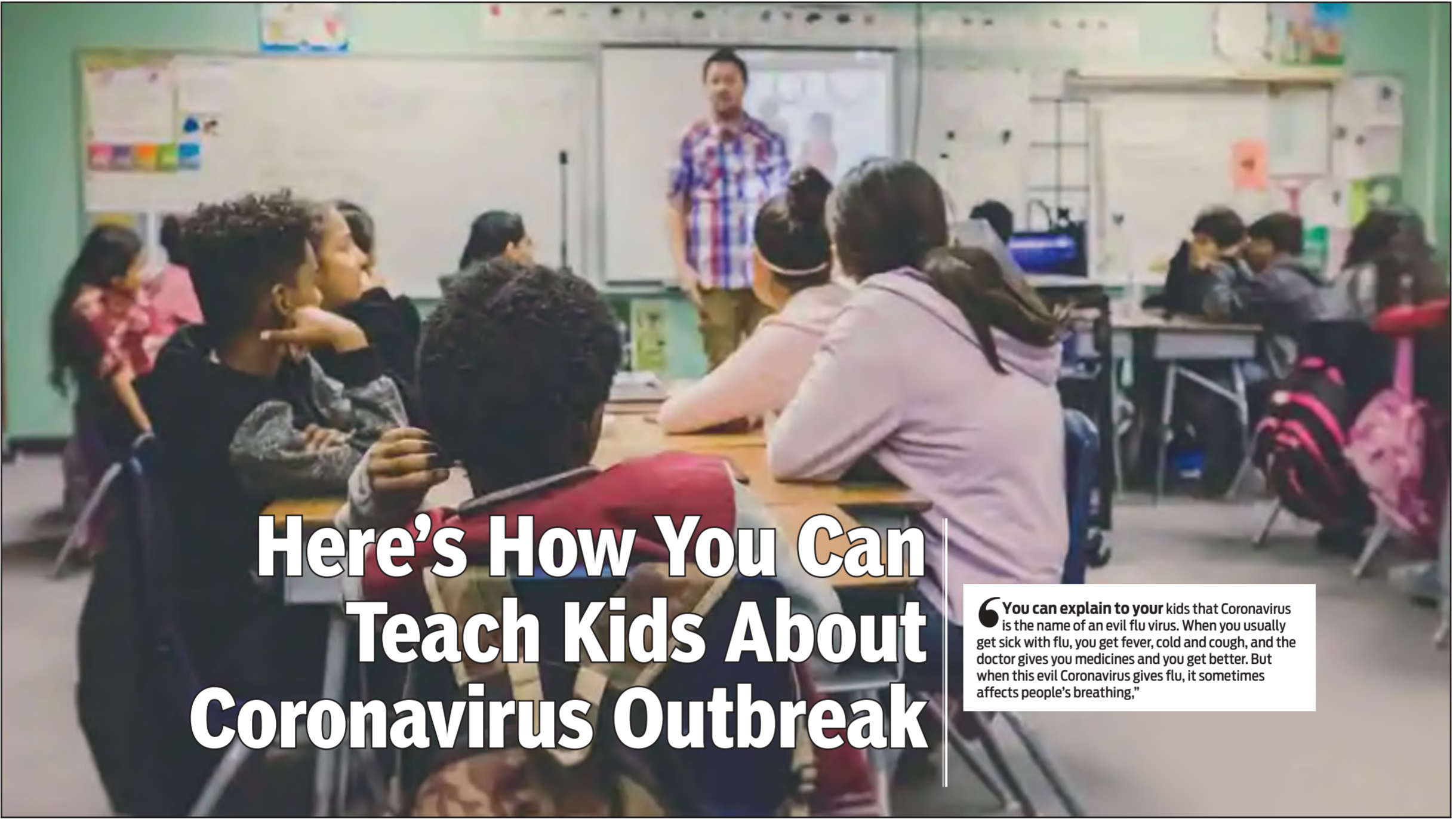
Something strange happened and suddenly the internet stopped working. Now, Marco finds himself isolated and frustrated

because he was addicted to the new routine of online interaction with friends and playing games. Suddenly everything has stalled. Now, there is nothing to do and his world has compressed to the four walls and three members of his family. Now he sleeps early and wakes up early. And slowly he has started to realise there is a lot to do and discover in this small world. He plays with his sister and helps his mother in the kitchen. He has started to turn pages of books that have accumulated dust in the cabinet. His dad reads history, philosophy apart from his medical literature. Mom is more into

literature, and the sister is inclined to history and sociology. The books amazed him, and quickly he has discovered a new friend, his love for religious literature, philosophy, and history. Now, his interactions are revolving around the topics he reads, and his companions are his family members. Now the entire discourse in home language has changed and centered on topics that he discovers every day. The best friends are now in the family, and daily chores are shared. Meals are taken together, and coffee sessions have turned into education and knowledge sharing occasions.

This is a huge transition and parents are extremely happy to see how Marco has rediscovered himself. His sister is extremely mesmerised to find that her only brother can be so friendly, helpful, and responsible. Now, the whole family seems to have discovered a new world. However, the question remains about the sustainability of this phase when the internet is resumed. When a lockdown is revoked, will the world change for good? This remains to be discovered but the lessons learned during the lockdown are many. It clearly shows that overburden of people at tourist places should be completely avoided to restore the imbalance, created by an overflow of tourists, with the environment and ecosystem. The second lesson could be about the rare opportunity that has allowed people to efficiently socialise with family and become a responsible family member by helping each other. And it also tells us how to discover the world even in the loneliness of your house, and be the change.

If you find the four walls of your house limiting your interaction with the world try switching off your internet and see what happens. It may transform you for good. There are so many things that we usually take for granted in our life and then discover them only when something bad happens. It is possible that the present crisis is a harsh reminder for humankind to look deeper within and around. To reflect on what we have achieved so far in this world, and whether we have made it a better place than what it was. If not we should work on our deficiencies and create a world of peace, prosperity, security, welfare, and love. The emergence of coronavirus pandemic portrays the entire world as a family unit on the planet Earth, and even if we have created huge walls in the shape of borders we are unable to isolate ourselves. So local, national and international borders have become irrelevant overnight. A virus that originated in China has traversed man made borders far and beyond and forced us to reflect on our reality.



# Here's How You Can Teach Kids About Coronavirus Outbreak

“You can explain to your kids that Coronavirus is the name of an evil flu virus. When you usually get sick with flu, you get fever, cold and cough, and the doctor gives you medicines and you get better. But when this evil Coronavirus gives flu, it sometimes affects people's breathing.”

Agencies

The novel Coronavirus has not just left our medical practitioners and researchers searching for solutions, but its also parents who find it hard to explain the phenomenon to young children, in a creative, calm way.

As per ontological coach and author Geeta Ramakrishnan, while this Virus crisis will have a psychological effect on all of us, you want to make it as soft and digestible as possible for the little ones.

“You can explain to your kids that Coronavirus is the name of an evil flu virus. When you usually get sick with flu, you get fever, cold and cough, and the doctor gives you medicines and you get better. But when this evil Coronavirus gives flu, it sometimes affects people's breathing,” she told IANSlife.

What's required are some rules. “This evil virus sticks to you when you go out and touch things. So you must use some secret tricks which this evil Coronavirus will not like. You must wash your hands with soap and sanitizer as often as you can to keep them clean. You

must not go out to meet your friends, so the virus can't stick to you. If older people have to go out to buy important things, we have to wear a mask and gloves. Parents can use paper and colors to help create stories with your kid on how the brave kids of today saved the world from the evil Coronavirus.”

Parents can also use a free-to-read, digital book for primary school age children. Illustrated by Axel Scheffler, the children's guide is about the coronavirus and the measures taken to control it. It is published by Nosy Crow, and written by staff within the company.

With expert input from Professor Graham Medley of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, two head teachers and a child psychologist, the book answers key questions in simple language: What is the coronavirus? How you catch it? What happens next? And, what can one do to help?

“This pandemic is changing children's lives across the globe and will have a lasting impact on us all. Helping children understand what is going on is an important step in helping them cope and making them part of the story – this is something that we are all

going through, not something being done to them. This book puts children in the picture rather than just watching it happen, and in a way that makes the scary parts easier to cope with,” Professor Graham Medley said.

The book is available for free on the Nosy Crow blog.

A new story book by UNICEF - available for free in six languages including English - will also help children understand and come to terms with COVID-19. It has been produced by a collaboration of more than 50 organisations working in the humanitarian sector.

## Best Time To Quit Smokers May Be At Higher Risk Of Severe COVID-19 infections

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

People who currently smoke, and those with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) may have higher levels of a molecule in their lungs, which could put them at an increased risk of developing severe COVID-19 infections, according to a study.

The study, published in the European Respiratory Journal, shows that levels of angiotensin converting enzyme II (ACE-2) --which sits on the surface of lung cells -- in former smokers is lower than in current smokers.

“The data emerging from China suggested that patients with COPD were at higher risk of having worse outcomes from COVID-19,” said Janice Leung from the University of British Columbia in Canada.

“We hypothesised that this could be because the levels of ACE-2 in their airways might be increased compared to people without COPD, which could possibly make it easier for the virus to infect the airway,” Leung said.



The researchers studied samples taken from the lungs of 21 COPD patients and 21 people who did not have COPD.

They tested the samples to gauge the level of ACE-2 and compared this with other factors, such whether they were from people who never smoked, were current smokers or former smokers.

Not only did they find higher levels of ACE-2 in COPD patients, they also found higher levels in people who were smokers.

The researchers then checked their new findings against two existing study groups, which together contain data on a further 249 people -- some non-smokers, some current smokers and some former smokers.

They found levels of ACE-2 were higher in current smokers but lower in non-smokers and in those who were former smokers.

“We found that patients with COPD and people who are still smoking have higher levels of ACE-2 in their airways, which might put them at an increased risk of developing severe COVID-19 infections.

“Patients with COPD should be counselled to strictly abide by social distancing and proper hand hygiene to prevent infection,” said Leung.

“We also found that former smokers had similar levels of ACE-2 to people who had never smoked. This suggests that there has never been a better time to quit smoking to protect yourself from COVID-19,” she said.

Professor Tobias Welte, an infections expert from the European Respiratory Society said the study gives interesting insight into why some people may be at risk of more severe COVID-19 symptoms than others.

“What it does not tell us is whether it's possible to manipulate ACE-2 levels to improve survival in patients infected with COVID-19 or whether this would make a difference in COPD patients who contract the infection,” said Welte, who was not involved in the study.

## Placing Self-Worth On Financial Success Leads To Feelings Of Loneliness

AGENCIES

Individuals who lay the foundation of self -worth on their financial success often feel lonely in everyday life, suggests a recent study.

Researchers from the University at Buffalo and Harvard Business School have taken the initial steps to better understand why this link exists.

“When people base their self-worth on financial success, they experience feelings of pressure and a lack of autonomy, which are associated with negative social outcomes,” says Lora Park, an associate professor of psychology at UB and one of the paper's co-authors.

“Feeling that pressure to achieve financial goals means we're putting ourselves to work at the cost of spending time with loved ones, and it's that lack of time spent with people close to us that's associated with feeling lonely and disconnected,” said Deborah Ward, a UB graduate student and adjunct faculty member at the UB's psychology department who led the research on a team that also included Ashley Whillans, an assistant professor at Harvard Business School, Kristin Naragon-Gainey, at the University of Western Australia, and Han Young Jung, a former UB graduate student.



The findings, published in the journal Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, emphasise the role of social networks and personal relationships in maintaining good mental health and why people should preserve those connections, even in the face of obstacles or pursuing challenging goals.

“Depression and anxiety are tied to isolation, and we're certainly seeing this now with the difficulties we have connecting with friends during the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Ward.

“These social connections are important. We need them as humans

in order to feel secure, to feel mentally healthy and happy. But much of what's required to achieve success in the financial domain comes at the expense of spending time with family and friends,” he added.

Ward says it's not the financial success that's problematic or the desire for money that's leading to these associations.

At the centre of this research is a concept psychologists identify as Financial Contingency of Self-Worth. When people's self-worth is contingent on money, they view their financial success as being tied to the core of who they are as a per-

son. The degree to which they succeed financially relates to how they feel about themselves -- feeling good when they think they're doing well financially, but feeling worthless if they're feeling financially insecure.

The research involved more than 2,500 participants over five different studies that looked for relationships between the financial contingency of self-worth and key variables, such as time spent with others, loneliness and social disconnection.

This included a daily diary study that followed participants over a two-week period to assess how they were feeling over an extended time about the importance of money and time spent engaged in various social activities.

“We saw consistent associations between valuing money in terms of who you are and experiencing negative social outcomes in previous work, so this led us to ask the question of why these associations are present,” said Ward.

“We see these findings as further evidence that people who base their self-worth on money are likely to feel pressured to achieve financial success, which is tied to the quality of their relationships with others,” he continued.

## Researchers Develop Computer Model That Predicts How Drugs Affect Heart Rhythm

AGENCIES

In a novel study, researchers have developed a computer model to screen drugs for unintended cardiac side effects, especially arrhythmia risk.

The study led by Colleen E. Clancy, professor of physiology and membrane biology, and Igor Vorobyov, assistant professor of physiology and membrane biology was published in the journal Circulation Research.

Clancy is a recognized leader in using high-performance computing to understand electrical changes in the heart.

“One main reason for a drug being removed from the market is potentially life-threatening arrhythmias,” Clancy said. “Even drugs developed to treat arrhythmia have ended up actu-

ally causing them.”

The problem, according to Clancy, is that there is no easy way to preview how a drug interacts with hERG-encoded potassium channels essential to normal heart rhythm.

“So far there has been no surefire way to determine which drugs will be therapeutic and which will harmful,” Clancy said. “What we have shown is that we can now make this determination starting from the chemical structure of a drug and then predicting its impact on the heart rhythm.”

Using a drug's chemical formula, the computer model reveals how that drug specifically interacts with hERG channels as well as cardiac cells and tissue. The outcomes can then be validated with comparisons to clinical data from electrocardiogram (ECG) results of patients.

## Indian manufacturers upset over zero duty on imported masks and gloves

**HYDERABAD:** While there is zero duty for masks and gloves for importers but those who make these products in India will have to pay goods and services tax ranging from 5 to 11 per cent.

Indian manufacturers of masks and gloves are very upset that no import duty will be levied on these items while they pay goods and services tax ranging from 5 to 11 per cent.

Consumers will not be affected because of the maximum retail price but Indian manufacturers will have to struggle

will not allow them to cover costs of production.

Price of raw materials has risen sharply in India and due to the lockdown there is very little manpower, and movement of goods from one place to another is affected.

Rajiv Nath, forum coordinator of Association of Indian Medical Devices Industry said, "We understand that there is a shortage of masks, gloves, personal protection equipment and other medical devices in India. We support government in ensuring that these shortages



to manage their costs of production, distribution and profit margin.

For example, there will be zero import duty on gloves from Malaysia while for gloves made in India the retailer pays 11 per cent GST. This will put Indian manufacturers at a cost disadvantage and they will be last on the list of corporate and government buyers.

Due to the policies of the government in the past, many manufacturers had moved to trading and assembling of imported products. But with the Covid-19 crisis in the last two months, many of them had returned to domestic manufacturing. This was good for the domestic market as there would be more players.

But this decision of the government on import duties has made them realize that investment in manufacturing

are met. But the benefits extended to importers must also be extended to Indian manufacturers."

Bold policy decisions to end 80 to 90 per cent import dependency is the need of the hour and these steps can be taken now, urge manufacturers. "Make in India of medical devices is already suffering and by exempting duty on imports, Indian manufacturers is at a further competitive disadvantage. This is the general mood of local industry," said Dr G S K Velu, managing director of Triviron.

Indian manufacturers have been urging that good quality, safety regulations and judicious price controls of medical devices will make health care affordable and accessible to thousands in the country.

## 42 per cent Indians have increased use of digital payments during COVID-19 lockdown: Report

**NEW DELHI:** The nationwide lockdown has benefited digital payment platforms as 42 per cent Indians have increased the use of digital means for payments in the last three weeks, a report said. Buying essentials and mobile recharges are top use cases for digital payments, according to a survey of 42,000 respondents done by consultancy firm Local Circles.

It said that Paytm and Google Pay are among the top digital payment apps being used by consumers. Many retail stores and local general stores have been reporting a major rush and spike in order because of the lockdown and as people purchase and stock essentials for use during this period, it said.

E-commerce platforms, especially the ones delivering groceries have also seen a massive spike in orders for essential goods in the last three weeks with some reporting five times demand. For both retail stores and e-commerce orders, what is common is that many of the consumers are now making their payments via digital payment mechanisms and taking contactless delivery of goods where possible.



## IMF Projects India's Growth Rate At 1.9 Per Cent In 2020, Forecasts Global Recession Due To COVID-19

Press Trust Of India

**WASHINGTON:** The IMF on Tuesday projected a GDP growth of 1.9 per cent for India in 2020, as the global economy hits the worst recession since the Great Depression in the 1930s due to the raging coronavirus pandemic that has nearly stalled all economic activities across the world. With this subdued forecast, India is likely to record its worst growth performance since the 1991 liberalisation. But the International Monetary Fund, in its latest edition of the World Economy report, has placed India as the fastest-growing emerging economies of the world.

It is among the only two major countries, which will register a positive growth rate in 2020. The other being China, for which the IMF has projected a growth rate of 1.2 per cent.

"We project global growth in 2020 to fall to -3 per cent. This is a downgrade of 6.3 percentage points from January 2020, a major revision over a very short period," IMF's Chief Economist Gita Gopinath, said, adding that the COVID-19 pandemic will severely impact growth across all regions.

The Great Depression was the worst worldwide economic downturn that lasted for 10 years from 1929, beginning in the US when the New York Stock Exchange on Wall

Street crashed and wiped out millions of investors.

Most countries, in the advanced economy group, are forecast to contract this year, including the United States (5.9 per cent), Japan (5.2 per cent), the United Kingdom (6.5 per cent), Germany (7.0 per cent), France (7.2 per cent), Italy (9.1 per cent), and Spain (8 per cent), the IMF report said. Even with a sharp rebound in the remainder of the year and sizable fiscal support, the Chinese economy is projected to grow at a subdued 1.2 per cent in 2020.

The IMF said that several economies in the region were forecast to grow at modest rates, including India (1.9 per cent) and Indonesia (0.5 per cent), and others are forecast to experience large contractions (Thailand, 6.7 per cent).

The IMF said that other regions are projected to experience severe slowdowns or outright contractions in economic activity, including Latin America (5.2 per cent) - with Brazil's growth forecast at 5.3 per cent and Mexico's at 6.6 per cent; emerging and developing Europe (5.2 per cent) with Russia's economy projected to contract by 5.5 per cent.

The Middle East and Central Asia (2.8 per cent) with Saudi Arabia's growth forecast at 2.3 per cent, with non-oil GDP contracting by four per

cent, and most economies, including Iran, expected to contract; and sub-Saharan Africa (1.6 per cent) with growth in Nigeria and South Africa expected at 3.4 per cent and 5.8 per cent respectively.

Gopinath said that this is a crisis like no other, and there is substantial uncertainty about its impact on people's lives and livelihoods. A lot depends on the epidemiology of the virus, the effectiveness of containment measures, and the development of therapeutics and vaccines, all of which are hard to predict.

She said that in addition, many countries now face multiple crises - a health crisis, a financial crisis, and a collapse in commodity prices, which interact in complex ways.

Assuming the pandemic fades in the second half of 2020 and that policy actions taken around the world are effective in preventing widespread firm bankruptcies, extended job losses, and system-wide financial strains, Gopinath said the IMF projects global growth in 2021 to rebound to 5.8 per cent.

India's growth rate in 2021 is projected at 7.4 per cent, while that of China at 9.2 per cent. The IMF report said that the United States has been projected to grow at 4.5 per cent and Japan 3 per cent. Gopinath said that this is a truly global crisis as no country is spared.

## India Inc seeks stimulus package after lockdown extension

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI:** India Inc on Tuesday said the nationwide lockdown extension was necessary to avert a humanitarian crisis, but insisted on the need for a stimulus package to rebuild the economy hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Tuesday asked India Inc to clear huge outstanding payments to micro, small and medium enterprises at the earliest in order to ease the distress in the sector and inject liquidity into market.

In a discussion with senior industry members of Ficci via video conferencing, the MSME minister exhorted the industry to clear pending dues owed by them to the units.

"I would like to request you, major industries also have huge outstanding dues of MSMEs. We were earlier considering framing a law

entailing stringent rules regarding such payments. However, now is not the right time for this. We do not wish to go down that road," the minister said.

Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that the current lockdown will be extended till May 3, saying it is necessary to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus in the country.

He said detailed guidelines on implementation of the new lockdown will be announced on Wednesday, and some relaxations may be allowed after April 20 in places where there are no hotspots.

Late last month, the government announced a Rs 1.7 lakh crore package aimed at providing relief to those hit hard by the lockdown as well as an insurance cover for healthcare professionals handling virus infected people.

Estimates show that India may be losing close to Rs 40,000

crore daily due to the national lockdown with an estimated loss amounting to Rs 7-8 lakh crore during the past 21 days," said Ficci President Sangita Reddy.

Further, it is also expected that close to 40 million jobs are at risk during the period April-Sept 2020. Hence, an urgent relief package is also critical, she said.

CII Director General Chandrajit Banerjee said the Covid-19 curve trajectory as of now required a fitting containment response and Prime Minister's decision for continuation of the lockdown is necessary to avert a larger humanitarian crisis.

"The extension gives the government adequate preparation time to organise an orderly and safe restart of the economy as and when health conditions permit. Industry too can devise its strategies for commencing operations accordingly during this extension period," Banerjee said.

## IMF approves debt relief for 25 poor countries to deal with pandemic



Press Trust Of India

**WASHINGTON:** The International Monetary Fund on Monday announced immediate debt relief for 25 poor countries to help them free up funds to fight the coronavirus pandemic.

"This provides grants to our poorest and most vulnerable members to cover their IMF debt obligations for an initial phase over the next six months and will help them channel more of their scarce financial resources towards vital emergency medical and other relief efforts," IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said in a statement.

The IMF board approved the debt relief for the countries, nearly all in Africa, but also Afghanistan, Yemen, Nepal and Haiti.

The fund together with the World Bank have called for rich nations to stop collecting debt payments from poor countries from May 1 through June 2021.

The debt relief will be funded by the IMF's Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust (CCRT), which was first set up to combat the West Africa Ebola outbreak in 2015 and has been repurposed to help countries fend off COVID-19.

The fund currently has USD 500 million, with Japan, Britain, China and the Netherlands among its main contributors.

"I urge other donors to help us replenish the trust's resources and boost further our ability to provide additional debt service relief for a full two years to our poorest member countries," Georgieva said.

Last week, the World bank said it would roll out USD 160 billion in emergency aid over 15 months to help countries stricken by the virus, including USD 14 billion in debt repayments from 76 poor countries to other governments.

## Reliance Industries to launch Rs 9,000 cr non-convertible debenture issue on April 16

**MUMBAI:** To cash in on cheap funds flooding the debt market through the targeted long-term repo operations route, Reliance Industries (RIL) will raise Rs 9,000 crore through an NCD sale to refinance the existing high-cost rupee debt. The most cash-rich company is also one of the most indebted corporates sitting on debt pile of over Rs 1.54 lakh crore as of March 2020.

According to an exchange filing, RIL is launching a Rs 9,000-crore non-convertible debenture (NCD) issue on April 16 and the proceeds from the debt sale will be used to repay existing rupee debt.

The issue has two components: a Rs 4,500-crore fixed rate tranche and an equal tranche with floating rate and both the issues are offering a coupon of 7.20 per cent-4.40 per cent of repo with a spread of 2.80 per cent.

The NCDs will be issued through a private placement, which will consist of 30,000 unsecured redeemable fixed coupon, non-convertible debentures under the privately placed debentures (PPD) series K1.

Each NCD has a face value of Rs 10 lakh each aggregating to Rs 3,000 crore along with a greenshoe option for oversubscription up to Rs 1,500 crore, aggregating in cash to Rs 4,500 crore.

In the floating interest rate tranche, RIL will issue 35,000 unsecured redeemable, non-convertible debentures under the PPD Series K2 each having a face value of Rs 10 lakh, aggregating in cash to Rs 3,500 crore with an option to retain oversubscription up to Rs 1,000 crore aggregating to Rs 4,500 crore.

If it raises the targeted Rs 9,000 crore, this is nearly a tenth of the Rs 1 lakh crore liquidity RBI has promised to pump into the debt market through the targeted long term repo operations (TLTRO). Of the total amount it has already infused Rs 75,000 crore into the system.

For the quarter to December 2019, RIL's consolidated turnover stood at Rs 1,68,858 crore and net profit at Rs 11,640 crore.



## ONGC's 'oil sevaks' operate India's biggest oil, gas fields beyond shifts amid COVID-19 lockdown

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI:** Miles away from land, working as well as living on iron structures standing in 70 to 100 metres of sea depth was always considered a physically demanding and potentially dangerous job. And when the 14-day work shift gets extended to as much as 35 days, it certainly can be mentally stressful and physically exhausting.

But not for the 4,500 ONGC employees and officers who have been operating India's biggest oil and gas fields in the Arabian Sea as well as fields and installations in the Bay of Bengal to feed the country's energy needs.

The employees, including nine women, are happy to continue working on offshore installations as a nationwide lockdown restricts bringing in their replacement. "I have been receiving messages from these brave employees saying they are happy to continue working on offshore fields as

long as it is needed," Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) chairman and MD Shashi Shanker told PTI here.

Most of India's oil and gas is produced from fields lying below the seabed. To produce oil and gas, firms such as ONGC drill wells and also build installations in the sea to process the oil and gas coming from these wells before it is piped to onshore facilities.

The processing platforms have living quarters that house personnel operating and maintaining the fields. ONGC has a number of fields in the Arabian Sea, the prime being Mumbai High oil and gas fields, Bassein and Heera. It also has some fields in Krishna Godavari basin in the Bay of Bengal.

Globally, a 50:50 pattern of work in offshore fields is followed. ONGC employees are supposed to work 14 days offshore before getting an equal period of break at their homes. Shanker said that most of the ONGC employees and contractual workers went to work on

offshore last month on a 14-day work cycle.

But the imposition of the lockdown meant that their replacement could not reach Mumbai -- the base from where they are to be ferried in helicopters to the offshore site. "My chest swells with pride to see these young ONGCians who are ready to go the extra mile during these testing times the nation is facing. It moves me to see how each one of them is wanting to do his or her best to serve the nation. Some people call them 'oil warriors' but I think a more appropriate term would be 'oil sevaks'," he said.

While mobile phones are not allowed on the installations, the employees stay in touch with their families over satellite phones and video calls.

The living quarters on offshore locations are well-staffed with kitchen, laundry and entertainment rooms but staying at sea for such a long period



with no physical contact with land can be mentally exhausting.

Shanker says that ONGC has continued to maintain oil and gas production even during the lockdown as a net oil importing nation cannot afford to shut even a single well. Besides, ONGC fields are old and if some wells are shut down, they will be difficult to revive as the natural pressure that pushes oil

and gas out will be hindered.

"Due to COVID-19 lockdown, may of these men and women working offshore have completed 28 days to 35 days duty compared to usual 14-day shift duty and are continuing to perform a duty. Due to dedicated efforts of offshore personnel, oil and gas production has been maintained from off-

shore and drilling operations are also continuing," he said.

A rig operates on 12-hour shifts and typically workers do 14 days and then rotate out for a break for another 14 days. The machinery on oil rigs is some of the most demanding equipment that works in one of the most difficult environments in the world, with oil and gas being extremely inflammable.

## Governments should support news media as 'essential service' to stop COVID-19 'disinfodemic': UNESCO

**UNITED NATIONS:** The UNESCO has said news media should be recognised and supported by all governments as an "essential service" to stop the COVID-19 "disinfodemic" that is putting lives at risk.

"There seems to be barely an area left untouched by disinformation in relation to the COVID-19 crisis, ranging from the origin of the coronavirus, through to unproven prevention and 'cures', and encompassing responses by governments, companies, celebrities and others," Guy Berger, Director for Policies and Strategies regarding Communication and Information at the UN educational, Scientific and Cultural Organiza-

"However, this is not a substitute for information supplied by the news media, so we are also intensifying our efforts to persuade authorities to see free and professional journalism as an ally in the fight against disinformation, especially because the news media works openly in the public sphere, whereas much disinformation is under-the-radar, on social messaging apps," Berger said.

The UNESCO official also pointed to a more harmful example of disinformation: encouraging the taking of medication, approved for other purposes, but not yet clinically proven as being effective against COVID-19.



tion (UNESCO), said in an interview with the UN News.

According to the UN, unreliable and false information is spreading around the world to such an extent that some commentators are now referring to the new avalanche of misinformation that's accompanied the COVID-19 pandemic as a "disinfodemic".

Berger said UNESCO is particularly urging governments "not to impose restrictions on freedom of expression that can harm the essential role of an independent press, but to recognise journalism as a power against disinformation even when it publicises verified information and informed opinion that annoys those in power."

"There is a strong case to be made that the media deserves to be recognised and supported by governments as an essential service at this time."

He stressed that the need of the hour is to improve the supply of truthful information and ensure that the demand is met.

"We are underlining that governments, in order to counter rumours, should be more transparent, and proactively disclose more data, in line with Right to Information laws and policies. Access to information from official sources is very important for credibility in this crisis."

He said unfortunately some have capitalised on the pandemic, to spread disinformation for the purposes of advancing their own agendas.

"The motives for spreading disinformation are many, and include political aims, self-promotion, and attracting attention as part of a business model. Those who do so, play on emotions, fears, prejudices and ignorance, and claim to bring meaning and certainty to a reality that is complex, challenging and fast-changing," Berger said.

He said in a time of "high fears, uncertainties and unknowns", there is "fertile ground for fabrications to flourish and grow". The big risk is that any single falsehood that gains traction can negate the significance of a body of true facts.

"When disinformation is repeated and amplified, including by influential people, the grave danger is that information which is based on truth, ends up having only marginal impact," he said.

Berger noted that some people believe, wrongly, that young people or those of African descent are immune (some disinformation has a racist, or xenophobic, tone), and that those in warm climates or countries where summer is on its way, do not need to worry too much.



## Migrant Workers Hit The Streets In Mumbai's Bandra, Demand Arrangements To Go Back Home

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI:** Hours after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced extension of the lockdown till May 3, a large number of migrant workers who earn daily wages came out on road in Mumbai on Tuesday, demanding transport arrangements to go back to their native places.

Daily wage workers have been rendered jobless ever since the lockdown was announced late last month to stem the spread of COVID-19, making their life a constant struggle.

Though authorities and NGOs have made arrangements for their food, most of them want to go back to their native places to escape the hardship brought by the sweeping curbs.

According to a police official, daily wage earners, numbering around

1,000, assembled at suburban Bandra (West) bus depot near the railway station and squatted on road at around 3 pm.

The daily wage earners, who reside on rent in slums in the nearby Patel Nagri locality, were demanding arrangement of transport facilities so that they can go back to their native towns and villages.

They originally hail from states like West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh.

One of the labourers, who did not reveal his name, said, NGOs and local residents are providing food to migrant workers, but they want to go back to their native states during the lockdown which has badly affected their source of livelihood.

"Now, we don't want food, we want to go back to our native place, we are not happy with the announcement

(extending the lockdown)," he said, looking dejected.

Asadullah Sheikh, who hails from Malda in West Bengal, said, "We have already spent our savings during the first phase of the lockdown. We have nothing to eat now, we just want to go back at our native place, the government should make arrangements for us."

Another labourer, Abdul Kayyuan, said, "I am in Mumbai for last many years, but have never seen such a situation. The government should start trains to shift us from here to our native place."

Heavy police deployment was made at the protest site to tackle any untoward incident.

Personnel from other police stations were called at the spot to maintain order, the official added.

## US approves sale of missile, torpedoes worth \$155 million to India

Press Trust Of India

**WASHINGTON:** The Trump Administration on Monday notified the Congress of its determination to sell Harpoon Block II air launched missiles and lightweight torpedoes worth \$155 million to India.

The sale of 10 AGM-84L Harpoon Block II air launched missiles is estimated to cost \$92 million, while 16 MK 54 All Up Round Lightweight Torpedoes and three MK 54 Exercise Torpedoes are estimated to cost \$63 million, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency said in two separate notifications to the Congress.

A determination in this regard was recently made by the US State Department following a request for these two military hardware made by the Indian Government, the Pentagon said.

According to the Pentagon, the Harpoon missile system will be integrated into the P-8I aircraft to conduct anti-surface warfare missions in defense of critical sea lanes while enhancing inter-operability with the United States and other allied forces.

"India will use the enhanced capability as a deterrent to regional threats and to strengthen its homeland defense. India will have no difficulty absorbing



these systems into its armed forces," the Pentagon said.

While the Harpoon missiles will be manufactured by Boeing, the torpedoes would be supplied by Raytheon, the notification said. The proposed sale, it said, will improve India's capability to meet current and future threats from enemy weapon systems.

The MK 54 Lightweight Torpedo will provide the capability to conduct anti-submarine warfare missions. "India will use the enhanced capability as a deterrent to regional threats and to strengthen its homeland defense."

India intends to utilize MK 54 Lightweight Torpedoes on its P-8I aircraft. India will have no difficulty absorbing

these systems into its armed forces," it said.

In both the notifications, the Pentagon said that the proposed sale of these equipment and support will not alter the basic military balance in the region.

According to the Pentagon, this proposed sale will support the foreign policy and national security of the United States by helping to strengthen the US-Indian strategic relationship and to improve the security of a major defensive partner, which continues to be an important force for political stability, peace, and economic progress in the Indo-Pacific and South Asia region.

## Bhima Koregaon case: Ambedkar's kin goes to jail; Navlakha also surrenders

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI:** Academician Anand Teltumbde, grand son-in-law of B R Ambedkar, and civil rights activist Gautam Navlakha were on Tuesday placed under arrest by the National Investigation Agency in connection with Bhima Koregaon case after both of them surrendered.

Both had to surrender after the Supreme Court had rejected their plea seeking more time to appear before the NIA because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Teltumbde walked into the South Mumbai office of the NIA on a day when the 129th birth anniversary of Ambedkar, architect of country's Constitution, was being celebrated. He and Navlakha were wanted by the NIA in the Elgar Parishad-Maoist links case popularly known as "Bhima Koregaon" case. Navlakha surrendered in the agency's headquarters in the national capital.

Teltumbde was later produced before a special NIA

terrorist organisation," the agency alleged in its remand application.

Teltumbde has links with the banned organisation, the agency alleged, claiming the call data records of the academician has revealed that he was in contact with the other accused in the case.

"It is also revealed that there is a conspiracy hatched by the accused persons to promote enmity between caste groups. This conspiracy led to violence resulting in loss of life and state wide agitation," the application alleged.

Teltumbde, Navlakha and nine other civil liberties activists have been booked under the stringent provisions of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) for having alleged Maoist links and for conspiring to overthrow the government.

Teltumbde and Navlakha, who were initially granted interim protection from arrest, were on March 16 directed by the Supreme Court to surrender within a period of three weeks following



court in Mumbai which remanded him in NIA custody till April 18 even as the agency sought 10-day custody.

Navlakha will be produced before a special court in Delhi where the agency will seek his transit remand to take him to Mumbai, officials said.

Earlier, the agency had planned to produce Navlakha through video conferencing before the Mumbai special court but special NIA judge A T Wankhede said since the accused surrendered in Delhi he would have to be produced before a court in the national capital.

The agency in its remand application filed through special public prosecutor Prakash Shetty has alleged Teltumbde had links with the Communist Party of India (Maoist), a banned terrorist organisation.

In its application, the agency also sought permission to handcuff him to avoid physical contact with the accused amid the COVID-19 outbreak. However, no such request was made before the court. The NIA in its application said Teltumbde was the convenor of the Elgar Parishad programme held on December 31, 2017 at Pune.

It is the prosecution's case that during that programme, inflammatory speeches were made which triggered caste-based violence at Koregaon Bhima on January 1, 2018 in Pune.

"During preliminary investigations it was revealed that accused Anand Teltumbde was recipient of funds from the central committee of Communist Party of India (Maoist), a banned

dismissal of their pre-arrest bail pleas.

On April 8, the apex court extended the time period by one week rejecting Navlakha's plea seeking extension of time on the ground that going to jail during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is "virtually a death sentence".

"Though we expected that the accused would surrender, honouring the order of this court, they have not done so. We are told that in Mumbai, the courts are functioning. It would have been appropriate for the accused to surrender as the courts are open and not totally closed" the bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra had said. In a statement, Navlakha said the "draconian provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act are not accompanied by stricter procedures regarding evidence, especially electronic, considering the stringent punishment provided for under the Act; the procedures, which otherwise provide tighter rules regarding evidence, are instead made elastic."

"Under this double whammy, jail becomes the norm and bail an exception. In this Kafkaesque domain, process itself becomes punishment," he said.

He said he can now begin to face the actual legal process, which accompanies cases where provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act are invoked. He said such acts turn the normal jurisprudence upside down and added no longer is it the axiom that "a person is innocent unless proven guilty".

### BOTTOM LINE

## COVID-19: Silicon Valley prepares for layoffs, reduction in salary and job freeze

Press Trust Of India

**WASHINGTON:** The Silicon Valley, hub of Indian entrepreneurship that showcases excellence of Indian IT professionals, is bracing itself for a post coronavirus period with layoffs, pay cuts and freeze on new jobs, a top venture capitalist has said.

M Ranganaswami told PTI that while the IT giants like Google and Facebooks might have a different approach, many of the startups have been instituting either layoffs or reduction in salary or a combination of both.

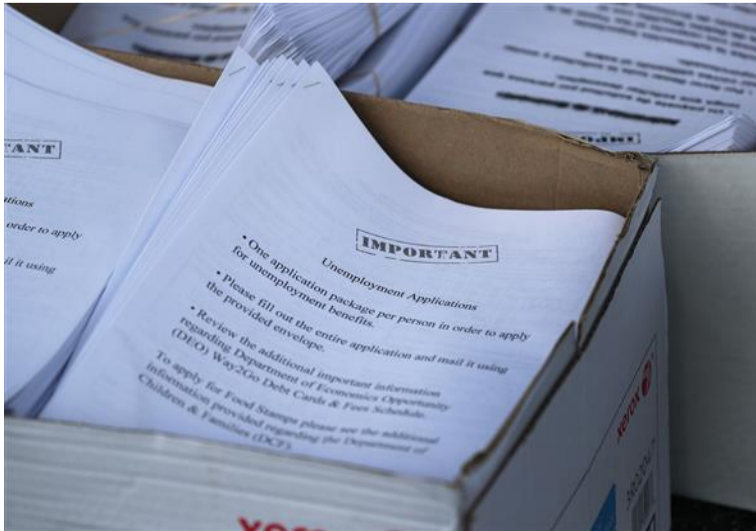
"They are all making sure that they have enough cash in the company for 18 to 24 months. This is a bad time to raise money. Because if they go try to raise money now, they'll get very

poor valuation," Ranganaswami said reflecting on the mood among startups in the Silicon Valley.

"So, I think over the next month, you'll hear a lot of unemployment picking up in the Bay Area, which has not happened since 2007, 2008. Even then, it didn't happen much. But this will be the first time you'll see that in a long time like after the 2000 bubble. This will equal that type of situation," said the well-known venture capitalist and entrepreneur.

The Silicon Valley is bracing itself for a layoff in the startup community, he said, adding that this is something that the Bay Area has not seen in a long time.

"It's not like half the Silicon Valley will get laid off. It might impact five per cent of the workforce or 10



per cent of the workforce get laid off. And people might take a 10 per cent salary cut that type of stuff," he said.

"It's not that the sky is falling, but the fact is that it hasn't happened in a long time," Ranganaswami said.

Responding to a question, he said, he cannot talk for the big companies like Google and Facebook.

"They may not do anything. But this is amongst the startup community. Definitely layoffs and reduction in salary," he said.

"Big companies will probably freeze hiring. That's what they do because they've already got big businesses. They have a lot of cash on hand, and they can weather the storm. Right. But small companies, the startups that are 10-20-50 million is size have to do cost cutting

for sure. And main costs cutting of course, in this business is people," Ranganaswami said. Companies that are selling to travel and tourism industries will see a huge dip in their business fortunes.

Ranganaswami said the Indian IT professionals on H-1B visas might not see much firing because they are already saving a lot of money for their business.

"They are already in jobs where they're saving customers money. So unless their business declined significantly, these people will still be needed. It's only if there's a dramatic downturn of the business. And those H1B workers are in that line of business and they don't need them anymore, then of course it would make it," he said.