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AMERICA
UNITED
AGAINST
COVID-19

KEEP SAFE

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

KEEP AMERICA SAFE

Indian-American attorney Ravi Batra accuses China of creating COVID-19 in a Lab

Urges Trump to Seek Compensation from China



NEW YORK (TIP): Alleging that coronavirus was genetically-engineered in a Wuhan lab, an Indian-American survivor of the deadly virus has urged President Donald Trump to seek compensation from China, running into trillions of dollars, for the thousands of deaths and harming the American economy.

contd on Page 6

HAPPY RAMADAN

Governor Cuomo extends lockdown of State until May 15

Says, 'Our goal is that the "new normal" will be a better New York'

NEW YORK(TIP): New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Thursday, April 16, extended the state's lockdown for another month, keeping schools and nonessential businesses closed until at least May 15. The news came after the governor announced that the daily death toll, along with hospitalization and intensive care unit admissions, have decreased. While about 2,000 people received a COVID-19 diagnosis in the state on Wednesday, that number has decreased. The numbers of people being sent to ICUs and requiring ventilators are

contd on Page 32

Appreciating New Yorkers, Cuomo said, 'I trust New Yorkers, you know. I believe if the facts are presented to the people of the state, New Yorkers will do the right thing.'



India's Governance Response to Covid-19



By Sandeep Chakravorty

Government of India is acutely aware of the need to balance our central concern about the welfare of our citizens with our global responsibilities.

extended to May 3, 2020 in view of the need to stop the spread of Corona virus. Such a decision was expected and largely welcomed despite the economic hardship it entails for the country, particularly for the poor.

contd on Page 2



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced, April 14, extension of the coronavirus lockdown till May 3



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Happy
Doctors' Day
March 30th



V.K. Raju, MD, FRCS, FACS

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

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

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



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India's Governance Response to Covid-19

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There is national consensus that lockdown and social distancing is the only effective way to prevent the spread of the virus and also reduce the burden on the healthcare system.

However, India's anti-corona virus strategies are not limited to the lockdown. In fact a layered and multi-stakeholder, multi-pronged strategy is in place providing a governance response in India to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is noteworthy that India, a country of 1.3 billion, has been able to limit the number of deaths to 420 in the period since January 30, 2020 when the first case was detected to April 16, 2020 when we go to press. Reported cases in India are much lower than the global incidence rate. The pandemic has also been contained geographically with negligible "community" transmission.

Prime Minister Modi has led a pandemic response that is historic in its ambition and complexity. Technology and administrative methods are supplemented by the strengths of our collective consciousness and our ancient philosophy. It is a sui generis crisis management operation. The strategy leverages the deep reservoir of national resolve to confront the current challenge as one nation and one people. It is being conducted in a democratic setting. Parliament has debated this crisis extensively. Prime Minister has also consulted and sought inputs from the entire political spectrum. The Union and State executives have mobilized and are working as an integrated unit. Prime Minister manages the effort at the highest political and executive level. A Group of Ministers, Committee of Secretaries and Empowered Groups provide political leadership and operational direction. At the operational level, Cabinet Secretary and Health Secretary are coordinating in real-time, through multiple videoconferences, a system-wide response that is being harmonized across all of India's 728 districts. The decisive Indian response was initiated much before WHO declared COVID 19 to be "Public Health Emergency of International Concern" on January 30, 2020 and before the first confirmed COVID positive case was reported, also on January 30, 2020. This was a day before Italy saw its first case on January 31. By that time, surveillance and screening of passengers had commenced in India and States had been alerted. The crisis management system had started operating at full speed. Let us examine in detail these strategies.

LOCKDOWN



Lockdown

The whole country had been placed under a lockdown since March 25 for 21 days. The lockdown which was intended to break the transmission through social distancing met with unprecedented and voluntary nationwide response. As we all know prior to the lockdown, on March 19, the nation had placed itself under a "Janata" or people's curfew. The extent of the lockdown and the compliance it has received are unique. It was an India specific crisis response measure tailored to Indian conditions and has demonstrated results. Governments, central and states, have used this period to trace and isolate positive cases and their contacts. The graph of COVID 19 cases is flattening. Cases are doubling in 7 days. Projections of the trajectories the pandemic would have taken had there been no lockdown or only a partial lockdown are frightening (please see the graph).

The lockdown was not the beginning but the logical continuation of a strategy. Surveillance at points of entry

(airports, major and minor ports, land borders) was initiated on January 17, 2020. Visa and travel restrictions were imposed on foreign nationals on February 5. All visas were suspended on March 11 and incoming flights were suspended from March 19. Incoming passengers were placed under daily surveillance through the Integrated Disease Surveillance Program (IDSP) Network and monitored through a national online portal. The portal aggregates data and maintains a log of all community contacts of positive cases. 621,000 passengers were monitored and not a single positive case in this universe has been able to mix with the general population.

MEDICAL PREPAREDNESS

The lockdown is accompanied by a nationwide effort to enhance medical preparedness. A network of labs across the country has been set up to facilitate early and timely sample testing. 223 labs are operational. State Nodal Officers have been appointed and specific labs have been designated for States. A national Hospital preparedness effort is underway to ensure availability of beds. Health facilities of the Defence, Labour, Railways, Home (paramilitary forces) and Steel Ministries and other Central and State government Institutions can be enlisted to augment hospital capacity if required. Currently there are 1,71,415 isolation beds available in Govt. Sector (with 2-3 Stadiums on stand-by in West Bengal), in addition 24,383 beds are available through Army, Para-Military forces, Railways and Labour Ministries. Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs), ventilators, essential drugs and other consumables are being stockpiled and buffer stocks are being constantly monitored.

Guidelines on every aspect of COVID-19 management have been widely disseminated. Medical and paramedical personnel and Rapid Response Teams nationwide are receiving orientation on infection prevention, clinical management and protocols etc. Videoconferences are held regularly between central and state authorities to review status. A massive contact tracing operation is continuing on a nationwide scale to pre-empt transmission. A public health communication exercise has been in operation since January 2020. Social media platforms and webpages of Government are pushing out information about basic preventive steps. TV & Radio channels were mobilized and an advertisement campaign launched.

Aarogya Setu (<https://www.mygov.in/aarogya-setu-app/>), a mobile app has been developed by the Government of India to connect essential health services with the people of India in our combined fight against COVID-19. The App is aimed at augmenting the initiatives of the Government particularly the Department of Health, in proactively reaching out to and informing the users of the app regarding risks, best practices and relevant advisories pertaining to the containment of COVID-19.

MIGRATION OF WORKERS



Migrant laborers in thousands gathered in Delhi to go back to their native places

As expected, the lockdown produced a number of challenges. A movement of migrant labor occurred during the initial period of the lockdown. A national effort was launched to mitigate the hardship faced by them. A detailed protocol was evolved to manage the migrants, and guidelines were issued to ensure essential supplies, rations and food packets for them. Relief camps providing food and shelter were organized on an unprecedented scale within days. This massive administrative effort across a number of states established more than 27,000 camps and

shelters housing 1.25 million individuals. An additional 360,000 workers have been provided shelter by industry. 7.5 million individuals are being fed through this network of camps and shelters plus another 19,460 food camps/distribution points. The public health aspect of this movement has not been neglected and the camps have been linked to a network of quarantine facilities and testing laboratories. The nationwide response to assist these workers and their families highlighted the popular understanding of the rationale behind the lockdown.

MITIGATION MEASURES

Prime Ministers Garib Kalyan Package (PMGKP) was launched to mitigate the hardships being faced by the poor and disadvantaged. It attempts to create a security net particularly for the disadvantaged sections of society that are worst affected in such situations. Senior citizens, widows, the physically challenged, women, workers and others who are most vulnerable have been identified. Food supplies, cooking gas, financial support and other forms of support are being delivered on nationwide basis. This enormous exercise involves a financial outlay of INR 170,000 crore/ USD 22 billion. Disbursal has commenced and the support is reaching those who need it the most. The management of essential services for the general population is a very high priority and is being constantly monitored.

INTERNATIONAL ASPECTS

This is a global pandemic and requires a global response. Prime Minister Modi has led the SAARC initiative and is also actively involved in G-20 wide coordination. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has created a COVID cell and is actively coordinating the global response. It is monitoring the condition of stranded Indians on a regular basis. A global procurement and supply chain support effort has been launched to enhance our medical preparedness. More than 4000 requests from 63 countries/regions for medicines like paracetamol have been cleared on humanitarian grounds. It is part of India's efforts to contribute to the global efforts to combat the Covid-19 pandemic. It is also a symbol of our solidarity towards all the countries who require these medicines during this hour of need. MEA has also coordinated inward and outward evacuations on a massive scale. It is also important to note that evacuation is possible only under very special conditions and for a limited number of people. For some countries such as USA, evacuation is not a readily feasible option due to the large number of people involved as well as the risks posed by international travel.

India's Embassy in Washington and Consulates in five cities including New York are actively involved in supporting the members of Indian community who are facing difficulty due to the lockdown in India and suspension of flights. The Consulate General of India in New York has created a special facility in its Pramit web application for addressing the needs of people (www.indiainnewyork.gov.in). We have been able to assist in a wide range of situations including support for accommodation, food, medicines and even personal counseling. In this we are receiving valuable support from community organizations. As people are doing their bit by staying at home, we are doing our bit by taking our programming and events directly to their homes by innovative use of social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter. I would encourage readers to like our Facebook page (@indiainnewyork) so that they remain virtually connected while being socially distant.

Government of India is acutely aware of the need to balance our central concern about the welfare of our citizens with our global responsibilities. India is a major source of pharmaceuticals. We are committed to acting responsibly during this crisis. There is no outright ban on exports of critical drugs and requests are being examined and responded to appropriately. Several consignments of critical medicines have been cleared and dispatched to the United States. Cooperation between Indian and US scientific organizations is also going ahead on how to mitigate and combat the virus. In a tragic way this crisis has brought us together and we see much greater India-US strategic and economic cooperation in a post-Covid world.

New Jersey Hard Hit by Covid-19 with more than 3,500 Deaths

Schools to Remain Closed through May 15

TRENTON , NJ (TIP): New Jersey has been hard hit by the novel coronavirus with more than 3,500 deaths and 75,000 COVID-19 cases. The death toll from COVID-19 complications rose to at least 3,518, after 362 new cases were reported Thursday, April 16. Reported deaths have increased by over 1,000 since Easter.

Gov. Phil Murphy said COVID-19 has now claimed more New Jerseyans than died fighting in World War 1. Murphy said that his state has tested the fourth most total people of any state with at least 77,317 people testing positive for the novel coronavirus as of Thursday. Thousands of new cases have been announced on many days.

The Governor announced that all schools in the state will remain closed through at least Friday, May 15. Governor Murphy also announced that the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency has unanimously voted to suspend rent increases at all eligible properties within the Agency's portfolio, which includes 36,000 rental units across the state.

"Many New Jerseyans are now facing the difficult financial realities of unemployment and a loss of income due to COVID-19," said Governor Murphy. "With this action, thousands of low- and



New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy and New Jersey Senator Cory Booker tour the field hospital in Edison, N.J. on Wednesday, April 8, 2020.

Picture / courtesy Office of the Attorney General

moderate-income families, who have been among the most-economically impacted during this crisis, will not have to fear a rent increase."

The suspension of rent increases will remain in place until the termination of

Executive Order 103. Thereafter, eligible properties in the Agency's portfolio seeking rent increases of up to 1.4% may do so only after 30-day notice is provided to NJHMFA and residents. Any request in excess of this amount

must first be reviewed and approved by NJHMFA staff.

NJ Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal announced April 15 that the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs has issued approximately 514 cease-and-desist letters and 89 subpoenas to businesses reported by consumers to have engaged in price gouging or other consumer protection violations related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Division's open cases include investigations of brick-and-mortar retailers in New Jersey, companies from other States that are accused of increasing prices for New Jersey consumers, and sellers located in New Jersey who have been accused of raising their prices on online marketplaces.

To date, the Division has logged a total of 2,978 complaints related to the COVID-19 emergency against about 1,800 business locations. Approximately 90 percent of the complaints involve price increase on items including surgical masks, hand sanitizers, disinfectant sprays and wipes, food, bottled water, and other items in demand by consumers concerned about protecting their health and maintaining enough supplies for their homes.

Nassau County Witnesses a drop in Coronavirus hospitalization

MINEOLA, NY (TIP): Nassau County continued to witness a welcome a drop in the number of people hospitalized for coronavirus. The number of deaths also dropped, signaling the beginning of the flattening of the curve.

According to Nassau County Executive Laura Curran, as of April 16, the county has 27,772 confirmed cases of the coronavirus, an increase of 1,052. That's a smaller increase than the previous day, when nearly 1,500 new cases were reported.

There were 52 deaths reported , April 15, bringing the county's total to 1,109. But that is also a smaller increase than previous days.

According to Curran, there are currently 2,419 coronavirus patients in Nassau's 11 hospitals - a decrease of 58. There were 235 people discharged, April 15.

"We stayed home, we did the right thing, and we flattened the curve," Curran said. "And that's thanks to everyone in Nassau County."

The consensus among officials is that it seems New York has reached the apex of its cases of the coronavirus. The state has seen a plateau, with the number of hospitalizations statewide actually dropping slightly.

The death rate in the state is also slowing. According to Gov. Andrew



Nassau County Executive Laura Curran: "We stayed home, we did the right thing, and we flattened the curve. And that's thanks to everyone in Nassau County."

Cuomo, 606 people died on April 15, which is nearly 150 less than the day before. So far, the virus has claimed the lives of 12,192 New Yorkers.

The state's focus is starting to move onto how, and when, to allow businesses to reopen. Cuomo said it would most likely be a phased reopening, with more essential businesses reopening before others.

There will also be a discussion on how businesses reopen, Cuomo said, and what new practices will be in place. Some companies may have to continue allowing employees to work from home, and others will have to figure out how to work social distancing into their business models.

Still, the governor extended, April 16, the stay-home order to May 15, keeping New York on lockdown for another month, at least.

OBITUARY



Mr. Avneet Singh

The death of Mr. Avneet Singh son of Mr Jay Jasbir Singh and Mrs. Lovely Kaur has sent shock waves in the community in Long Island.

Mr. Singh was sick for some time and was hospitalized. He died on April 16, 2020.

Many individuals and organizations have mourned the death of the promising young man. Indian American Forum led by its chairman Bobby Kalotee and The Indian Panorama sent in their condolences to the editor to be passed on to the bereaved family. May the dear departed soul Rest In Peace!

IN MEMORIAM

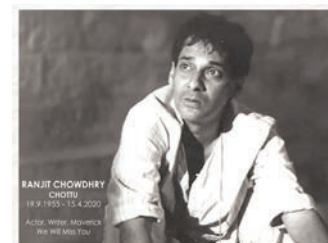
Actor and Writer Ranjit Chowdhry dies at 65

I.S. SALUJA

MUMBAI/ NEW YORK (TIP): Film, television and theatre actor Ranjit Chowdhry passed away in Mumbai on Wednesday, April 15 at the age of 65.

Ranjit was the son of Mumbai theatre heavyweight Pearl Padamsee and the stepson of ad film maverick, Alyque Padamsee, also remembered for playing MA?Jinnah in Ben Kingsley's Gandhi.

According to a report in Pinkvilla, Ranit had moved to the US in 1980 and been active as a writer and actor there too. Ranjit is best remembered for playing Jagan Gupta in Hrithikesh Mukherjee's iconic film, Khubsoorat. The song Saare Niyam Tod Do, where he features alongside Rekha, is still fondly



Ranjit Chowdhry in his younger days

remembered by all.

During that period he worked in films such Basu Chatterjee's Khatta Meetha and Baaton Mein. After moving to the US, Ranjit worked in a number of US?shows, the most famous being The Office. He appeared as Vikram. H reportedly also wrote the screenplay for Deepta Mehta's Sam & Me, for

which he also found an honorable mention at the Cannes Film Festival.

I got an opportunity to work with him in Tirlok Malik's film 'On Golden Years' . I have lost a friend and mentor.

Tirlok Malik and the entire cast of 'On Golden Years' mourned the passing away of the great artist.

We will miss you. RIP.

Four Indian Techies Named 2020 IBM Fellows



Ajay Apte, Kailash Gopalakrishnan, Shalini Kapoor, and Ranjan Sinha have been named 2020 IBM Fellows

NEW YORK (TIP): Four Indian origin techies are among the best and brightest of IBM's global workforce this year- the IBM Fellows 2020. Each year, IBM honors its top technologists as IBM Fellows. This year's 12 new IBM Fellows come from Asia, the Americas and Europe. They have worked across multiple business units to assist our clients in their digital transformations and migrations to AI and Cloud. These new IBM Fellows also have energized the company's internal business practices, and have helped to establish and maintain IBM's reputation as the world's responsible-and dependable-steward of technology.

The four Indians are - Ajay Apte, Distinguished Engineer, IBM Cloud, Kailash Gopalakrishnan, IBM Distinguished Research Staff Member,

Senior Manager of Accelerator Architectures and Machine Learning, Shalini Kapoor, Distinguished Engineer, Director-Watson IoT India, IBM Cognitive Applications, and Ranjan Sinha, Vice President and Chief Technology Officer for the IBM Global Chief Data Office

After 20 years of working across a broad portfolio of IBM products including middleware and containers, Ajay had earned 30 IBM patents and a reputation as an IBMer who combined technical expertise with business impact. Taking on a new role designing applications for hybrid cloud forced Ajay to use everything he'd learned about infrastructure and the software that runs on top of it-and to bring it to a critical part of the business that will define IBM's next era.

Since Kailash joined IBM in 2004, his research has relied on the disciplines of engineering, physics and mathematics. Over the last seven years he's looked for new ways to make AI more computationally efficient and consumable.

Throughout an IBM career that spans more than 23 years, Shalini Kapoor has personified the expression "doing well by doing good." Shalini's journey at IBM has included leadership roles in Technical Sales, Research, and Development. Her many accomplishments include creating the Watson Internet of Things (IoT) and AI Lab in India Software Labs, and seeding the Global Systems Integrators Technical Mission. Shalini also helped build out IBM's IoT ecosystem by enlisting partners and working with

start-ups across numerous industries. She also pioneered the concept of IoT Recipes, which provides partners with step-by-step guidance for integrating their offerings with IBM Watson IoT solutions on the IBM Cloud.

As VP and CTO for the IBM Global Chief Data Office, Ranjan Sinha is on the front lines of the transformational effort to infuse artificial intelligence (AI) into real-world applications. Sinha created the Cognitive Enterprise Data Platform, which helps reduce data silos, democratize access to data, enable a self-service data-driven culture, provide trusted data for IBMers and accelerate collaboration. To date, CEDP has empowered and enabled more than 100,000 users with enterprise data and AI.

Four Indian-Americans Named 2020 Guggenheim Fellowship Winners



Pradeep Sharma, Kavita Ramanan, Dilip Da Cunha, and Mukul Sharma have been awarded with the prestigious 2020 Guggenheim Fellowships

NEW YORK (TIP): Four Indian-Americans have made it to the 96th Guggenheim Fellowships, the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation announced April 8. The Board of Trustees of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation approved the awarding of Guggenheim Fellowships to a diverse group of 175 writers, scholars, artists, and scientists. 2020 Fellows are drawn from 53 scholarly disciplines and artistic

fields, 78 different academic institutions, 31 states and the District of Columbia, and 2 Canadian provinces.

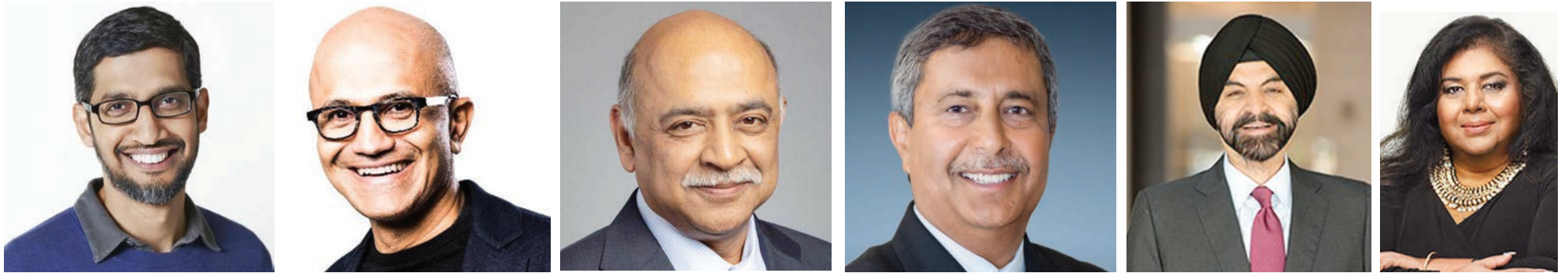
The four Indian -American fellows awarded with the prestigious 2020 Guggenheim Fellowships are Pradeep Sharma, Anderson Professor of Mechanical Engineering and Physics at the University of Houston, Kavita Ramanan, Roland George Dwight Richardson University Professor of

Applied Mathematics at Brown University; Dilip Da Cunha, architect and planner and teacher at Harvard University and Columbia University; and Mukul Sharma, professor of Earth Sciences at Dartmouth College.

Appointed on the basis of prior achievement and exceptional promise, the successful candidates were chosen through a rigorous peer-review process from almost 3,000 applicants in the Foundation's ninety-sixth competition.

Since its establishment in 1925, the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation has granted more than \$375 million in Fellowships to over 18,000 individuals, among whom are scores of Nobel laureates, Fields Medalists, poets laureate, members of the national academies, winners of the Pulitzer Prize, Turing Award, Bancroft Prize, National Book Award, and many other internationally recognized honors.

Six Indian Americans Included in Trump's Great American Economic Revival Team



While Sundar Pichai, Satya Nadella, Arvind Krishna and Sanjay Mehrotra have been named to the Tech Group, Ajay Banga and Ann Mukherjee have been named to the Financial Services Group and manufacturing Group, respectively

WASHINGTON (TIP): US President Donald J. Trump announced many of the esteemed executives, economists, scholars, and industry leaders including six Indian Americans who together will form various Great American Economic Revival Industry Groups.

Sundar Pichai from Google, Satya

Nadella from Microsoft, Ajay Banga from Mastercard, Arvind Krishna from IBM, Micron's Sanjay Mehrotra, and Ann Mukherjee from Pernod Ricard are six Indian origin leaders who are part of the team formed to revive the US economy ravaged by the coronavirus pandemic.

While Sundar Pichai, Satya Nadella, Arvind Krishna and Sanjay Mehrotra have been named to the Tech Group, Ajay Banga and Ann Mukherjee have been named to the Financial Services Group and manufacturing Group, respectively.

"These bipartisan groups of

American leaders will work together with the White House to chart the path forward toward a future of unparalleled American prosperity. The health and wealth of America is the primary goal, and these groups will produce a more independent, self-sufficient, and resilient Nation", said the White House.

Indian American Singer Anuradha Palakurthi Releases Song for Doctors Combating Coronavirus

BOSTON (TIP): Indian American Singer Anuradha Palakurthi released a video song to pay tribute to doctors who are combating Coronavirus and putting their lives on the line to save lives of people during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Titled "Rukta Hi Naheen Tu Kahin Haar Ke", the song was produced by Boston-based Juju Productions within a week-from idea to its final release. Sung by Ms. Palakurthi, the lyric was composed by Boston poet and scriptwriter Sunayana Kachroo. Music was composed by Kamlesh Bhadkamkar, Mixed and Mastered by Vijay Dayal in Mumbai. Nikhil Joshi made the Video.

"I don't think they have worked so fast on any project so far. The urgency and gravity were significant enough for the entire team," Ms. Palakurthi told INDIA New England News.

Given the urgency of the COVID-19 pandemic and so many doctors of Indian-origin on the frontline, Palakurthi got inspired by their dedication and service.

"So many Indian families in the United States have at least one doctor in them. I had to bring their contribution to the forefront in the USA. They are the ones who are in close quarters with real danger. They are the first responders who are putting their lives on the line to save lives," said Ms. Palakurthi. "Some have sadly lost their lives too in this battle. Only true heroes in war do that. Coming from a gold star family, I feel strongly about soldiers and their sacrifices."

As of April 9, more than 200 doctors and nurses have died battling Coronavirus worldwide, according to news reports.

Ms. Palakurthi said that the idea about the music video formed in her head on April 3rd.

"I contacted Sunayana to brainstorm a bit about lyrics etc. We wanted to write and make something new, but I decided to pick an existing song and change the lyrics," said Ms. Palakurthi. "Sunayana did an exceptional job. The next step was to contact my trusted musicians Kamlesh Bhadkamkar and Vijay Dayal in Mumbai and we were good to go from then on."

Ms. Palakurthi said that Nikhil Joshi in Mumbai compiled all the photos that were sent him from Boston and worked non-stop 12 straight hours on it.

"It was quite a task to explain my vision to him in 36 hours. But the real help came from some friends who are doctors. They did their best under the circumstances. I wish I had more faces, but I guess asking them to send photos of themselves in these pressing times was a bit much," said Ms. Palakurthi.

Ms. Palakurthi said that she is very humbled to dedicate this song to doctors, nurses and healthcare workers in the United States and around the world.

"I think it's a humble tribute compared to what they are doing every day. There should have been at least a hundred more faces in the music video. We personally know 100

such families and could not get their pictures."

Ms. Kachroo said that Ms. Palakurthi had given her a brief on the purpose of the song and the reference song as well.

"While the purpose of the original song is to inspire people to reach to a goal," Ms. Kachroo said. "This song is to honor the resilience and the unwavering commitment of the medics and researchers to go beyond their job profiles and stand-up to this disease with their relentless service."

Earlier this year, Ms. Palakurthi's "Jaan Meri" song from her Jaan Meri album won the prestigious Independent Music Category's Best Song of the Year Award at the Radio Mirchi Music Awards, the Indian equivalent of the Grammys. Two of the top five nominees for the best song of the year for the Radio Mirchi Music Awards in the Non-Film/ Independent category were from Jaan Meri Album.

Ms. Palakurthi has been recognized as the top-rated singer of Indian origin by industry legends. She has performed live with Bollywood singers like Kumar Sanu, Suresh Wadkar, Deepak Pandit and Bappi Lahiri across the United States. Anuradha has recorded a duet with Hariharan for Ekal Vidyalaya - composed by guitarist Prasanna with drummer Sivamani and a group of 14 multiple-Grammy winning musicians from across the globe. She sings in six Indian languages and has recorded playback for South Indian films.



Ms. Palakurthi has been recognized as the top-rated singer of Indian origin by industry legends

Indian-American attorney Ravi Batra accuses China of creating COVID-19 in a Lab

contd from page 1

"The unleashing of global death and suffering with the coronavirus, a plague upon all of us, is worse than Pearl Harbor, and given its deception, and later, cover-up, lack any semblance of Honor," Indian-American attorney Ravi Batra said in a letter to the president.

"On the established rules of law, China is at least guilty of negligence in proximately causing a world pandemic, where nearly two million people have suffered its pain and suffering, and nearly 122,000 souls have lost their lives and left their families damaged and fractured," he said in a letter dated April 14.

China owes us civil compensation - at least for negligence - a fair and reasonable amount, "which I recommend match our standard for 9/11, but no less than \$USD1 million dollars for every American who tested positive for Coronavirus, \$5 million for every American who died, and \$100,000 for every American who has to be 'locked down'," he said.

"I recommend, given the cover-up, which exacerbated the injury, pain and suffering globally, as well as avoidable deaths, that China's ownership of debts in every country - for example the USD1.2T in China's ownership of our T-Bills - be cancelled," Batra said.

In his letter, Batra charged China with hiding the actual source of coronavirus.

The Indian Panorama was sent a copy of the open letter addressed to President Donald J. Trump, Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Addison Mitchell McConnell, Jr. with copies to Sen. Chuck Schumer, Leader Kevin McCarthy, Chairman Eliot L. Engel, Ranker McCall, Chair Carolyn B. Maloney, Ranker Jim Jordan, Chairman-Senator Risch, Ranker-Senator Bob Menendez, Secretary Pompeo, Secretary Esper, Gov. Andrew Cuomo, Mayor Bill de Blasio, and A.G. Tish James.

Here is the text of the letter.

"Honorable Messrs Trump, Pelosi, and McConnell:

Let me begin with three obvious facts: first, the Chinese civilization is a great one, with many superlative contribution to humanity, including, empire building, martial arts, gun powder, tea, and perhaps, best of all, Confucius (who famously said: May you live in boring times); second, I am a Blessed survivor of Coronavirus, that at 104.3 fever, when I was on fire for 2-3 days, I was at the surreal edge between live and death, where I could calmly talk to God to allow me to live so I may serve and protect my family and serve the Greater Good. In my personal and intimate experience, I labeled Covid19 as a Trojan Horse, as it obviously has a very friendly "handshake" with every host's auto immune system to gain entry, before turning to destroy one's Walls of Troy; and third, today the known global Covid19 cases are 1,945,055, with 121,897 global deaths, total US cases of 584,073 with 23,700 deaths, and New York, our epicenter, nearly 11,000 New Yorker have died. As a disclaimer, I am an American first, a registered Democrat second, and I voted for Donald J. Trump in 2016. I applaud the President for standing up to China's unfair trade with us, and I am most troubled with her 24/7 global efforts to gain military and economic superiority on land, air, water and space, well beyond OBOR, and her continuing and enhanced misbehavior in South China Sea. Finally, yesterday, I specifically tweeted to dear Amb. Zhang Jun, China's PR, and to her bilateral Ambassador Cui - as "fairness, respect and personal honor requires me to invite you to respond to my Tweets I've made re China, WHO and Covid19." Unlike, on April 4, 2020, when PR Zhang and I respectfully conversed on Twitter, albeit, about the serious need for China to disclose the "Raw Truth" about Covid19, China's distinguished diplomats

incredulously maintained "radio silence," when being forthcoming was what was required - both as a duty, and as reciprocal honor.

Recently, on April 9, 2020, House Oversight and Reform's Ranker Jim Jordan, and his colleagues, sent a gentle letter to Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, DG, of the WHO. I join in said letter, albeit, I would not have been so gentle to a dishonest fiduciary, whose misconduct proximately caused the world's public health to lay in ruins and the world's economies were set adrift from both fiscal and monetary policies.

WHO breached its fiduciary-forensic duties owed to the world, as it dishonestly enjoyed being China's lap dog and purposefully issued false statements and delayed declaring a pandemic so as to create a confusing record for nations' leaders, reasonably causing miscalculation. I had in days prior to Rep. Jordan's letter, called for an amendment to the UN Charter, to do away with the moth-balled Trusteeship Council and to replace it with a new Public Health UNSC, but named "UN Pandemic Council," with 12 Permanent Members and 9 or 13 Rotating Members, charged with Responsibility to Protect, a sovereignty-piercing power, and have OPCW, as well as a reconstituted WHO, albeit, re-named, and then report to it. I am happy to say, Philippines Foreign Minister, dear Teddy Locsin has publicly - on Twitter - approved my proposal, and other nations' Permanent Representatives have expressed interest in also supporting such a change to surgically remove the corruption-cancer and establish "clean margins" for honest fiduciary-forensics to protect the global Public Health.

It is a curious fact, that where-ever we have cut back in our contributions at the UN and her "organs," China for merely giving UN the funding-shortfall we created, has become the "cherry on top" of all such organs. This is wrong, and an insult to our mammoth contributions still being contributed, but, incredulously, taken for granted. The WHO ought to be defrocked and defunded, while its function - only vital if the forensics are done consistent to high fiduciary duties - and then, it too, as reconstituted, report to the new proposed UN Pandemic Council.

The role and function of the United Nations is vital and important as ever, as the UNSC, charged with preventing WWII has handsomely succeeded, even as the weeds of local and regional wars have mushroomed. UN is celebrating its 75th Anniversary. Perfect time for some "spring-cleaning," and re-calibration to achieve necessary reforms to better effectuate the high ideals of the UN Charter. It is, after all, a paraphrased amalgam of our Declaration of Independence and our cherished Constitution, to help form a more perfect world.



Wuhan Seafood Market

Coronavirus - as a matter of biochemistry (see, "1st documentary movie on the origins of CCP virus - Tracking Down the Origin of the Wuhan Coronavirus" (The 1st Documentary) <http://youtu.be/Gdd7dtDaYmM>).

I rely upon this cited evidence, see below, as it credibly shows, and I credit it, that the "story of the

Wuhan Seafood Market" is a pretext and an elegant cover-up, which is exposed as such with biochemistry: China denied there was any "human-to-human" transmission. Well, we know that to be a Big Lie, as we are all under a Lockdown to prevent "community spread," i.e. human-to-human transmission. Jon Cohen wrote in the Journal Science, "Wuhan seafood market may not be the source of novel virus spreading globally." In a paper entitled, The clinical features of patients with 2019 novel coronavirus in Wuhan, China, published in The Lancet, whose first author Huang Chaolin, Deputy Director of Jin Yin-Tan Hospital, and Dr. Sean Lin, who said:

- I. Symptom onset of the First Patient is on December 1, [2019] had NO relation to the Huanan Seafood market;
- II. No epidemiological link was found between the first patient and later cases;
- III. On December 10, [2019], there were 3 more cases, 2 cases of the 3 cases had NO relation to the Huanan Seafood Market;
- IV. Since December 15 [2019], a cluster of cases with a history of seafood market exposure have been reported;
- V. NO one sells BATS at the Wuhanan Seafood Market and NO BATS have been found.

Judy A. Mikovits PhD, Molecular Biologist, Former Director of Lab of Antiviral Mechanisms NCI said: There were no bats, and the idea of the spread so fast through the population is highly unlikely and improbable.

There were 99 confirmed cases at Jin Yin-Tan Hospital, of which 50 had NO exposure to Wuhanan Seafood Market.

45 of the 425 confirmed cases before January 22 [2020], had NO contact with the Wuhanan Seafood market, albeit, the secondary source of a virus appears to be mushrooming and over-shadowing (cover-up) the original breach of the original virus.

Daniel Lucey, an epidemiologist at the University of Georgetown said the First case would have been infected by the virus already in November [2019] - if not earlier because there is an incubation time between infection and symptoms surfacing. [Means Wuhanan Seafood Market is a secondary source, not the primary source, and as a result of "community spread," at best, or a separate virus introduced to cover up the earlier one, at worst].

Gordan Chang, Asian Affairs Expert, and columnist, said: We know that Beijing for six (6) weeks in December [2019] and January [2020] suppressed information, before acknowledging on January 20th, and they then started a campaign of suppression of information, and on January 26th created a panel, and it was very heavy with propaganda officials. Indeed, the vice chairman of the group is the Communist Party's propaganda czar. The Communist Party Group imposed a false diagnostic criteria, starting with - must have contact with Wuhanan Seafood market, knowing a solid one-third of the cases had ZERO contact with Wuhanan Seafood Market. Thank God, they didn't impose a Bat-Bite requirement for their investigation. Hence, it was the start of an organized cover-up, and to mislead the world as to what China was really up to.

Gen. Robert Spalding, Senior Fellow Hudson Institute, and former NSC Senior Strategy Director, was in China when SARS happened. Same playbook.

Critical Evidence - The Mysterious Gene Sequence (from the 1st Documentary):

The coronavirus, aka "2019-n-CoV" - has a 100% amino acid similarity in the nsp7 and E proteins with "Bat-SL-CoVZC45" and "Bat-SL-CoVZXC21, but worst of all, the "2019-n-CoV" - has a reversed-engineered and grafted-on in a lab of the natural-to-bats "receptor-binding" domain structure, the "mushrooms" on the surface, of

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the "SARS-CoV" - i.e. a transplantation of the Spike Glycoprotein(S), the natural "mushroom" on the surface of "SARS-CoV" is in a lab genetically added/spliced/grafted onto o "2019-n-CoV" - which I have, from personal experience, called a Trojan Horse to have a friendly "handshake," is in fact accurate biochemically - as the "receptor-binding" unlocks the human cell, and enters the human body much easier! The SARS' "Bat-SL-CoVZc45" and "Bat-SL-CoVZXC21" - with its natural Bat-based "mushrooms" on the surface - did not enter humans.

CDC's Error: Curiously, the CDC.Gov site publishes the January 29, 2020 article in The Lancet - which gets into the genome characteristics of the subject coronavirus, aka "2019-n-coV" aka "2019-nCov," at

(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/genomic-characterization-of-2019-nCoV-Lancet-1-29-2020.pdf>), which states the predicate findings, as

"The ten genome sequences of 2019-nCoV obtained from the nine patients were extremely similar, exhibiting more than 99-98% sequence identity. Notably, 2019-nCoV was closely related (with 88% identity) to two bat-derived severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS)-like coronaviruses, bat-SL-CoVZC45 and bat-SL-CoVZXC21, collected in 2018 in Zhoushan, eastern China, but were more distant from SARS-CoV (about 79%) and MERS-CoV (about 50%). Phylogenetic analysis revealed that 2019-nCoV fell within the subgenus Sarbecovirus of the genus Betacoronavirus, with a relatively long branch length to its closest relatives bat-SL-CoVZC45 and bat-SL-CoVZXC21, and was genetically distinct from SARS-CoV. Notably, homology modelling revealed that 2019-nCoV had a similar receptor-binding domain structure to that of SARS-CoV, despite amino acid variation at some key residues."

Despite finding that 2019-n-CoV had these "receptor-binding," which is not natural, but was reverse engineered, like the WHO misleading the world, issued an "interpretation" that ignores the non-natural addition of these Spike Glycoprotein to Coronavirus!

Edgar Allan Poe: Purloined Letter

I well recall the famous American mystery writer, Edgar Allan Poe, who in his "Purloined Letter" - has the subject letter hiding in "plain sight" in a letter box on the desk, while everyone is looking for secret compartments. Here, the first case had NO exposure to Wuhanan Seafood Market, and there are NO bats at said market. Hence, Wuhanan is secondary source, after community spread, and can be ignored and discarded as a "cover up." The actual and original source of the coronavirus is therefore elsewhere. That is an undeniable fact, well capable of meeting even the criminal standard of proof - "beyond a reasonable doubt." I, therefore charge China with hiding the actual source of coronavirus, and ignore the fraudulent assertion by the Chinese Communist Party Propaganda Czar that Wuhanan Seafood Market, with zero Bats, has any value to getting to the source, or finding the most precious item right now across the world: the most effective vaccine to this plague from China. China, it appears, is following an old playbook it developed in SARS outbreak

The question, then arises: where, oh where, did Coronavirus come from?

The answer, given the reverse-engineered receptor-binding, my "Trojan Horse" element, which makes this virus so contagious, since it took a natural element in the two SARS virus, and spliced it on to Covid19 to unlock human auto-immune system/defense.

Why did China allow its citizens to travel the world after November 2019, when she knew there were coroanvirus (with artificial receptor-binding) cases, which had nothing to do with Wuhanan Seafood Market? Was this negligence? Was this intentional? I cannot prove intent, but negligence, is overwhelming.

China had a duty to tell the WHO, and the world (not, do a "hit & run"):

The International Health Regulations (2005) are

internationally binding rules upon member-states, which obligate them in handling public health issues, especially, for highly transmissible diseases. Ironically, they were adopted after the 2003 SARS outbreak in China - and then too, China was criticized for not promptly disclosing - what I have demanded - the "Raw Truth." These rules are enforced by the WHO, China's Lap Dog, and thru the ICJ. Among the Rules violated by China include, WHO's Article 6 (Not notifying WHO of a Public Health Emergency - in November 2019), article 7 (Un-timely information-sharing during an emergency), Article 64 (not providing timely epidemiological reports - the core violation, given China's active cover-up, and even substituting Wuhanan Seafood Market as a false source), and finally, violating the anti-corruption regulation, Article 37 (seeking to influence the WHO DG Dr. Ghebreyesus, and staff - WHO has played well as a lap dog, and hence, China has violated this Article).

Pearl Harbor - FDR:

"A Day That Will Live in Infamy" - when Kamikaze Pilots of the Imperial Forces of Japan hit us on December 7, 1941 in a sneak attack, but in broad daylight, their attack started at 7:55 am and lasted till 9:00am, a little over an hour, causing, according to the National Park Service, 1998 Navy personnel, 109 Marines, 233 Army personnel and 48 civilians killed at Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941; a total of 2388 Americans killed. Still, the Japanese airmen were enemy combatants, and died in service to their Emperor - until General Douglas MacArthur had him abdicate divinity on the deck of the USS Missouri. Here, however, China used - negligently or heaven forbid, intentionally, her everyday unwitting citizen-tourists and businessmen, contaminated with Coronavirus, to spread the deadly and lab-engineered plague of death and destruction, and then covered it up and went 'radio silent." China is criminally guilty at least of a "Hit and Run." If our Government was to find out that we were Pearl Harbored, even more sneakily than on December 7, 1941, then China must lose her UNSC Permanent Seat, and give the world \$100 Trillion in reparations, and disband her military.

Rule of Law in our Rules-based world - The Standard of Proof and Permitted Inferences:

I honor the established standard of proof, and permitted inference - Civilly, when only compensation is due, the standard is "mere preponderance of the evidence," and a "negative inference" is charged, when a party who ought to speak up or produce documents, but doesn't, such party is presumed to be hiding "inculpatory" evidence of said party's guilt. My near 10-day Tweets in seeking to honesty crack the Coronavirus case - based upon reliable evidence - and a specific tweet, predicated upon fairness, respect and personal honor, to Ambassadors Zhang and Cui, including, even a tagging of "@China_mfa," sadly, did not cause a tsunami of facts and documents showing China's innocence to come my way today.

Instead, China has "closed" and "covered up" tighter than a drum used in parades. This behavior violates a core "duty" to speak up, let alone help find the best Coronvirus vaccine. Accordingly, on the established rules of law, China is at least guilty of negligence in proximately causing a world pandemic, where nearly 2 million people have suffered it's pain and suffering, and nearly 122,000 souls have lost their lives and left their families damaged and fractured. A simple example: a trucking delivery service has two trucks, one that is a flat-bed, and the other, which is a closed truck-container. The Owner directs the driver to use the flat-bed truck, load it up with boxes, and then strap them down tightly. The driver, on the road, hits a few bumps, does a few hard brakes, and the next thing you know, as he is going around a turn his load becomes loose and shoots across the highway. The cars behind while trying to avoid being "shot at" by the bouncing boxes, crash into each other or the road divider, many suffering injuries, and some even dying. A lawfully negligent driver would stop his truck, get out, and try to help, or at least call 911 for ambulance and police. China didn't

do that. China kept driving, and when asked, told falsehoods to deceive. Hence, under established laws, China is at least guilty of a "Hit & Run," which is a crime.

Additional facts:

China has cancelled approximately 8 million cell phones in the last 3-4 months - each Chinese citizen is authenticated by their government by their cell phone. Unless you are dead, you don't cancel your cell phone. This suggests that China's coronavirus death toll far exceeds its official number of a mere 3,300. Since President trump has sought to impose fair trade between us, China's FDI in the United States has dropped from over \$45 Billion to just over \$5 Billion. This shrinking footprint suggests evasion of expected sanctions for bad acts.

Recommendations and Conclusions to POTUS and U.S. Congress:

1. China owes us civil compensation - at least for negligence, which has been proven the legal standard - in a fair and reasonable amount, which I recommend match our standard for 9/11, but no less than \$1 million dollars for every American who tested positive for Coronavirus, \$5 million for every American who died, and \$100,000 for every American who has to be "locked down." Every other nation can negotiate - using our good offices of Secretary Pompeo - for their fair and reasonable settlement;
2. China owes criminal "hit & run" sanctions: I recommend, given the cover-up, which exacerbated the injury, pain and suffering globally, as well as avoidable deaths, that China's ownership of debts in every country - for example the \$1.2T in China's ownership of our T-Bills - be cancelled. As a further example, it means Sri Lanka's \$9 B debt is cancelled, and she gets her largest port back. Furthermore, China must vacate Mischief Reef, and stop all aggression, such as blocking "freedom of navigation," or just a few days ago, ramming a Vietnamese fishing boat, with eight fishermen fishing in Vietnamese waters. This outlaw behavior coupled with aggressive and active attempts to buy military enhancing capacities must stop.

As I respectfully told China's distinguished Foreign Minister Wang three years ago in 2017 at the UNGA, China is inviting a Little War now, or a Big War later - and I prefer a Little War now. He responded, "No War; No War". The unleashing of global death and suffering with the coronavirus, a plague upon all of us, is worse than Pearl Harbor, and given its deception, and later, cover-up, lack any semblance of Honor:



**Respectfully,
/s/
Ravi Batra"**

(Ravi Batra is an attorney based in New York. He can be reached at ravi@ravibatralaw.com)



By A. D. Amar

It may be accepted that waiting to restart all sectors of the economy simultaneously will unnecessarily keep some sectors shut that actually can be reengineered to open without much further delay.

America should restart its economy and other operations by mitigating risk and making sure that it is done right to be able to succeed at the effort. While playing safe and delaying it beyond May 2020 may sound like the appropriate step to take, we should also know that it brings with it a loss of about two trillion dollars and a consequential setback worth several trillion dollars more every month. On the other hand, restarting America early may bring the risk of extending the misery due to COVID-19. There is no way to come to an optimized solution to this problem. It will have to be made by guts and appetite for risk-taking. We have to carefully look at several pro and con aspects and decide.

Restarting the economy would be especially important because some estimates tell us that the effect of coronavirus could hang on until August 2020 or even later. A shutdown of that magnitude no economy will be able to handle. Moreover, some say that coronavirus would come back with an even greater vengeance as cold season returns in the fall. The economy has to be ready to cope with that if it does indeed happen. In fact, the longer the U.S. economy remains in this dormant state, the longer it will need to get restarted, harder to bring it back to its past size and the greater irreparable harm it will cause.

To restart the economy, we will look at the type of operations deployed for

product and service transformation. There are certain operations that are large, both in terms of the size of employment and contribution to the gross domestic product. This list includes businesses such as restaurant, retail, sports and entertainment, education and training, and travel and tourism that can be restarted with proper and careful reconfiguration, adaptation of technology, redesign and/or creative reinventing of their processes, workflows, and scheduling. Their restart can be begun in a matter of weeks.

We can formulate standards of operating for those large organizations that have more machine and technology interface and reduced human interactions. Such outfits include manufacturing, service processing, fulfillment centers, etc. The restart of these businesses will depend on how soon each of them comes up to these standards.

Taking the calculated risk of restarting this economy that had been willfully put to sleep rather than shut down because of an external one-time mishap will be unavoidable. It will have to be woken up with whims, such as presidential or gubernatorial executive orders. The alternative in the form of slower legislative processes will likely cause a long-lasting recession or depression or deep depression, as some are stating.

Moreover, no matter when we restart the economy, given the politically ultra-divided America and the anxiety over the upcoming presidential election, opposition to any proposal to restart is bound to be there. That is why, we have to move fast and devise a scheme to open the economy and begin the restarting in weeks rather than months. It may be accepted that waiting to restart all sectors of the economy simultaneously will unnecessarily keep some sectors shut that actually can be reengineered to open without much further delay.

Utilizing the countrywide state by state and county by county data on coronavirus already collected by the White House, we

AS I SEE IT

RESTARTING AMERICA



can sectorize our economy and get what can be started within weeks by presidential order and what will need congressional action. The latter will have to be started soon and completed on an expedited basis.

Operations that need longer will be restarted applying science, engineering and technology. Our effort should be to redesign human and machine interactions, human-to-human contacts, and group interfaces, all with the goal to mitigate the risk of any second or later legs of COVID-19. We should also work to adapt and design or redesign technologies, operations, and communication systems for keeping workers safe from all similar communicable diseases. This should also make the companies become even more productive.

America should use COVID-19 experience as a way to emphasize self-dependence for the production and distribution of all goods, services, processes, and technologies. This experience has taught us that all these

are important and not just the essential ones.

We should also work to make sure that we bring back manufacturing to the USA and place requisite importance on research to help us achieve this self-dependence in an economically competitive way. The White House should continue to exert pressure to make sure that American business invests in the goal of self-dependence. Furthermore, we should make sure that our businesses set research and development intensity to achieve the goal.

We should also fight COVID-19 worldwide and help other countries restart their economies, replicating what we did to put the world back to work after the two world wars.

(A. D. Amar, Ph.D. is Professor of Management at the Stillman School of Business, Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ 07079 (ad.amar@shu.edu). He was one of the three academics who endorsed Donald Trump for president in 2015, much before the primary elections of 2016. Later, he founded Indian-Americans for Trump 2016, a PAC, registered to promote Trump for president)

GUEST COMMENT

President Donald Trump's ability to throw a spanner in the works is well demonstrated. As the world, including the US, grapples with a pandemic that is as virulent as it is infectious, the one thing that is expected is that the world body at the forefront of tackling the crisis would get all the support it requires. President Trump has done precisely the opposite by cutting the US funding of the World Health Organisation (WHO). He blames the WHO for being insufficiently critical about China's early response to coronavirus. The case could be argued either way, and the WHO is no stranger to being blamed. It was criticized for declaring

the 2009 swine flu a pandemic too early, and of being too late to act during the 2014 Ebola crisis.

Since 1948, the WHO has proved its usefulness to the world repeatedly. It has promoted international cooperation, set protocols and procedures, and encouraged more interaction between nation-states on matters of health. Indeed, the fight against smallpox represented a significant success and involved active cooperation between two Cold War

adversaries, the US and the USSR.

Pandemics know no national barriers. The need for a coordinated effort to battle disease is so apparent that it would not ever bear stating, except for now. The US is the WHO's largest donor by far, contributing 10 times what China does to the organization. President Trump is peeved with what he perceives to be a pro-China tilt in the health body. Surely, the way to counter that would be to honor the US' commitment.

Naturally, those who fill the purse have a greater say than those who don't. The world needs the WHO and international cooperation. It does not behoove the US to renege on its international commitment, more so during a crisis. The global nature of the current threat has made it imperative that leaders rise above the demands of strident nationalism and petty domestic politics. Those who fail to do so will be judged harshly by history. (Tribune, India)

Unhealthy decision: US cutting WHO's funding is plain wrong

India's international response to Covid-19



**By Ambassador Asoke
Kumar Mukerji**

India's international response to the challenge posed by the Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated her global leadership as a reliable first responder to humanitarian crises.

India's international response to Covid-19 exemplifies the continued relevance of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, seeing the world as one interdependent family.

The Covid-19 outbreak was termed a "public health emergency of international concern" on 30 January 2020. According to the WHO, the virus originated in the city of Wuhan in China, from where it was transmitted by human travelers to several countries across the world, including India. On 26 February 2020, India supplied 15 tons of medical assistance comprising masks, gloves and other emergency medical equipment on an Indian Air Force special flight to Wuhan as a gesture of solidarity in confronting Covid-19.

The Director General of the WHO declared the global Covid-19 outbreak as a pandemic on 12 March 2020. In a statement in

Parliament the External Affairs Minister conveyed that India had taken pro-active action to bring back Indian citizens from the affected countries before restrictions on international air flights to India. These included three special flights to Wuhan in China, evacuating crew and passengers from a cruise ship off Japan, and sending medical teams to assist the repatriation of thousands of Indian nationals stranded in Iran and Italy. As the Minister said, "exceptional situations require an exceptional response".

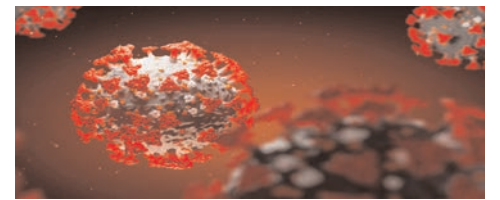
On 15 March 2020 PM Shri Narendra Modi took a major regional initiative to speak with the leaders of all SAARC countries through video conference. During this meeting, India announced five specific measures to prevent such infections from spreading across South Asia.

First, the creation of a Covid-19 Emergency Fund with an initial Indian contribution of \$10 million. Second, placing the services of an Indian Rapid Response Team of doctors and specialists with testing kits and equipment at the disposal of SAARC countries. Third, training emergency response teams in SAARC countries. Fourth, giving access to India's Integrated Disease Surveillance Portal, including training on how to use it. Fifth, creating a common Research Platform to coordinate

research on epidemic diseases in the South Asian region, which would include common SAARC Pandemic Protocols.

The response to the Prime Minister's initiative from her neighbors was overwhelmingly positive with contributions pledged to the Covid-19 Emergency Fund by Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Nepal by 23 March 2020. A follow-up video conference of SAARC Directors General of Health Services on 26 March 2020 emphasized the importance of community engagement and participation to augment the emergency measures undertaken by the governments of South Asia to combat Covid-19. At the global level, in his role as the incoming Chair of the G-20 in 2021, PM Shri Narendra Modi had a phone conversation on 17 March 2020 with the G-20's current Chair, Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman of Saudi Arabia. The two leaders agreed that Saudi Arabia would convene a video conference of G-20 leaders to coordinate steps to counter Covid-19 and instill confidence in the global populace. 90% of the Covid-19 cases and 88% of the deaths have been in G-20 countries, which comprises 80% of the world's GDP and 60% of the global population.

On 26 March 2020, the G-20 held a Summit by video conference Summit. Participants



agreed to coordinate a global response to fight the pandemic, adopting measures to safeguard the global economy, minimizing trade disruption and enhancing global cooperation. Before and after the G-20 Summit, the Prime Minister of India engaged in active telephone diplomacy with various world leaders from the five continents to discuss a viable framework for effective international cooperation to counter the spread of Covid-19.

Two special contributions of India to this international effort so far have been the supply of medicines like paracetamol and hydroxychloroquine to help partner countries, including the United States and European Union, to respond to the pandemic, and highlighting yoga exercises and Ayurvedic remedies to mitigate Covid-19 conditions. India's international response to Covid-19 exemplifies the continued relevance of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, seeing the world as one interdependent family.

(Ambassador Asoke Kumar Mukerji is a former Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations. The article here is originally a commentary Ambassador gave on All India Radio)

Covid reshapes global politics

While it may take years for the US to recover, China set to establish dominance



By G Parthasarathy

The Chinese refusal to accept responsibility for the impact of what transpired in Wuhan is unfortunate, and for many, unpardonable.

As the coronavirus poses a serious threat to humankind, one can be gratified at some of the efforts for globalizing the quest for a cooperative remedy. This situation has also to be analyzed as one looks at China's present outreach to cooperate with countries ranging from Italy and Spain on the one hand and to Cyprus and Pakistan on the other. China, whose actions triggered this crisis, appears ready to provide what every country now desperately needs, particularly by way of equipment and machinery. While China's industrial progress since the 1980s has been path-breaking, there have been complaints about medical and other equipment it has supplied recently, which it will have to address quickly to maintain its credibility as a reliable supplier of sophisticated machinery, equipment and know-how.

The Chinese refusal to accept responsibility for the impact of what transpired in Wuhan is unfortunate, and for many, unpardonable. In response to US queries and requests for samples of relevant material from Wuhan, China claimed that it had 'no clear evidence of human-to-human transmission'. It denied US experts access to Wuhan. President

Trump has faced considerable criticism that he was 'taken for a ride' by the Chinese, who stalled US efforts to ascertain full facts. Wuhan is the hub of China's industrial, technological and educational development. It is also a major center internationally for educational and technological development. The tragedy that the world faces today is widely and almost universally accepted as having emerged from the wholesale seafood market in Wuhan.

The Trump administration has been outraged by the absence of Chinese actions to immediately bring these developments to the notice of the world. Around 38,000 US citizens and residents were flown back from China to major American cities like New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and San Francisco, in the weeks following the Wuhan shutdown. This was inexplicably done without comprehensive medical checks of passengers. The tragedy that has befallen Americans, as their cities are ravaged and thousands have died, is the direct outcome of these developments. China, now confident that it will emerge as the unquestioned No. 1 power in the world, is in no mood to express any regrets to the US, or to the world at large. While it could take years for the US to recover fully, China appears determined to establish its dominance globally. It is challenging US power by flying in 'relief supplies' across the world as the US looks on. Not surprisingly, Putin's Russia, which shares a long common border with China, has acted quietly, clinically and decisively to deal with the issue.

With Trump and his political associates

going ballistic over what is unquestionably Chinese responsibility and culpability in handling the Wuhan crisis, relations between the two foremost powers have sunk to a new low. Moreover, Trump has echoed misgivings, shared widely, about the role of the Director General of the WHO, who is accused of not only being ineffective but also is regarded as a virtual apologist for China. The US has threatened to end all funding for the WHO, which would render the organization dysfunctional. Rather than showing understanding and promoting cooperation, the US and China appeared determined to confront each other. India is, however, playing its cards carefully - indeed skillfully - to avoid getting drawn into the vortex of Sino-American rivalry. At the same time, an outraged Indian media is focusing on the blatant Chinese efforts to disclaim responsibility.

China also appears to have concluded that it should not get into a position of totally alienating India and Indian public opinion. Following a tele-conversation with the otherwise none-too-friendly Chinese foreign minister, Wang Yi, External Affairs Minister Jaishankar made it clear that India was not in the business of pointing fingers at China. Jaishankar merely noted that following his discussions with Wang Yi, both sides had agreed to work together to combat the Covid. China and India also indicated that they were ready to cooperate in the G20 Summit convened by Saudi Arabia.

The readiness to work together with China evidently had an impact on China's approach to deal with Pakistani attempts to raise the Kashmir issue in the UNSC



In control: China is flying in 'relief supplies' across the world even as the US looks on.

late last month. China, which was then the president of the UNSC, turned down a request from Pakistan for 'urgent and appropriate action' on developments in J&K. Islamabad claimed these developments posed 'a threat to international peace and security'. This was a departure from Chinese policies in the recent past on the issue. It would, however, be premature and a serious mistake to presume what direction China's policies will take in coming months.

Just over a century ago, an estimated 18 million Indians perished in a global pandemic, where an estimated 50 million perished globally. India was then under British rule. India today has a democratically elected government in a federal democratic system, which is responsive to public needs. The world has never been as interconnected as it is today. We will, therefore, naturally find a way forward. But, in the meantime, it is heartening that PM Modi and his government are constantly monitoring developments and reviewing their policies, after extensive consultations with state Chief Ministers. Given this welcome trend, one looks forward to India emerging from the crisis, with its federal institutions and structures significantly strengthened.

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

IMF warns Pak's budget deficit may hit record high

ISLAMABAD (TIP): The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has warned that the cash-strapped Pakistan's budget deficit is expected to rise to the record level to 9.2 per cent of the size of national economy or Rs 4 trillion in current fiscal year due to the impact of the pandemic.

In the Middle East and Central Asia Regional Economic Outlook (REO) Update released on Wednesday, the global lender urged the Pakistan government to ramp up spending on the health sector that remained the lowest in the region.

Fiscal expansion is expected in all countries as the fight against the virus and its economic effects is scaled up. It said that Pakistan's budget deficit that in pre-COVID-19 situation had been projected at 7.3 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP), may increase to 9.2 per cent. —PTI

Malaysia reports 153 new coronavirus cases with 3 new deaths

KUALA LUMPUR (TIP): Malaysia's health ministry reported 153 new confirmed cases of the novel coronavirus on Sunday, raising the cumulative total to 4,683, the highest in Southeast Asia.

The latest data includes three new deaths, raising the total number of fatalities from the outbreak to 76.

The ministry said 45% of all confirmed cases have recovered. PTI

Pakistan bans export of anti-malaria drugs

ISLAMABAD (TIP): Pakistan has banned the export of anti-malaria drugs after several countries, including the US, started using the medicines to treat coronavirus patients, according to a media report.

The ban, which has been imposed with immediate effect, will remain till the National Coordination Committee (NCC) on COVID-19 deems necessary, according to a notification released by the Commerce Ministry amidst a spike in the number of coronavirus cases in the country.

On Friday, Pakistan reported 190 fresh infections taking the total number of COVID-19 cases in the country to 4,788. The death toll from the virus has reached 71. As many as 762 have recovered while 50 were in critical condition.

This is the second time in this week that the Pakistan government has banned the export of anti-malaria medicines. The notification was released to the media on Friday. There are approximately 20 companies, which are manufacturing anti-malaria drugs.

To restrict use of anti-malaria drugs in the domestic market, the DRAP has already asked medical stores to sell the drugs on doctors' prescriptions only. —PTI

Bangladesh coast guard rescues 396 Rohingya in drifting boat; 24 dead

DHAKA (TIP): At least two dozen ethnic Rohingya died on a ship that drifted for weeks after failing to reach Malaysia, Bangladesh coastguard officials said on Thursday, following the rescue of 396 starving survivors.

For years, Rohingya from Myanmar have boarded boats organised by smugglers in the hope of finding refuge in Southeast Asia, usually making voyages during the dry season from November to March, when the waters are calm.

A human rights group said it believed more boats carrying Rohingya, a Muslim minority group, were adrift at sea, with coronavirus lockdowns in Malaysia and Thailand making it harder for them to find refuge.

"They were at sea for about two months and were starving," a Bangladesh coastguard official told Reuters in a message, adding that the ship was brought to shore late on Wednesday.

The 396 survivors aboard would be sent to Myanmar, said the official, who revised the number upwards from an initial count of 382.

Video images showed a crowd comprised mostly of women and children, some stick-thin and unable to stand, being helped to shore. One emaciated man lay on the sand.

One refugee told a reporter the group had been turned back from Malaysia three times and a fight had broken out onboard between passengers and crew at one point.

Buddhist-majority Myanmar does not recognise Rohingya as citizens, and the face severe curbs on freedom of movement as well as access to healthcare and education.

Myanmar denies persecuting Rohingya and says they are not an indigenous ethnic group but immigrated



from South Asia, despite many being able to trace their ancestry back centuries.

More than a million live in refugee camps in southern Bangladesh, the majority having been driven from homes in Myanmar after a 2017 military crackdown the army said was a response to attacks by Rohingya insurgents.

Rights groups fear virus curbs across southeast Asia could trigger a repeat of a 2015 crisis, when a crackdown by Thailand prompted smugglers to abandon their human cargo at sea on crowded, rickety boats.

Chris Lewa, director of the Arakan Project, said she believed several more boats were stranded.

"Rohingya may encounter closed borders supported by a xenophobic public narrative," she said in a message.

"COVID-19 cannot be used to deny access to territory to desperate refugees in distress. Another maritime crisis in the Andaman Sea, as in 2015, is

unacceptable." Several boats were trying to reach Malaysian shores and monitoring had been stepped up, a police official in the northwestern state of Kedah told Reuters.

A police official in southern Thailand said five boats carrying Rohingya had been spotted off the coast of Satun province late on Monday. It was not possible to independently confirm the remarks.

People were smuggled out by boat and over land, said Kyaw Hla, a Rohingya from Sittwe in Myanmar's Rakhine state, where tens of thousands of Rohingya have been confined in camps since a bout of violence in 2012.

"Within these eight years, there has been no progress, only degradation," he said by telephone. "People can't stand it. Since we are locked up and suffocated, people try to leave, of course."

He added, "If the coronavirus breaks out here, we'll be as good as dead." Reuters

Sri Lankan church 'forgives' Easter suicide bombers

COLOMBO (TIP): Sri Lanka's Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith said on Sunday that the Roman Catholic Church had forgiven the suicide bombers who killed 279 people and wounded nearly 600 others on Easter Sunday in 2019, in one of the deadliest attacks in the island nation's history.

"We offered love to the enemies who tried to destroy us. We forgave them," Cardinal Ranjith told an Easter mass which was broadcast from a TV studio due to the coronavirus outbreak in the country.

Nine suicide bombers carried out a series of devastating blasts that tore through three churches and three luxury hotels, killing 279 people and injuring 593 others on the Easter Sunday on April 21, 2019.

"The attackers may have had some anger towards Jesus, but, they caused a big damage to us Catholics and Christians. In those bomb attacks, it is

not only the Catholics who died. A lot of others — Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, Christian also died," said Ranjith, who conducted the mass to an empty All Saints Church here this morning.

The blasts targeted St Anthony's Church in Colombo, St Sebastian's Church in the western coastal town of Negombo and a church in the eastern town of Batticaloa when the Easter Sunday mass were in progress.

The ISIS terror group claimed the attacks, but the government blamed the local Islamist extremist group National Thawheed Jammath for the bombings.

The island's Christian religious minority marked the Easter Sunday without attending the traditional mass as many churches remained closed due to the coronavirus which has killed 7 people and infected nearly 200 others. — PTI

THE ATTACK

The blasts targeted St Anthony's Church in Colombo (pic), St Sebastian's Church in the western coastal town of Negombo and a church in the eastern town of Batticaloa when the Easter Sunday mass were in progress.

Three explosions were reported from the five-star hotels - the Shangri-La, the Cinnamon Grand and the Kingsbury in Colombo.

The ISIS terror group claimed the attacks, but the government blamed the local Islamist extremist group National Thawheed Jammath for the bombings

NEW YORKERS: STAY HOME TO STOP THE SPREAD OF CORONAVIRUS

New Yorkers working together and staying home can slow the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) in New York City. When you go out for essential needs, work or to get fresh air, keep distance between yourself and others and take the following precautions.



PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS

- Keep at least 6 feet between yourself and others.
- Wash your hands with soap and water often.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or sleeve when sneezing or coughing.
- Do not touch your face with unwashed hands.
- Monitor your health more closely than usual for cold or flu symptoms.



IF YOU ARE SICK

- Stay home.
- If you have a cough, shortness of breath, fever, sore throat and do not feel better after 3-4 days, consult with your doctor.
- If you need help getting medical care, call 311.
- NYC will provide care regardless of immigration status or ability to pay.



PROTECT THE MOST VULNERABLE

- Stay home if you have lung disease, heart disease, diabetes, cancer or a weakened immune system.
- Stay home and call, video chat or text with family or friends who have one of these conditions.



REDUCE OVERCROWDING

- Stay home.
 - Telecommute if possible.
- If you do go out:**
- Stagger work hours away from peak travel times.
 - Walk or bike.
 - Do not gather in crowds.

Text **COVID** to **692-692** for real-time updates or visit nyc.gov/coronavirus.

Call 311 to report harassment or discrimination. Call 888-NYC-WELL, text "WELL" to 65173 or chat online at nyc.gov/nycwell to connect with a counselor.

*Messages and data rates may apply. Check your wireless provider plan for details.

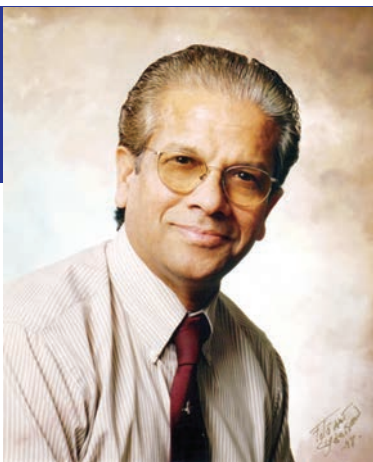


Bill de Blasio
Mayor
Oxiris Barbot, MD
Commissioner

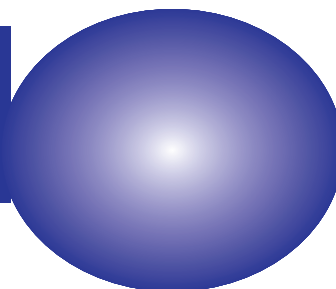


CORONAVIRUS HELPLINE

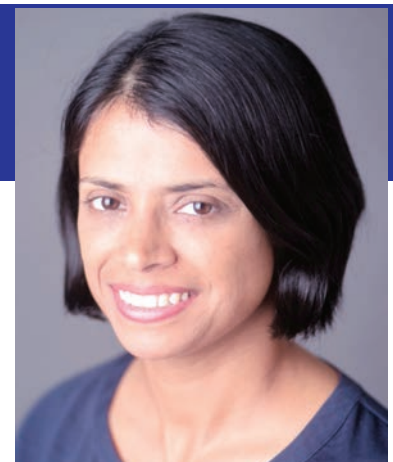
Dr. VK Raju and Dr. Leela Raju of the Eye Foundation of America will be glad to answer any eye related concerns of the readers of The Indian Panorama during this difficult period of Coronavirus onslaught



DR. VK RAJU IS A
CLINICAL
PROFESSOR OF
OPHTHALMOLOGY
AT WEST VIRGINIA
UNIVERSITY



DR. LEELA RAJU IS
AN ASSOCIATE
PROFESSOR OF
OPHTHALMOLOGY
AT NYU LANGONE
MEDICAL CENTER



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World leaders criticize Trump's move to end WHO funding amid Coronavirus fight

Now is a time for unity," the United Nations chief said, "not a time to cut the resources of the World Health Organization."

WASHINGTON (TIP): President Donald Trump's move to halt funding to the World Health Organization has been met with severe criticism at home and abroad, with the United Nations secretary-general saying "now is not the time" for such a drastic move while the coronavirus pandemic is gripping the globe.

Trump made the announcement, April 14, pending a review of the WHO's response to the initial coronavirus outbreak in China. He claims the agency has been too close to Beijing and covered up for its mistakes.

Congressional Democrats are disputing the president's authority to do this. Republican lawmakers are planning their own investigation, examining the early response by the WHO and the Chinese government.

"Now is a time for unity in the global battle to push the COVID-19 pandemic into reverse, not a time to cut the resources of the World Health Organization, which is spearheading and coordinating the global body's efforts," U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres said in a statement, April 14.

China expressed "deep concern" about Trump's announcement, its foreign ministry spokesman, Zhao Lijian, said at



Trump accused WHO of shielding China and other mistakes. WHO chief Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus regretted the decision of the president of the United States to order a halt in funding to the agency.

a news briefing.

"As the most authoritative and most professional organization, the World Health Organization has played an irreplaceable role in global public health crisis," Zhao said. "The decision of the U.S. will undercut the ability of the WHO and damage the global cooperation of fighting the epidemic."

The European Union's foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, tweeted similar

misgivings.

Josep Borrell Fontelles
?

@JosepBorrellF

Deeply regret US decision to suspend funding to @WHO. There is no reason justifying this move at a moment when their efforts are needed more than ever to help contain & mitigate the #coronavirus pandemic. Only by joining forces we can overcome this crisis that

knows no borders.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov slammed Trump's move as "a very selfish approach." He told the TASS news agency, "We urge the United States to abandon further attacks on the WHO and pursue a responsible line."

And Moussa Faki Mahamat, the chairman of the African Union Commission, called the decision "deeply regrettable."

It's not just governments and international organizations that have lined up to express dismay at Trump's move. Experts, entrepreneurs, and others have also been quick to condemn the announcement.

Microsoft founder and philanthropist Bill Gates told his 50 million Twitter followers that halting the WHO's funding was "as dangerous as it sounds."

"Their work is slowing the spread of COVID-19 and if that work is stopped, no other organization can replace them," Gates tweeted. "The world needs the WHO now more than ever."

Dr. Amesh Adalja, a senior scholar with Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, told Reuters, "The move sends the wrong message during the middle of a pandemic."

Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news

Hindu Americans Raise \$18000 for Pakistani Religious Minorities



WASHINGTON (TIP): After several media reports that NGOs coordinating activities with the Government of Pakistan were denying food aid to non-Muslims following implementation of the nation's coronavirus-related travel restrictions, the Hindu American Foundation urgently partnered with the Haray Rama Foundation in Sindh province to ensure food and supplies for religious minorities there.

In a matter of 72 hours, people from across the US responded to HAF's appeal, contributing \$12,000 - \$6000 for Pakistani Hindus denied food aid in Sindh, as well as an additional \$6000 for Pakistani Hindu refugees living in camps in Jodhpur, India. The Sindhi Hindu American community committed an additional \$6000 in matching funds, raising the total disbursement funds to \$18,000.

Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news

Indian American Lawmaker Calls for Urgent Actions to Stop Spread of COVID-19

WASHINGTON (TIP): Indian American Representative Ami Bera, M.D. (CA-07) on April 15 sent a letter to House leadership outlining critical actions Congress and the Administration should take to halt the spread of and ultimately defeat COVID-19 in the United States and abroad.

"We cannot return to normal without the implementation of a national testing strategy that ensures all Americans who need a diagnostic test receive a test and that we are utilizing widespread serologic testing to determine who has had coronavirus," said Rep. Bera. "We also need a COVID Response Corps to conduct widespread testing and contact tracing. Without it, we leave our nation at risk for new waves of the virus."

Bera is urging future COVID-19 legislation include provisions to:

- Develop a national testing strategy, including ensuring states continue to have enough testing supplies
- Establish a COVID-19 Response Corps to conduct contract tracing and other public health activities

Rep. Bera last week urged the Administration to create a national testing strategy to address shortfalls in



Rep. Bera has been a leader in Congress on global health security

COVID-19 testing. He also penned a bipartisan op-ed encouraging the U.S. to establish a COVID-19 Response Corps with a trained, deployable workforce to address the urgent needs of the national COVID-19 response.

Congressman Bera today also called for additional resources to combat the virus

internationally.

"Diseases know no borders. Even if the U.S. is able to contain COVID-19 here at home, we risk continued outbreaks if we are not able to contain it elsewhere. First and foremost, that means building on USAID and CDC activities to strengthen the ability of countries to prevent, detect, and respond to coronavirus. But it also means thinking creatively about how to cooperate with other countries to ensure we are resourcing both prevention and response and vaccine efforts, through organizations like CEPI. Finally, we cannot forget that coronavirus originated in animals. We should support programs like PREDICT, implemented by universities like UC Davis here in the Sacramento area."

Rep. Bera has been a leader in Congress on global health security. He chaired the first congressional hearing on the coronavirus on Feb. 5th, sounded the alarm after the Trump Administration disbanded the global health security office in the National Security Council in 2018, and is a member on the CSIS Commission on Strengthening America's Health Security, which in November 2019 made a series of recommendations to prevent pandemics.

Indiaspora's Online COVID-19 Giving Campaign Raises Fund for Marginalized Communities

WASHINGTON, DC (TIP): Indiaspora has launched a ChaloGive for COVID-19 online giving campaign to fight hunger and provide relief directly to vulnerable populations affected most by the coronavirus pandemic in the United States and India.

The giving campaign has raised USD \$500,000 in contributions from Indiaspora's leadership network last week. The campaign continues Friday as a grassroots initiative through Indiaspora's online giving platform ChaloGive.org.

"We are facing an unprecedented situation due to Covid-19," said Anand Rajaraman, a Silicon Valley-based serial entrepreneur and venture capitalist, and an Indiaspora Founders Circle member who, along with his wife Kaushie Adishesan, is a lead donor for the campaign. "The drastic measures necessary to control this pandemic have created special challenges for vulnerable sections of society across the world, particularly in India and the US. Indiaspora has the opportunity to unite the diaspora to quickly and decisively help in the midst of this crisis."

There has been an outpouring of support from the Indian diaspora during this pandemic. Several community-based organizations are providing much-needed relief, with CEOs, entrepreneurs, professionals from different industries, and the entire community rallying to make contributions to various nonprofits.

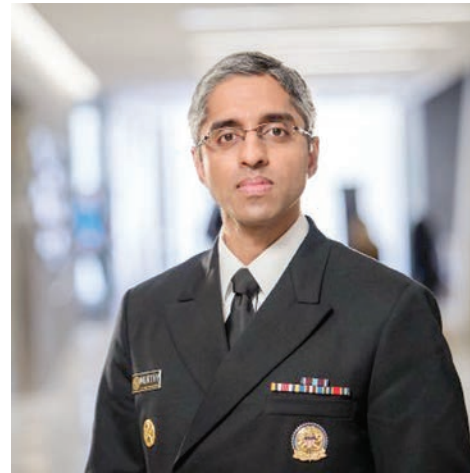
One of the most pressing and urgent challenges facing both the U.S. and India right now is hunger, which is a deciding factor in Indiaspora's new ChaloGive campaign.

In the U.S. more than 37 million people face food insecurity, with food banks struggling to meet a massive increase in need. In India, nearly 140 million migrant workers have been displaced and remain in dire need of food and other essentials.

"While all eyes are on frontline hospitals, millions in America and across the globe suffer silently from a growing and equally alarming epidemic of food insecurity as the COVID-19 crisis threatens to push already struggling families deeper into poverty," said Sejal Hathi, an Indiaspora Board member and physician at Massachusetts General



High-profile ambassadors have endorsed the ongoing campaign, including former Pepsi Chairman and CEO Indra Nooyi, and former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy



Hospital. "Now more than ever is the time for communities like Indiaspora's to come together and rise to this call to feed people in need. I'm so proud to witness exactly this commitment to seva."

ChaloGive for COVID-19 provides an opportunity for the Indian diaspora to make a collective impact toward helping marginalized communities who have been disproportionately affected by the ongoing crisis.

"This crisis has made it even harder for those who were already struggling to survive," said Kris Gopalakrishnan, Chairman of Axilor Ventures and a founder of IT services company Infosys, who is also an Indiaspora Founders Circle member. "Given the increasingly global world we are living in, India and its diaspora are in a unique and powerful position to help each other."

Partner nonprofits for ChaloGive for COVID-19

Contributions to ChaloGive.org will meet demand on the ground through beneficiary nonprofits Feeding America and Goonj in the United States and India, respectively.

Feeding America, which has been providing emergency food assistance to people facing hunger through its nationwide network of 200 food banks in America for more than 40 years, is responding to the new hunger crisis in the U.S. Every dollar to Feeding America secures 10 meals through the food bank network.

"The nation and our food bank network

are facing challenges unlike anything we've seen in our organization's history," said Claire Babineaux-Fontenot, CEO of Feeding America. "We are truly grateful to Indiaspora for its support of Feeding America through the ChaloGive for COVID-19 campaign. During this time of uncertainty, the generous donations derived from this effort will help bring much-needed food and hope to countless families facing hunger across the U.S."

In India, Goonj provides disaster relief, rehabilitation and community development with dignity. Through their Rahat Covid-19 initiative, given their already pan-India network and presence, Goonj has already initiated relief work of reaching food, dry ration and hygiene kits to displaced migrants in parts of fourteen states of India.

"Despite our extensive experience of working in disasters, the scale and still unfolding nature of this long-tailed disaster calls for massive resource mobilization for short-, mid- and long-term work," said Anshu Gupta, Founder of Goonj and a Magsaysay Awardee. We are delighted to partner with Indiaspora on this campaign as an opportunity to engage the Indian-American community and our well-wishers from across the world in supporting their fellow citizens in this difficult hour."

Contributions given at ChaloGive.org will go directly toward these charities' relief funds, and are fully tax-deductible for U.S. taxpayers.

An additional USD \$100,000 donated online by April 15 will be matched by

Indiaspora's members; thus, donors who give through the platform will have the opportunity to have their impact doubled.

Ambassadors for ChaloGive for COVID-19

High-profile ambassadors have endorsed the ongoing campaign, including former Pepsi Chairman and CEO Indra Nooyi, and former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy, who serve on Feeding America's Food Security Council and Board of Directors, respectively.

"This pandemic has exposed an already existing hunger crisis," said Indra Nooyi. "Together, as a society we must rise to this moment and address this great need knowing our investment in people, in families, and in communities will reap untold benefits not only now but into the future."

"It is essential that individuals - especially vulnerable populations who are most at risk - maintain access to food during this public health emergency," said Dr. Vivek Murthy. "I proudly support this campaign and trust its impact will go far to bring relief to those struggling with food insecurity."

In India, philanthropists Rohini and Nandan Nilekani and Bollywood actress Nandita Das also have voiced their support for the campaign.

"Goonj is just the kind of organization we can rely on in this double crisis of health and livelihoods," said Rohini Nilekani. "It has decades of experience serving the most vulnerable while striving to preserve the dignity of every stakeholder; and it has time and time again demonstrated a scaled up, rapid response in the aftermath of disasters. We have been supporters of Goonj for many years. They care, and they deliver. Thank you all for your generosity and your support."

ChaloGive for COVID-19 is the second online giving campaign by Indiaspora. Its inaugural ChaloGive campaign launched October 2, 2019 on the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, from October 2-8, 2019, highlighting more than 20 organizations with successful track records in areas of poverty alleviation and empowerment, health, and education.

Indian American Congressman Appointed to White House Coronavirus Advisory Council

WASHINGTON (TIP): Indian American Representative Ro Khanna (CA-17) said that he has accepted President Trump's invitation to serve on the White House Coronavirus Advisory Council to fight to get working class Americans the relief they need.

"The American people need action, support, and direction from the federal government. The Small Business Administration's

Paycheck Protection Program just ran out of the funds to keep Main Street afloat. Millions of Americans are filing for unemployment every week. That's why I, along with several of my Democratic colleagues, decided to accept President Trump's invitation to serve on the White House Coronavirus Advisory Council. Though we continue to share obvious and pronounced

disagreements, the task at hand is too important for partisanship. As a member of the Council, I will continue to fight to get working class Americans the relief they need to make it to the other side of COVID-19" Khanna said in a statement following the first Advisory Council conference call with President Trump.

"I will call for massive investment in advanced

manufacturing, in innovative scientific advancement, and in smart technology. Already, we have seen that America was too dependent for crucial medical equipment and electronics on China, Germany and other nations. Like Eisenhower did during the Cold War, we can reshape the future of American industry to rebuild our economy if we harness the power of American innovation", he further added.

Congressman Khanna represents the 17th District of California, which covers communities in Silicon Valley.



Congressman Khanna represents the 17th District of California, which covers communities in Silicon Valley.

170 districts identified as Covid-19 hotspots in India

NEW DELHI (TIP): Nearly one in five districts in India is a hotspot, the Health Ministry said on Wednesday, a day that saw at least 1,036 COVID-19 infections.

The government said it had classified every district into a hotspot, potential hotspot or a green zone. Of India's 736 districts, 170 were 'hotspots', defined as places with at least 15 confirmed infections or where there was an exponential rise in cases. There were 207 'potential hotspots,' Lav Agrawal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, said at the daily media briefing.

There were 11,439 confirmed cases and 377 deaths. A total of 1,306 people have been discharged after recovery.

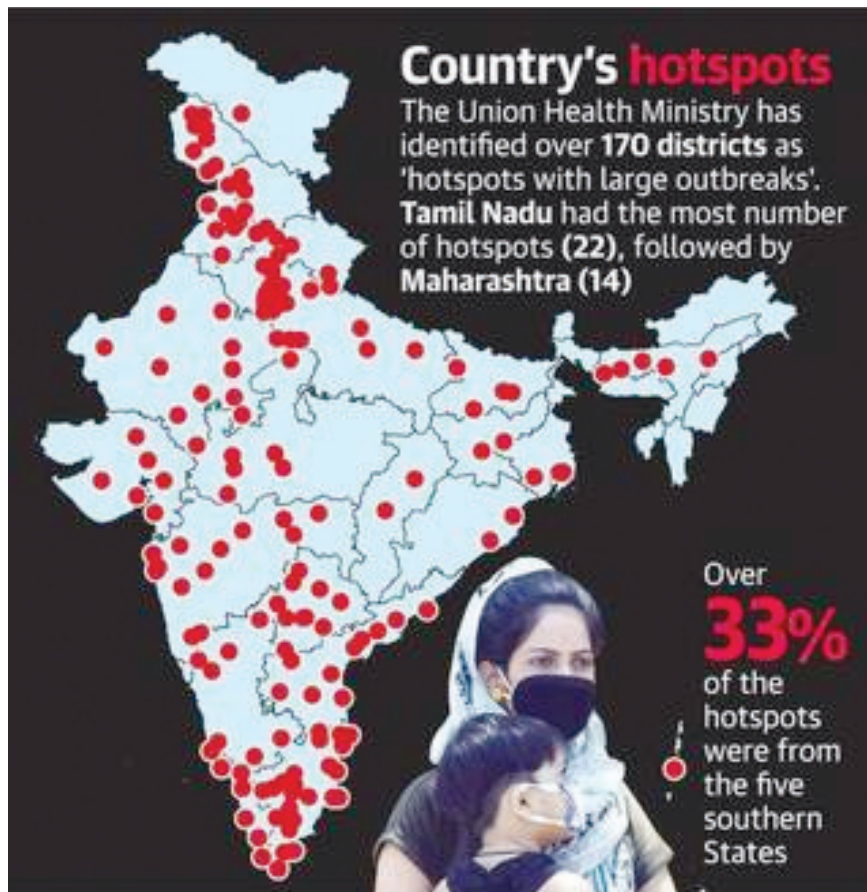
Details of these districts were not shared but in all of these places — potential or not — testing would be ramped up to include checking even those who displayed 'influenza-like illnesses' and breathlessness.

According to reports from the State Health Departments, the total number of cases rose to 12,380, of which 10,568 were active ones. While 422 people have died of the disease, 1,392 have recovered.

Interactive map of confirmed coronavirus cases in India | State-wise tracker for coronavirus cases, deaths and testing rates

Special teams had been set up to trace all contacts and to conduct house-to-house surveys. These teams will include health staff, local revenue staff, corporation staff, Red Cross and volunteer groups who have undergone an online training course, Mr. Agrawal added.

He said District Magistrates had the authority to declare regions as hotspots, and a protocol would be in place to check how a district was performing in containing the



spread of the virus.

"In order to break the chain of transmission, focus needs to be on contact tracing, monitoring and clinical management. States have been asked to uniformly implement the containment plan in every district across the country," an accompanying press statement added.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while announcing extension of lockdown on Tuesday, said all districts would have to strictly enforce quarantining until April 20, after which based on the 'performance' of districts in keeping the case count low or

halting a rapid rise in infections, restrictions would begin to be eased. Were these regions to regress, restrictions would be reimposed.

Meanwhile, Health Minister Harsh Vardhan participated in a meeting with officials of the World Health Organisation to take stock of preparedness.

Praising India's response to COVID-19, Regional Director, WHO South-East Asia Region, Poonam Khetrpal Singh, said, "Despite huge and multiple challenges, India has been demonstrating unwavering commitment in its fight against the pandemic".s



INDIA ISSUES NEW LOCKDOWN GUIDELINES ISSUED: WHAT IT MEANS

NEW DELHI (TIP): The government on Wednesday issued revised guideline to be followed during the extended lockdown period till May 3. While several things have been kept suspended to prevent the spread of coronavirus disease Covid-19, the government has allowed others which have a direct impact on the lives of the common people.

As per the revised guideline, all self-employed people like electricians, those involved in IT repairs, plumbers, motor mechanics and carpenters have been allowed.

The courier services and vehicles used by e-commerce operators have also been permitted by the government.

Apart from these, shops (including kirana and single shops selling essential goods) and carts, dealing with food and groceries, hygiene items, fruits and vegetables, dairy and milk booths, poultry, meat and fish, animal feed a fodder etc have been allowed to operate without any restriction on timing of opening and closure.

However, these establishments have been asked to strictly follow social distancing.

All medical establishments, including ayush centres, labs, vet centres have also been allowed to open in non-containment zones.

Dhabas (eateries) on the highways to have been allowed, but with instructions to follow social distancing norms.

Relaxing the movement of people, the guideline says that private vehicles for emergency services, including medical and veterinary care and for procuring essential commodities, will be allowed. In such cases, one passenger besides the private vehicle driver can be permitted in the backseat in a four-wheeler; in case of two-wheelers, however, only the driver of the vehicle is permitted.

India's testing strategy effective, better than others, says Centre

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Central government today allayed apprehensions around low Covid-19 testing, saying that India was testing more people than other countries to arrive at one confirmed case of the disease.

Insisting that limited testing strategy was working with 325 districts not reporting any Covid case so far and 27 districts in 17 states managing to remain free of new infections for 14 days, the Health Ministry said India had been testing on an average 27 symptomatic persons to get one Covid positive case.

"This number is much lower for other countries. While we are testing 24 people to get one positive case, Japan is testing 11.5, Italy 6.7, the US 5.3 and the UK 3.4. The test criteria we are following are the same that are followed by other countries. It is not correct to assume that we are offering the tests to lesser number of people," ICMR chief epidemiologist Raman Gangakhedkar said as the country's Covid case load soared to 12,759 and death toll mounted to 420 on Thursday with an additional 1,320 cases and 43 deaths over a single day.

So far 1,514 people have recovered showing a cure rate



of around 12 per cent as against a case fatality rate of 3.3 per cent. The government today assured that the ICMR had enough testing stocks for eight weeks and more testing kits were on the way. The ICMR has in the past 10 days ramped up testing significantly with 2,90,401 total samples tested so far and 26,331 tested on Thursday.

ARMY SUSPENDS TROOP MOVEMENT, EXERCISES TILL FURTHER ORDERS

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Indian Army has extended the suspension of all exercises and movement of troops till May 3.

They informed field commanders for not planning anything until further orders.

For Army men who were on temporary duty or training—when the lockdown was announced on March 23—the Railways will be running two special trains—only those are fit and free from COVID-19.

These special trains will meet the operational requirements of Northern and Eastern borders. A train will depart from Bangalore to Jammu on April 17. Another one will leave Bangalore for Guwahati the next day. Enroute, the train will stop at major military stations.

The target is to ferry a hundred men, who were under training at Bangalore, Belgaum, Secundrabad and Gopalpur.

Meanwhile, all training activities and temporary duties will remain suspended.

India projected to grow at 1.9%, turnaround expected next year, says RBI Governor

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Reserve Bank of India said on Friday that even after battered economically due to the Covid-19 crisis, India will continue to grow at 1.9 per cent during the current fiscal year.

"India is among the handful of countries that is projected to cling on, somewhat tenuously, to positive growth rate of 1.9 per cent. This is the highest growth rate among the G-20 economies as estimated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF)," RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said at a digital press conference.

"India is expected to post a sharp turnaround and resume its pre-Covid growth trajectory by growing at 7.4 per cent in 2021-22," he further said.

He also said that India's central bank has been very proactive and has been monitoring evolving situation very closely adding that there are slivers of brightness at the domestic front among the encircling gloom.

This was the second time that the



governor addressed the media since the nationwide lockdown was imposed from March 25.

On March 27, RBI held a historic pre-term MPC (Monetary Policy Committee) meeting wherein the repo rate was cut by a record 75 basis points. The repo rate was reduced to a 15-year-low of 4.40 per cent and was also the steepest cut since October 2004. The same day,

the central bank cut the cash reserve ratio by 100 bps to 3 per cent apart from announcing various measures to boost liquidity in the system.

There were calls that the 75 bps cuts was not sufficient and that RBI could go for more rate cuts and liquidity measures. Many brokerages had said RBI could slash the lending rates by another 100 bps.

Delhi food delivery boy tests positive for coronavirus, 72 families quarantined

NEW DELHI (TIP): With 89 people quarantined after a pizza delivery agent tested positive for coronavirus in south Delhi, the authorities are considering clinical screening of all food delivery personnel in the area.

The 19-year-old tested positive for the virus on April 14. A total of 72 families whom he delivered pizza to have been put under home quarantine, said B M Mishra, district magistrate of South Delhi.

"In view of this incident, we are considering that all those involved in home delivery of food are put through clinical screening so that those showing symptoms are stopped from visiting homes," Mishra told PTI.

The pizza delivery agent was feeling unwell for some time alongwith a persistent cough since the third week of March. Later he approached a hospital where he was tested positive, said another official.

The 17 first line contact of the infected man, including his colleagues, have been quarantined at an institutional facility at Chhatarpur, Mishra said.

The 72 people in areas of south Delhi including pockets of Malviya Nagar and Hauz Rani have not shown any symptoms of the infection but will be tested if they do, he said.

The officials refused to share details of the people who came under contact with the infected man



saying it was yet to be ascertained as to how he contracted the virus despite not having any travel history or coming in contact with any known corona positive patient.

They said the booth level teams were deputed to trace other contacts of the delivery agent.

India to export HCQ, paracetamol tablets to 55 nations

India is preparing shipments of Hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) and paracetamol tablets for 55 countries, even as the Ministry of External Affairs has set about sourcing personal protective equipment (PPE) and testing kits from a large number of countries. The first mega shipments from China and South Korea are expected to land later in the night.

While the government had continued to evacuate foreigners stranded in India, with several flights leaving the country daily, it has advised its nationals stranded abroad to stay put. India has so far sent back 35,000 foreigners from 48 countries. However, for Indians stuck abroad, sources advice "patience", by hunkering down wherever they are currently based. Indian missions will be at hand to provide support and guidance.

The government also has no plans to bring back over 3,300 stranded Indians who have tested positive for COVID. There is no word on the fate of the bodies of 25 Indians who have died abroad due to the epidemic. Sources denied that the inaction was due to the absence of quarantine facilities.

US provides US\$ 5.9 million in assistance to India to fight COVID

WASHINGTON (TIP): The US has provided nearly USD 5.9 million in health assistance to India to contain the spread of COVID-19, the State Department has. The amount is being used to help India hinder the spread of the disease by providing care for the affected, disseminating essential public health messages to communities and strengthen case-finding and surveillance, it said on Thursday.

The assistance is also being used to mobilize innovative financing mechanisms for emergency preparedness and response to this pandemic.

"This builds on a foundation of nearly USD2.8 billion in total assistance, which includes more than USD1.4 billion in health assistance, the United States has provided to India over the last 20 years," it said in an update of the US efforts in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The State Department and the US Agency for International Development have now committed nearly USD 508 million in emergency health, humanitarian, and economic assistance.

'Follow curbs during Ramadan'

NEW DELHI (TIP): Senior BJP leader, Union Minister for Minority Affairs and Chairman of the Central Waqf Council Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi today urged the Waqf Boards and members of the Muslim community to ensure strict and honest implementation of the lockdown, curfew and social distancing during the holy month of Ramadan beginning April 24 in view of the pandemic.

Interacting with the chairmen and senior officials of more than 30 state Waqf Boards across the country, he said they should remain cautious of any fake news and conspiracies aimed at creating misinformation. He said officials should create awareness among people to offer prayers and perform other religious rituals at home.

"The authorities have been working for the safety and well-being of all citizens of the country without any discrimination. Such rumours and conspiracies can weaken the fight against Covid. We should work together to win this fight against the pandemic by not falling prey to rumours, misinformation and conspiracies," he said.

More than seven lakh registered mosques and other religious and social institutions come under the state Waqf Boards across the country.

Woman travels 2,700 km across six states to meet ailing son

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM (TIP): A 50-year-old woman travelled 2700 km in a car crisscrossing 6 states to meet her critically ill son, a BSF jawan in Jodhpur, despite strict lockdown restrictions due to Covid-19.

The woman was accompanied by her daughter-in-law and another relative during the journey, which they covered in 3 days time.

Speaking to PTI from Jodhpur in Rajasthan, Sheelamma Vasan said the health condition of her son, Arun Kumar (29), who was suffering from myositis, (inflammation of muscles), was improving.

"Due to god's grace we have reached here without any problems anywhere", she said.

The family was informed by a doctor at AIIMS in Jodhpur about Arun Kumar's condition following which they decided to undertake the journey from Kerala through Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat to reach Rajasthan.

Thanks to the intervention of Union Minister V Muraleedharan, office of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and Congress leader, Oommen Chandy, the family could get necessary passes for the travel across the states. Volunteers of Hindu help line, a VHP organisation, helped in arranging a cab and two taxi drivers free of cost to take them to Jodhpur.

After getting necessary passes arranged by Kottayam District Collector P K Sudheer Babu, Sheelamma accompanied by her daughter-in-law Parvathy and another relative set off on the journey from Panackachira village in Koruthodu panchayat in Kottayam on April 11 and reached Jodhpur on 14th, "Vishu" (Malayalam new year).



99-YEAR-OLD WWII VET BEATS COVID IN BRAZIL

BRASILIA (TIP): A 99-year-old World War II veteran in Brazil was released from hospital with military honours Tuesday after recovering from Covid-19.

Second Lieutenant Ermando Piveta, who served in the Brazilian artillery in Africa during World War II, was brought out of the Armed Forces Hospital in Brasilia to a burst of trumpet music and applause.

Wearing an army-green side cap, he raised his arms in the air as he left the hospital after eight days as a patient.

"He won another battle, this time against the new coronavirus. He was released from hospital the same day Brazil is commemorating the 75th anniversary of its troops' successful campaign in the Battle of Montese in Italy during World War II," the army said in a statement.

Piveta served in the army's fourth artillery regiment, which trained in Dakar in 1942, soon after Brazil entered the war on the side of the Allies, the army said.

He then returned to Brazil with his regiment to defend the country from an Axis invasion that never came to be.

Brazil is the hardest-hit country in Latin America in the coronavirus pandemic, with 1,532 deaths so far.

Only a COVID-19 vaccine will allow return to 'normalcy': UN chief

UNITED NATIONS (TIP): A COVID-19 vaccine may be the only thing that can bring back "normalcy," UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Wednesday, hoping for just that before the end of the year.

"A safe and effective vaccine may be the only tool that can return the world to a sense of 'normalcy,' saving millions of lives and countless trillions of dollars," he added during a video conference with the 50 or so African countries that are members of the United Nations.

He called for its accelerated development and accessibility to all, adding it must have a "universal global benefit" and "allow us to control the pandemic." "We need an ambitious effort to ensure that international stakeholders operate through a harmonized, integrated and leveraged approach to maximize the speed and scale needed for the universal deployment of such a vaccine by the end of 2020," he insisted.

Guterres said his appeal on March 25 for \$2 billion in donations for a comprehensive UN humanitarian response to the pandemic had so far raised about 20 percent of that amount.

Through the World Health Organization, the United Nations has been able to equip 47 African countries with COVID-19 tests, he said.

The UN chief also praised the efforts of several African governments to mitigate the consequences of the pandemic.

He cited Uganda, which has given businesses more time to file their tax returns; Namibia, which provides emergency income for workers who have lost their jobs; Cape Verde, which provides food aid; and Egypt, which has reduced taxation on industries.



On-off social distancing may be needed until 2022, reveals Harvard study

A one-time lockdown won't halt the novel coronavirus and repeated periods of social distancing may be required into 2022 to prevent hospitals from being overwhelmed, Harvard scientists who modeled the pandemic's trajectory said.

Their study comes as the US enters the peak of its Covid-19 caseload and states eye an eventual easing of tough lockdown measures.

The Harvard team's computer simulation, which was published in a paper in the journal Science, assumed that Covid-19 will become seasonal, like closely related coronaviruses that cause the common cold, with higher transmission rates in colder months.

But much remains unknown, including the level of immunity acquired by previous infection and how long it lasts, the authors said.

"We found that one-time social distancing measures are likely to be insufficient to maintain the incidence of SARS-CoV-2 within the limits of critical care capacity in the United States," lead author Stephen Kissler said in a call with reporters.

"What seems to be necessary in the absence of other sorts of treatments are intermittent social distancing periods," he added. Widespread viral testing would be required in order to determine when the thresholds to re-trigger distancing are crossed, said the authors.

The duration and intensity of lockdowns can be relaxed as treatments and vaccines become available. But in their absence, on and then off distancing would give hospitals time to increase critical care capacity to cater for the surge in cases that would occur when the measures are eased.

"By permitting periods of transmission that reach higher prevalence than otherwise would be possible, they allow an accelerated acquisition of herd immunity," said co-author Marc Lipsitch.

Conversely, too much social distancing without

TRACKING THE VIRUS			
GLOBAL		INDIA	
Cases	Deaths	Cases	Deaths
2,182,197	1,45,521	13,387	437



respite can be a bad thing. Under one modeled scenario "the social distancing was so effective that virtually no population immunity is built," the paper said, hence the need for an intermittent approach.

The authors acknowledged a major drawback in their model is how little we currently know about how strong a previously infected person's immunity is and how long it lasts.

Virus likely here to stay

At present the best guesses based on closely-related coronaviruses are that it will confer some immunity, for up to about a year. There might also be some cross-protective immunity against Covid-19 if a person is infected by a common cold-causing betacoronavirus.

One thing, however, is almost certain: the virus is here to stay. The team said it was highly unlikely that immunity will be strong enough and last long enough that Covid-19 will die out after an initial wave, as was the case with the SARS outbreak of 2002-2003.

HOW TAIWAN BEAT CORONAVIRUS

A leading Taiwanese scientist has explained why the island has dealt with coronavirus so well - and said data from China cannot be trusted.

Professor Ih-Jen Su, the former director of Taiwan's Centers for Disease Control, explained that Taiwan has prepared for a pandemic since the SARS outbreak of 2002 which mostly affected China, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Nursing homes were given thousands of ventilators and the number of intensive care beds was increased to 10,000.

That figure is four times Australia's 2,500 beds even though the two countries have similar populations of around 25million.

To date, Taiwan has recorded only 385 cases of COVID-19 compared to Australia's 6,300, China's 82,000 and America's 560,000.

As soon as officials heard about a mysterious pneumonia in China in December, they started preparing for the worst.

Aggressive testing, contact tracing and isolation of the sick were set in motion and on January 2 Taiwan activated its emergency operations centre before banning flights from China. Professor Su told The Age that Taiwan has been rehearsing for a virus outbreak for 17 years.

"We exercise hospital and control measures one to two times a year. The most important thing is the earlier the better for control measures," he said.

Professor Su said last month that the west would struggle to contain the virus because it lacks the experience of SARS. "The situation in other countries now resembles the situation we were in during the first few weeks of the SARS spread in Taiwan in early 2003," Professor Su told the Financial Times.

ReelAbilities Film Fest NY 2020: A Closer Look

By Mabel Pais

"A sentient being on this beautiful planet."- (of himself) Oliver Sacks, neurologist, author, storyteller

The ReelAbilities Film Festival New York 2020 (RFFNY2020) had its virtual run, March 31 to April 6th. The virtual schedule is available at reelabilities.org/newyork

The following are highlights of some of the films screened....

OLIVER SACKS: HIS OWN LIFE

DIR. RIC BURNS | US | 115 MIN | DOCUMENTARY

The riveting and profoundly moving life and work of Oliver Sacks, who redefined our 21st-century understanding of the brain and mind.



Oliver Sacks

Photo / Courtesy RFFNY-2020/CavuPictures.com

"A sentient being on this beautiful planet." - Oliver Sacks

"Oliver Sacks: His Own Life" explores the life and work of the legendary neurologist and storyteller, as he shares intimate details of his battles with drug addiction, homophobia, and a medical establishment that accepted his work only decades after the fact. Sacks was a fearless explorer of unknown mental worlds who helped redefine our understanding of the brain and mind, the diversity of human experience, and our shared humanity.

On January 15th, 2015, a few weeks after completing his autobiographical memoir, the writer and neurologist Oliver Sacks learned that the rare form of cancer for which he had been treated nine years earlier had returned and that he had only a few months to live. A few weeks later, he sat down with Ric Burns for a series of marathon filmed interviews in his apartment in New York. For eighty hours, between February and June - surrounded by family and friends, books and minerals, notebooks from six decades of thinking and writing about the brain - he talked about his life and work, his dreams and fears, his abiding sense of wonder at the natural world, and the place of human beings within it. He spoke with astonishing candor and clear-sightedness, a profoundly gifted 81-year-old man facing death with remarkable courage and vitality while facing the end. He was determined to come to grips with what his life has meant and what it means to be, as he put it, "a sentient being on this beautiful planet."

Drawing on these riveting and profoundly moving reflections, Oliver Sacks: His Own Life also features deeply revealing and personal interviews with family members, colleagues, patients and close friends. It is in part the biography of an extraordinary physician and writer who was dogged by his own neuroses and by the rejection of his medical colleagues but nonetheless redefined for millions of readers the nature of the human mind, through the simple act of telling profoundly compassionate stories. It is also a deeply illuminating exploration of the science of human

consciousness and the nature of subjectivity, and a meditation on the deep and intimate relation between art and science and storytelling.

To view a video clip of the film, visit <https://youtu.be/64PHLhAVnf4>

For updates on release dates of the film, visit <https://zeitgeistfilms.com/film/oliversackshisownlife#playdates>

CODE OF THE FREAKS, OPENING NIGHT

DIR. SALOME CHASNOFF | US | 68 MIN | DOCUMENTARY



A scene from "Code Of The Freaks"

Photo / Courtesy RFFNY-2020/CavuPictures.com

Offend One, And You Offend Them All

Taking its title ("Code Of The Freaks") from Tod Browning's 1932 classic film, "Freaks," this radical re-framing of how characters with disabilities are represented looks at a century of Hollywood favorites with a fresh perspective. Disability activists imagine a cinematic landscape that takes people with disabilities seriously.

"Code of the Freaks" presents a radical re-framing of the use of disabled characters in film. From "The Fake Beggar" (1895), "Of Mice and Men" (1939) and "Whatever Happened to Baby Jane" (1962) to more contemporary films like "Million Dollar Baby," "Forrest Gump," "Avatar," "Fences" and "Me Before You," Hollywood continues to crank out all the old disability clichés and hollow inspirational narratives - what disability activists call "inspiration porn" - that carry actors straight to the Oscars. "Code of the Freaks" counters these formulaic entertainments with a powerful corrective: it dares to imagine a cinematic landscape that centers the voices of disabled people.

"Code of the Freaks" is well timed to intervene in an emerging international conversation about inclusion and representation. Social media has elevated the disability community's critique of Hollywood's casting decisions and exclusion of disabled people from the industry. "Code of the Freaks" extends the conversation beyond the largely superficial issue of casting to the stories themselves.

In addition to better known voices, "Code of the Freaks" showcases totally new on-the-ground disability activists and educators to advance a compelling argument: when it comes to disability onscreen, whether the fate of the disabled character is a miracle cure, institutionalization, death, or "overcoming," it's all aimed at inspiring a mainstream audience.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Website (in development):

<http://codeofthefreaks.com>

Facebook:

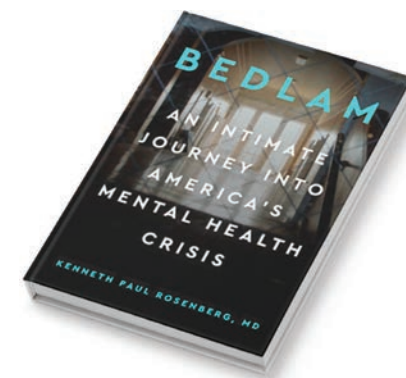
<https://www.facebook.com/CodeOfTheFreaks/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/CodeOfTheFreaks>

For updates on release dates of the film, visit <https://www.codeofthefreaks.com/screenings-1>

BEDLAM, CLOSING NIGHT

DIR. KENNETH PAUL ROSENBERG | US | 86 MIN | DOCUMENTARY



"Bedlam" book cover

Photo / Courtesy RFFNY-2020/CavuPictures.com

An Intimate Journey Into America's Mental Health Crisis

"BEDLAM" is a feature-length documentary, through intimate stories of patients, families, and medical providers, that immerses us in the national crisis surrounding care of the seriously mentally ill.

Filmed over five years, it brings us inside one of America's busiest psychiatric emergency rooms, into jails where psychiatric patients are warehoused, and to the homes - and homeless encampments - of mentally ill members of our communities, where silence and shame often compound personal suffering. The story is told in part by director Kenneth Paul Rosenberg, MD, a psychiatrist, filmmaker and whose own life journey has been profoundly impacted by a seriously mentally ill family member.

Among others, featured in the film is Patrisse Cullors, co-founder of 'Black Lives Matter,' and her brother Monte, a victim and survivor of this very broken system. "BEDLAM" premiered to standing ovations at the 2019 Sundance Film Festival and will have its broadcast premiere on PBS's Independent Lens in April 2020 and is now available to stream online at (until May 13th): <https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/videos/bedlam/>

About ReelAbilities Film Festival: New York

ReelAbilities Film Festival is the largest film festival in the world dedicated to promoting awareness and appreciation of the lives, stories, and artistic expressions of people with disabilities. Founded in New York in 2007 by the Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan, the festival presents award-winning films by and about people with disabilities. Post-screening discussions and other engaging programs bring communities virtually together to explore, discuss, embrace, and celebrate the diversity of our shared human experience. The New York festival is the launching pad for an international program and its selections run satellite ReelAbilities festivals in over 20 cities worldwide. Learn more at reelabilities.org/newyork

About the Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan

Together with its community, the Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan creates opportunities for people to connect, grow, and learn with progressive programming within an ever-changing Jewish landscape. The JCC events extend beyond neighborhood boundaries, reaching people at all stages of their lives. Learn more at jccmanhattan.org.

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



RANVEER SINGH IS JOE EXOTIC OF 'TIGER KING' IN NEW MEME

Ranveer Singh is a rare Bollywood superstar who loves sharing his own memes on a regular basis, and he has done it again!

In a new meme that he shares, the actor has turned into Joe Exotic from the popular Netflix series "Tiger King: Murder, Mayhem And Madness".

Amid the lockdown, Ranveer, an ardent social media user, took to his Instagram story to share a photoshopped picture himself. In the image, he can be seen posing with a Tiger. His face has been photoshopped into the original picture of Joe Exotic, an American ZooKeeper. He captioned it: "Who did this." "Tiger King: Murder, Mayhem and Madness" is penned and directed by Eric Goode and Rebecca Chaiklin. It focuses on the life and crimes of Joseph Allen Maldonado-Passage, also known as Joe Exotic. He is a former country musician, Oklahoma zookeeper, gun enthusiast and big-cat keeper. On the work front, Ranveer will next be seen starring as cricketer Kapil Dev in "83", Kabir Khan's account on India's first-ever cricket World Cup victory in 1983.

MALAIKA ARORA TREATS ARJUN KAPOOR TO YUM CHOCOLATE DESSERT

Arjun Kapoor shared an inside glimpse into his romantic diaries with girlfriend Malaika Arora as they self-isolate at their respective houses amid the lockdown.

Malaika, who has been experimenting with desserts lately--from besan laddoos to paniyaram and banana ice cream, baked a chocolate walnut cake on Easter. Arjun shared a glimpse of the dessert on his Instagram story and simply captioned it "Her", alongside adding a pink heart emoji to the photo.

Earlier, Arjun shared a video from his kitchen and called himself a "fake baker". The clip featured his dog Maximus as well, with the song Tune Maari Entriyaan from his film Gunday playing in the background.

"I'm sure Maximus the real Gunda sang this song in his head cause it's the first time he's seen me the Fake Baker attempt anything in the kitchen !!! PS - (his hips really don't lie) @aliabbaszafar @ranveersingh @priyankachopra #maximusthegunda," his caption read.

Arjun Kapoor and Malaika have been making the headlines for their relationship for a long time now. Earlier, Arjun opened up about the



same to Filmfare and said, "We've come out because we feel the media has given us dignity. There's a certain understanding the media has... they've been respectful, kind, honest and decent about it. That is

why I felt comfortable. You recoil when there's a certain 'gandhagi' that comes with the territory. When purposely people irk you by saying, writing or asking things... there hasn't been any of that."

ADITYA NARAYAN ON STAGING WEDDING GIMMICK WITH NEHA KAKKAR ON INDIAN IDOL

The wedding gimmick had sent viewers in a tizzy when Aditya's parents, Udit Narayan and Deepa Narayan Jha made an appearance on the singing reality show and announced Neha as their daughter-in-law.

It was further pushed when Neha's parents too joined them and agreed to give their daughter away to the Narayan family. Special wedding episode promos were shot, with co-judge Vishal Dadlani officiating the ceremony.

But it was later revealed that it was all for TRPs. Aditya has now explained in an interview that it was done for additional entertainment quotient. But don't such gimmicks take away from the actual talent show?

"It is part of the show, it is entertainment. No channel in this entire country will be happy if you give them a music show with just music. They will reject it. It's a TV show. At the end of the day, people are not watching Indian Idol just to listen to music. They want to be entertained. So we try our best to keep things within the parameters of, you know, not offending anybody, and try and entertain people," Aditya said.

"Neha is obviously a beautiful,



super talented, super successful young woman. We are good friends, and somebody thought of making this happen. And we are not going to back down on the entertainment quotient of the show just because some people

are assuming something. But we never accepted it, we never said it was happening. It was part of the show, and if anyone asked us anything, we denied it. We were doing our respective jobs," he added.

THEATRE AND FILM ACTOR RANJIT CHOWDHRY DIES



Film, TV and theatre actor Ranjit Chowdhry, son of actress Pearl Padamsee, passed away on April 15. He was 65. In his professional career spanning over four decades, Ranjit starred in several prominent roles in films including Bandit Queen, Baton Baton Mein, Khubsoorat, Mississippi Masala, Lonely in America, Bollywood/ Hollywood and many others.

Ranjit also featured in a role in US TV series Prison Break in two episodes as Dr Marvin Gudat and even wrote the screenplay for Deepa Mehta's Sam & Me.

Deepa condoled the actor's death in a tweet as she wrote, "Miss him - a real loss."

Actors Poorna Jagannathan and Rahul Khanna also condoled Ranjit's death on social media.

As per sources, Ranjit was suffering from an ailment for several months and was even admitted in a hospital for surgery. Unfortunately, he did not survive the procedure.



Tom Hanks hosts coronavirus comedy

Recovered successfully from the Covid-19 infection, actor Tom Hanks took a dig at himself, admitting he had become "America's dad" as no one wanted to come close to him.

"It is good to be here, though it also very weird to be here hosting 'Saturday Night Live' at home," Hanks said, speaking from his kitchen. "It is a strange time to try and be funny, but trying to be funny is 'SNL's whole thing.'"

Hanks sported a close-cropped haircut which he said was done for a movie, announced last month that he and his wife Rita Wilson tested positive for the virus. They recuperated while in Australia.

On the show, the Oscar winner said he had to get used to learning his temperature in degrees Celsius, where 36 was good but 38 was bad, "like Hollywood treats female actresses."

Sounding optimistic and upbeat, the actor recognised the efforts of healthcare and service industry workers. "We're in this for the duration, and we will get through this together. We are going to thank our hospital workers, our first responders, and all our helpers. The supermarket stockers. The people who deliver our food. The people who are making the takeout for us. The men and women who are keeping this country running at a time when we need them more than ever before," he said.

RITA ORA AND OTHER CELEBS SIGN UP TO BE NHS VOLUNTEERS

Various governments all over the world have called upon hundreds of retired or ex-doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers to return to the NHS. Among this hallowed panoply of willing volunteers are many well-known celebrities, who have either resumed their former healthcare jobs from their position in the spotlight, or have upped their workload to provide all the assistance they could offer.

Singer Rita Ora and her sister Elena are among those, who have offered to help support elderly through the coronavirus pandemic and will be assisting with deliveries and reaching out to speak to lonely members of society during this time of social distancing. Rita has praised her 'heroic' mum Vera for inspiring her to become an NHS volunteer during the coronavirus pandemic.

Another celebrity to volunteer is former Love Island star Malin Andersson who decided to return to her job as a carer, as she explained last week on Twitter, "I can't sit at home on my own anymore knowing I have training within the sector. My heart hurts for them, and if I can give something more then what I'm doing - then I am satisfied."

A couple of days later, Malin updated her followers to say she'd completed her first shift. "My heart feels full. So



so full," she wrote on Twitter.

Another well-known volunteer is British doctor and TV presenter Ranj Singh, who specialises in paediatric emergency medicine, has continued his practise during the pandemic.

As he put it on Twitter following one programme recording: "TV job done...

now off to the day job! I get a lot of stick for working in the media. Sometimes it's quite hurtful. But I'm beyond proud to still be working alongside my AWESOME NHS colleagues. We are so lucky to have these people looking after us. So thank you!"

AMY SCHUMER HAS CHANGED SON'S NAME, FOR A HILARIOUS REASON

American stand-up comedian-actor Amy Schumer is re-introducing her son, Gene David Fischer.

According to reports, during the 38-year-old comedian's episode of her podcast revealed that she and husband Chris Fischer decided to give their 11-month-son a new middle name after realising how original it sounded.

In last May, the couple welcomed their baby boy with the name Gene Attell Fischer - his middle name Attell as a reference to fellow comedian and the actor's friend, Dave Attell.

Schumer and Fischer, however, ultimately renamed their son after noticing his name sounded like the word "genital."

The 'I Feel Pretty' actor said in her podcast, "So do you guys know that Gene, our baby's name is officially changed? It's now Gene David Fischer. It was Gene Attell Fischer, but we realised that we by accident named our son 'genital.'"

Claudia O'Doherty, Schumer's longtime friend, admitted, "My mom pointed that out to me actually. My mom was like, 'Amy's called her son 'genital.' And I was like, 'What are you talking about?' And then, she was right."

The 'Snatched' actor further noted that she and her husband then realised the baby's last name, Fischer, took things one



step further, making her son's name sound like "genital fisher."

Though, Gene's new middle name, David, now hits "two stones" as it references Attell's first name and Schumer's father, Gordon Schumer, whose middle name is David.

JOAQUIN PHOENIX AND ROBERT DE NIRO BUTTED HEADS WHILE SHOOTING JOKER

Actor Joaquin Phoenix says he doesn't like to rehearse and because of this habit he had a clash with Joker co-star Robert De Niro, who prefers having a read-through while working on a film.

In a lengthy profile piece with GQ, Phoenix said the anxiety of not knowing helps him perform better and hence he was unwilling to join De Niro and rest of the cast for a read-through. The 45-year-old actor, who won this year's best actor Oscar for his performance in the movie, revealed that De Niro even called director Todd Phillips to make sure he turns up.

"Tell him he's an actor and he's got to be there. I like to hear the whole movie and we're going to all get in a room and just read it," De Niro told Phillips. Phoenix said he was adamant to give read-through a miss and told Phillips, "There's no f***** way I'm doing a read-through."

However, the actor, who is also a huge fan of De Niro, attended the meeting at veteran star's production office. He murmured his way through the script and after the meeting De Niro invited him to his office to talk where the two eventually cleared the air. The actor said De Niro took his face into his hands and kissed him on the cheek. "It's going to be OK, bubbeleh," said De Niro, who



played talk show host Murray Franklin in the film. Phoenix made a clean sweep winning all the major awards this year for his portrayal of DC supervillain.

Ramadan, everything you always wanted to know



By Mike Ghouse

Ramadan is pronounced Ramzan in the Subcontinent, Iran, Turkey, and the Central Asian Republics wherever the Persian linguistic influence exists, elsewhere in the world, it is Ramadan. In the Arabic language, "Z" is "D" in most words. This article has three sections: The Spirit, Politics, and Rituals of Ramadan.

The spirit of Ramadan

One's birth to the last rites of life, every moment in between, is laden with rituals, even though some of us may deny it. Indeed, whether we go to the gym, eat, sleep, wear clothes, drive, or talk on the phone, we follow rituals.

Rituals signify the milestones of our daily life. Every significant moment of the day is a ritual. It is an unwritten way of measuring our progression, a memory pattern to bring discipline to our actions. Training is necessary to do things on time, manage personal relationships, drive to a destination, or keep within budget. The result of disciplined behavior is worthwhile for most people. When joyous, whether we are theists or not, we have to express that sentiment. Otherwise, a sense of incompleteness lingers in our hearts.

Every faith is composed of a set of unique rituals to bring discipline and peace to human life. Fasting is one of the five essential rituals that Muslims around the world observe.

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar and observing with a ritual precision; it is an annual training or a refresher. It requires one to abstain from food, drink, intimacy, ill-will, ill-talk, harmful actions, and other temptations from dawn to dusk, every day for a full month.

One has to rise above his or her baser desires. Islam gifts this month to its followers to teach discipline to bring moderation to their daily lives.

Although Ramadan is popularly known in the west for its culinary delicacies and fancy iftars (ceremonial breaking of fast at sundown), the spirit and intent of Ramadan lie in a human transformation in a month-long inner spiritual journey of finding oneself in tune with spirituality.

God does not need the hunger or thirst of someone who hurts others, violates their dignity or usurps their rights said Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The fasting of the stomach must be matched by the dieting of the limbs. The eyes, ears, tongue, hands, and feet all have their fasts to undergo. The tongue's temptations, for example - lies, backbiting, slander, vulgarity and senseless argumentation - must be challenged and curbed to maintain the integrity of the fast.

The consciousness of behavior and vigilance over action are the most

profound dimensions of fasting: the fasting of the heart focuses on the attachment to the divine. That is when Ramadan becomes a source of peace and solace, just as Christmas goes beyond the rituals to bring forth kindness, charity, and caring.

True fasting is self-purification; from this comes an abundant inner life that brings about values such as justice, generosity, patience, kindness, forgiveness, mercy and empathy - values that are indispensable for the success of the community.

Ramadan will come and go with such stealth that we cannot but be reminded of our mortality. What is it that we value, and why? Habits, customs, even obsessive behavior like smoking can be curtailed with relative ease in the face of a higher calling.



Iftar at the White House with President Obama

Politics of Ramadan

Politics plays a crucial role in our Temples, Synagogues and Churches, Mosques are no different. For the moon sighting, a few scientifically-inclined Muslims have adopted NASA's calculations believed to be precise. However, four different traditions are operating concurrently; i) Strictly Calendar, ii) NASA and iii) Sighting with bare eyes, and iv) sighting by others in the community.

Muslims around the world will begin fasting from Thursday, April 23, 2020, and for a whole month after that, however, for some of them, it will start (only) if the moon is sighted.

The traditions of Ramadan

It's a celebration time when Muslims around the world anxiously wait for the first moon of the ninth Lunar month to appear in the sky. The families gather in their backyards, or get on the nearest hill or climb on top of their homes, and wait for the pencil-thin moon to appear on the horizon, and when it does, Ramadan begins.

Right after the moon is sighted, the announcement goes that Ramadan has started.

The first evening, mosques hold "Taraweeh" prayers - in the next 29 to 30 days, they recite a chapter each day for the full month. Due to Corona, this year, every mosque around the world has canceled the congregational prayers and asked to pray at home.

As the Christians do the count down from the first day of Christmas or Hindus express devotion for each one of the nine days through Navaratri or the Jews follow eight days of Chanukah, Jains observe eight days of Paryushan. Others follow a similar path, and the Muslims count the next 29 to 30 days with a sense of duty.

Every day, with small variations in practices, families rise early around 4:00 AM and gather up in the kitchen to participate in preparing and cooking. Then the family sits around, says a short blessing, and eats the meal. Everyone has to finish off the food and water intake five minutes before sunrise or the morning call for prayers known as Azan or Adan.

Then everyone used to go to the mosque to pray, but this year, everyone

will pray at their homes.

Throughout the day, a conscious effort is made to abstain from food, water, or temptations that are detrimental to self-discipline. Those who do not observe fasting, honor the ones who do, by not eating or drinking in their presence.

One of the most appealing aspects of Ramadan is the domino effect other Muslims have on you to guard yourselves against greed, anger, ill-will, malice, hate, jealousy, and other ills of the society. One feels pious during the month. Of course, there would always be a small percentage in a group who do not receive that wisdom.

When the time to break the fast approaches towards the sundown, anxiety builds up, it is almost like the countdown of seconds when the space shuttle takes off. Muslims attempt to be in the congregation or team up with some. A prayer call (Azan) signifies the time to break the fast.

Prophet Muhammad had initiated a healthy way of breaking the fast; it was graduating the empty stomach with snacks like dates, fruits, and veggies to prepare the digestive system for a full meal after the prayer break. The dates are the most popular item around the world, they are chewy, meaty, and tasty after a long day of fasting, and dates are also a preferred item as it was for the Prophet. It has the right nutrients to give one a smooth transition from fasting all day to eating a full meal.

The breaking of fast, also known as

"Iftar," has become a community event. It is an excellent opportunity for friends of Muslims belonging to other faiths to host the Iftars. It is a way to bond, connect, and build cohesive societies. Unfortunately, this year, no one is holding the iftar parties.

President Clinton started the tradition of holding an Iftar party carried forward by President Bush and then-President Obama, and they invited a few Muslim leaders from around the United States. Trump held the iftars for the Muslim Ambassadors. It is a major social event for the politicians, just as it is with Christmas, Rosh Hashanah, Diwali, and other festivities.

At the end of the 29th or 30th day, depending on the moon sighting, NASA, or other traditions, the fasting would come to an end with the celebration. It is Chandni Raat or the moonlit festivities. Usually, the evening is spent on last-minute shopping.

The next day is Eid or festivity. It is a significant event, and Muslims gather in large spaces and perform their thanksgiving prayer. The traditional greetings are "Eid Mubarak, Ramadan Mubarak, or Happy Ramadan."

On this day, one formally forgives and gets forgiven and starts the year with goodwill. Every one hugs three times; I am your friend; you are my friend, and together we are friends, and together we forgive each other. It is the equivalent of Michami Dukadam in Jainism.

Traditionally everyone in the family wears new clothing, a symbol of starting over with a clean slate. The oldest one in the family passes on gifts and cash gifts (called Eidi) to younger members of the family to spend as they wish and to teach responsibility with freedom.

It is also a time to share one's wealth with the needy; it is like the tithe and is called Zakat. Every family takes out 2.5% of the value of their assets and passes on to the needy. It is an investment in human capital, to help uplift everyone on a level playing field to maintain a sustainable good in society.

On the culinary side, it is a feast! A variety of dishes are prepared, over the years I have discovered that the most common item around the globe is a dessert made out of vermicelli's, i.e., thin hair noodles cooked in Milk with nuts, dates, honey, and other goodies, it is both in liquid and solid formats. Of course, the Biryani is the main meal. It is a feast!

For fasting to be truly universal, its benefits must extend beyond the fraternal ties of Muslims and must continue to forging a common humanity with others. Fasting is meant to impart a sense of what it means to be truly human, and its universality is reflected by its observance in Bahai, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Sikh, Zoroastrian and other faiths.

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When Will I Get My Coronavirus Stimulus Check?

New tool from IRS lets you track your payment, add deposit information

WASHINGTON (TIP): The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has launched a new online tool that lets you track when your stimulus payment should arrive.

The new Get My Payment tool allows many taxpayers to check when they can expect to receive their payment. In addition, the tool allows taxpayers to add direct deposit information, if it isn't already on file with the IRS.

"Get My Payment will offer people a quick and easy way to find the status of their payment and, where possible, provide their bank account information if we don't already have it," IRS Commissioner Chuck Rettig said in a statement.

Although some people are not eligible for the stimulus payments, for the many who are eligible, the checks can be as high as \$1,200 per individual and \$2,400 per married couple filing jointly. Parents can get an additional \$500 per child under 17. An initial round of 80 million stimulus payments is already hitting bank accounts via direct deposit this week. Paper checks, for those who lack bank accounts or who don't have account information on file with the IRS, will start to go out in early May.

How to use the Get My Payment tool

If you want to use the Get My Payment tool to see when your check is projected to arrive, you'll need to have your Social Security number, date of birth and the mailing address used on your tax return. Having a copy of your most recent return will speed the process, the IRS says.

If you want to add your bank information for direct deposit, you'll need to know the type of



account you have (checking or savings, for instance), your account number and your bank routing number. You'll also need your adjusted gross income from your most recent tax return submitted - either 2019 or 2018 - and the refund or amount owed from

the latest filed tax return.

The information from your previous year's tax returns is a security measure to keep fraudsters from claiming your stimulus checks, an IRS spokesperson said. To prevent fraud, the IRS tool won't let you change your bank information on file with the IRS. If you have changed accounts since you filed your most recent return, the payment will get kicked back to the IRS, which will then send you a paper check.

Get My Payment is updated once daily, usually overnight. To avoid overloading the system, the IRS says to check the tool just once a day.

If you normally aren't required to file a tax return, you can use a separate IRS web tool for non-filers to register for your economic impact stimulus payment. You don't need to use the non-filer web tool if you receive Social Security retirement benefits, survivor benefits, disability (SSDI) benefits, railroad retirement benefits or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits. For those non-filers, \$1,200 stimulus checks will go out automatically based on benefit information on file with the government.

However, non-filers such as Social Security, SSDI and SSI beneficiaries who will automatically receive a \$1,200 payment should use the non-filer tool if they have children under 17. The non-filer tool will allow those automatic recipients to claim an additional \$500 stimulus payment per child.

Trump proposes 3-phased country re-opening plan

WASHINGTON (TIP): US President Donald Trump has proposed a three-phase, locally targeted plan for opening the coronavirus-battered nation but will leave the decision on implementing it in the hands of the state Governors.



Trump said, "We are a very large country and we have different dynamics in the country".

"We are opening up our great country," Trump declared on Thursday with his two highly regarded medical advisers, Anthony Fauci and Deborah Birx at his side.

"America wants to be open, and Americans want to be open," he said.

The plan requires states to meet basic criteria called "gating" before Governors can move them into the three phases of opening that takes into account the diversity of the country.

Any setback will push them back into the more rigorous earlier phase.

Trump unveiled the guidelines after a teleconference with state Governors where he told them: "You're going to call your own shots." By leaving the decision to the Governors after having asserted that he has to the authority to end the restrictions nationwide, Trump is avoiding a show-down with recalcitrant governors and also making them face the consequences.

Trump's plans to restart economic and social activities in a nation facing serious economic and social setbacks have met with opposition from Democrats and some public health experts who think it is premature and could lead to coronavirus flare-ups.

Even a phased, geographically targeted plan may not mollify them.

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Stimulus Payment

5 reasons you may not have received your stimulus money yet



Here are five reasons why you might not have received your money yet:

1. You didn't get a federal tax refund in 2018 or 2019

Even if you filed your 2018 or 2019 taxes electronically, that doesn't mean the IRS can direct-deposit the money into your bank account. You must have also received a refund in those years via direct deposit to get the money delivered automatically.

The IRS is not using bank account information it may have used to withdraw from your account if you owed money.

2. Your refund went to an old bank account

If you didn't receive a refund in 2019, or haven't filed yet, the IRS will use the bank account information used to send a refund for the 2018 tax year.

Some people told CNN that the money was sent to an account they have since closed and that the bank

transferred the money back to the IRS. In that case, the payment will likely come later by a check in the mail.

A new IRS online tool, called Get My Payment, allows you to input new bank account information -- but it's only helpful if the agency doesn't already have an account on file from a 2018 or 2019 tax return and hasn't yet processed your stimulus payment.

Filing a 2019 return now, if you haven't already done so, is the only way to update direct deposit information that the IRS has on file from a 2018 return. Tax Day was moved from the traditional April 15 to July 15 this year to give filers more time.

3. Your refund went to a temporary account set up by a tax preparer

You may not even realize it, but sometimes tax preparers set up a temporary account and that's where your tax refund is deposited first. They take out their fees and then transfer the remaining money into your bank account or a debit card. Sometimes this is in the form of an advanced loan.

It may take longer for you to receive your stimulus money if that's the case. When stimulus payments were sent out in 2008, this glitch affected about 20 million people. But they eventually received the money by a paper check.

Some people who used popular tax preparers like TurboTax and H&R Block and received a refund on a debit card told CNN that the IRS tool could not confirm the status of their payment when they checked this week. H&R Block said on its website that it is still waiting for answers from the IRS, but that some people

who have used its Emerald debit card will see their stimulus money transferred there.

TurboTax said the IRS has the appropriate banking information for all of its filers and that any of its customers who are eligible for a stimulus payment and had their refund transferred to a debit card will receive their payment without delays or fees.

4. You filed a paper return in 2019

Most people file electronically, but some still send in paper returns.

Amid the coronavirus pandemic, the IRS has many employees working remotely and has stopped processing paper returns until its centers are able to reopen. If you didn't get a refund directly deposited in 2018 and filed a paper return for 2019, you may be waiting for a paper check with your stimulus money.

5. You aren't normally required to file a tax return

There are millions of low-income people who are not normally required to file tax returns that will have to take some action before receiving their stimulus money.

Generally, these are individuals who did not earn more than \$12,200 last year or married couples who did not earn more than \$24,400.

But they won't have to file a whole new form, as earlier guidance from the IRS suggested. Instead, it created an online tool for non-filers that asks for basic information including names, date of births, and Social Security numbers for the person filing and his or her dependents. They won't have to provide any income information. (Source: CNN)

Medical examiner dies after contracting coronavirus from dead body, scientists say



BANGKOK (TIP): Researchers believe that a medical examiner in Thailand is the first person to die from coronavirus after contracting the disease from a corpse.

The mysterious case is also the first known transmission from a dead body to a forensic worker, according to a study published this week in the *Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine*.

"There is low chance of forensic medicine professionals coming into contact with infected patients, but they can have contact with biological samples and corpses," co-authors Won Sriwijitalai, of the RVT Medical Center in Bangkok, and Viroj Wiwanitkit, of China's Hainan Medical University, wrote in the study.

The medical examiner, who was not identified, worked in the Thai capital, but no details have been released about the case.

The researchers said the country has no data on the exact number of corpses infected with COVID-19 since it's "not a routine practice" in Thailand to test for the disease after a person has died.

"Nevertheless, infection control and universal precautions are necessary," they wrote, urging medical examiners to take precautions when doing their work.

"Forensic professionals have to wear protective devices including a protective suit, gloves, goggles, cap and mask," the study says. "The disinfection procedure used in operation rooms might be applied in pathology/forensic units too."

As of April 16, Thailand has confirmed nearly 2,700 coronavirus infections and at least 46 deaths, according to Johns Hopkins University.

Austria to test all retirees in homes

VIENNA (TIP): Austria, one of the more successful countries in Europe at flattening the curve of coronavirus infections, plans to test every retirement home resident as it expands efforts to measure the pandemic's spread, its health minister said on Thursday. The Alpine republic acted early in its outbreak to shut schools, bars, restaurants, non-essential shops and other gathering places roughly four weeks ago. It has told the public to stay at home and work from there if possible. So far it has reported just 410 deaths in total, fewer than some larger countries are suffering each day.

Russia-Europe clash over Syria chemical weapons



UNITED NATIONS (TIP): Syria's close ally Russia clashed with European nations in the UN Security Council over a report from the global chemical weapons watchdog blaming the Syrian air force for a series of attacks using sarin and chlorine on a rebel-held town in 2017.

Moscow dismissed it as "baseless" and the Europeans demanded accountability for the government's action. An investigative team of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons said in a 82-page report issued April 8 that the Syrian air force dropped bombs containing either chlorine or sarin on a

hospital and open farmland in the central town of Latamneh, injuring over 70 persons and killing at least three — a surgeon and two others.

The exchanges between Russia and the Europeans took place at the monthly meeting on Syria's chemical weapons, which was closed. Russia, Germany, Britain and Estonia distributed the statements of their ambassadors. UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said UN disarmament chief Izumi Nakamitsu briefed the council, including on the findings of the OPCW report, and stressed that they were "deeply distressing."

Russia's UN Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia told the council that all of Syria's chemical weapons were destroyed and accused the OPCW experts of "echoing baseless accusations" by some unnamed countries, "biases," and preparing a report "without even the slightest traces of due diligence." Syrian authorities repeatedly refused to cooperate with the investigation, the report said.

Germany's deputy UN ambassador Jurgen Schulz told the council: "Accountability is essential and impunity for these heinous crimes is not an option." —AP

Economic pain from virus spreading quickly as the pandemic

PARIS (TIP): Economic pain from the coronavirus pandemic spread even more widely on Thursday, weighing heavily on nations, businesses and ordinary people as countries struggled to restore confidence that stores, factories, airplanes and schools could reopen safely.

In France, Amazon suspended operations altogether after a court ruled it wasn't doing enough to protect its workers in the country. The online retailer, which has six warehouses in France, said it would evaluate the court decision.

Cargo traffic at Europe's massive port of Rotterdam in the Netherlands sank by 9.3% in the first quarter to 112.4 million metric tons from the same period a year ago. "We are facing unprecedented disruptions," said Allard Castelein, the port CEO, adding that he expects the situation to get worse.

The International Monetary Fund says

fallout from what it calls the "Great Lockdown" will be the most devastating since the Great Depression in the 1930s.

Still, leaders are anxious to send people back to work and school and to rebuild economies devastated by the pandemic that has infected more than 2 million people and claimed more than 137,000 lives, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University.

Yet in China and the handful of countries in Europe that have partially reopened their economies, even people who still have jobs are wary of spending much or going out. In nearly empty stores and streets, people eye each other from a distance, their faces covered by masks.

Some Chinese cities tried reassuring consumers by showing officials eating in restaurants. In Zhengzhou, Zhang Hu in is back at work but his income plummeted because few are buying the 20-ton trucks he sells.

"I have no idea when the situation will turn better," he said.

The US began issuing one-time payments this week to tens of millions of people as part of its \$2.2 trillion coronavirus relief package. But another part of the relief package, a \$350 billion paycheck protection program aimed at small businesses, is running dry after being open for only a matter of days.

Negotiations were accelerating in Washington over a \$250 billion emergency request to help.

Even with limited testing, the US has seen nearly 640,000 infections — more than the next four countries put together — and leads the world with nearly 31,000 deaths, according to Johns Hopkins University.

Experts say the true toll of the pandemic is much higher due to limited testing, uneven counting of deaths and some governments' attempts to downplay their outbreaks. AP

CHINA SHUTS DOWN LARGEST MAKESHIFT HOSPITAL IN WUHAN

BEIJING/WUHAN (TIP): With the number of coronavirus cases sharply falling, China on Wednesday shutdown one of its largest makeshift field hospitals built in just 10 days to treat the surging COVID-19 infections in Wuhan, the epicentre of the pandemic.

Thousands of medical workers deployed in the capital of central Hubei province from across the nation also left Wuhan after completing their mission, the official media reported.

The makeshift Leishenshan (Thunder God Mountain) Hospital ceased operation in Wuhan, capital of central China's Hubei Province, on Wednesday as the coronavirus epidemic wanes, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

It was one of the two over a 1,000-bed capacity hospitals built in 10 days in February to treat the COVID-19 patients amid a glare of national and international publicity to curb the virus.

Besides the two hospitals, China also built 14 additional makeshift health centres to quarantine and treat the COVID-19 patients. All of them were closed down recently. Also, the last group of medical workers sent to Hubei to fight the outbreak also left Wuhan, state-run China Daily reported on Wednesday.

China deployed 42,000 medical personnel in Hubei to deal with the outbreak which was first reported in Wuhan, the provincial capital.

The government began serious action to curb the outbreak by imposing the lockdown in Wuhan from January 23. The lockdown was lifted on April 8.

Over 3,000 medical workers were reported to have been infected with the virus. The hospital was closed as no new confirmed cases of the novel coronavirus disease were reported in the province on Tuesday.

The province, however, reported one death, bringing the total number of fatalities caused by COVID-19 to 3,222 in Hubei.

The provincial health commission said that 32 asymptomatic cases were reported on Tuesday in Hubei, taking the total



Six crucial days that made a deadly difference

In the six days after Chinese officials secretly determined they likely were facing a pandemic from Covid-19, Wuhan hosted a mass banquet for thousands of people for Lunar New Year celebrations. President Xi Jinping warned the public on the seventh day, January 20. But by that time, more than 3,000 people had been infected during almost a week of public silence.

Pompeo dials China, seeks info on Covid

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo spoke to China's diplomat to underscore the Trump administration's demand for "full transparency and information sharing" from China on the origin and spread of Covid-19.

Pompeo's phone call to Yang Jiechi, director of the Office of Foreign Affairs of the Communist Party of China, came a day after US President Donald Trump announced to halt funding to the World Health Organisation, alleging it had sided with China on the coronavirus issue and mislead the world.

number to 619. All are under medical observation.

Asymptomatic cases are those where people test positive for the virus but develop no symptoms such as fever, cough or sore throat. They are infectious and pose a risk of spreading the disease to others.

However, increasing number of local transmissions in the country's northeast bordering Russia remained a concern for the authorities following the return of Chinese nationals from there.

Health experts said that the Suifenhe city at the China-Russia border might become another Wuhan amid sharp increase of COVID-19 cases following an exodus of Chinese nationals from Russia. — PTI

N Korean defector wins big in S Korean elections

SEOUL (TIP): A high-profile North Korean defector won a constituency seat in the South Korean general elections, becoming the first person hailing from Pyongyang to be chosen directly by South Korean voters as their representative.

Thae Yong-ho, a former No. 2 diplomat at North Korea's Embassy in London, was elected to the National Assembly as the main conservative opposition United Future Party's candidate in Seoul's southern affluent district of Gangnam, Yonhap News Agency reported on Thursday.

Thae received 58.4 per cent of the votes cast on Wednesday in the Gangnam constituency, one of the conservative party's main strongholds, far ahead of his opponent Kim Sung-gon, a four-term lawmaker from the ruling Democratic Party who earned 39.6 per cent.

Thae, who defected to the South in 2016, had campaigned under a different name, Tae Ku-min. Thae said he deliberately registered the false name and a false date of birth with the government after defection so as to make it harder for the North to track him down.

This marks the first time a North Korean defector has won a constituency seat in the South's parliament South Korea. — IANS

Virus didn't originate in lab: China

BEIJING (TIP): China is refuting allegations that the coronavirus pandemic may have originated in a laboratory near the city of Wuhan where contagious samples were being stored.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian cited the head of the World Health Organization and other unidentified medical experts as saying there was no evidence that transmission began from the lab and there was "no scientific basis" for such claims.

"Only with reasonable response can the international community win this fight," Zhao said. "China will continue to work together with other countries to help and support each other." China has also strongly denied claims it delayed reporting on the virus outbreak in Wuhan late last year and under-reported case numbers, worsening the impact on the US and other countries.

The virus is believed to have originated with bats and have passed via another animals to humans at a seafood market in Wuhan, although a firm determination has yet to be made.

Allegations about a leak of the virus from the lab have been made in the US media without direct evidence. — AP

Russia carried out anti-satellite missile test: US military

WASHINGTON (TIP): Russia carried out a test of an anti-satellite missile on Wednesday, the US military said, calling it an example of the threats the United States faced in space.

The move comes as officials have said that space will increasingly become an important domain for warfare, with the US and other countries such as Russia and China stepping up their military postures in low-Earth orbit and near the moon.

Experts say that anti-satellite weapons that shatter their targets pose a space hazard by creating a cloud of fragments that can collide with other objects, potentially setting off a chain reaction of projectiles through Earth orbit.

"The United States is ready and

committed to deterring aggression and defending the nation, our allies, and US interests from hostile acts in space," General John Raymond, the commander of US Space Command, said in a statement.

Raymond added that the test was proof of "Russia's hypocritical advocacy of outer space arms control proposals ... while clearly having no intention of halting their counterspace weapons programs."

Russian airspace notices indicate the test was conducted around Wednesday morning. It did not appear that the mobile missile system was targeting any satellites in space based on public satellite data, according to analysts.

The test was of Russia's new Nudol

anti-satellite missile system, analysts projected, launching from the Plesetsk Cosmodrome about 800 km (497 miles) north of Moscow.

The US military is increasingly dependent on satellites to determine what it does on the ground, guiding munitions with space-based lasers and satellites as well as using such assets to monitor for missile launches and track its forces.

The US and China have carried out similar anti-satellite tests. In March, India launched the most recent anti-satellite missile test against a satellite in low Earth orbit, creating a field of impact debris whose fragments continue to orbit Earth today. Reuters

CREATE A ROMANTIC ATMOSPHERE AT HOME

Although there's no denying that red is the colour of love, it's not the only hue that will set the perfect tone for your boudoir. Texture is one of the most popular interior trends for 2018 and will definitely help turn up the heat in an otherwise stark or cold space.

Keep bed linens classic white – but opt for 100% Egyptian cotton for that luxury feel – and add texture with an array of cushions and perhaps a throw.

In the kitchen/dining room

Food is the way to a person's heart, right? But be sure to pay as much attention to your table setting as you do your cooking to please your loved one. An easy win is to use a quality tablecloth or runner and splash out on some crisp linen napkins, which will give a much more luxurious feel than paper ones.

In the lounge

A romantic setting certainly isn't exclusive to the bedroom, and this setting is one to be enjoyed either on your own or with your significant other. Layer different throws and blankets on your favourite spot on the sofa, then bury yourself in them along with your favourite book and a delicious hot chocolate.

For some, there's nothing more romantic than a relaxed setting and, as well as adding the perfect cosy touch to your lounge, a fur rug is also a comfortable spot to unwind. Put on a fresh pair of new pyjamas, your cosiest socks and order your favourite pizza to chill out with the one you love.

In the bathroom

There's (arguably) nothing nicer than wrapping yourself in warm fluffy towels after a long, relaxing candlelit bath – which is the perfect preparation ahead of a romantic night in.

Extend that comforting feeling by slipping into a luxurious bathrobe



post-soak. You're hopefully now brimming with ideas of ways to enjoy a low-key but romantic

Valentine's Day – to whatever degree of romance suits you – in your favourite space at home.

FOOD CORNER



SMOKED CHICKEN CHAAT

INGREDIENTS

3 pieces chicken breasts, 5 pinches salt, 5 tablespoon olive oil pomace, 1 medium onion, 1/2 small capsicum (green pepper), 1/4 teaspoon red chilli powder, 300 gm paneer, 2 tablespoon chopped coriander leaves, 1/4 teaspoon thymol seeds, 6 pieces mushroom, 2 slices pineapple, 2 tablespoon garlic, 1 tablespoon lemon juice, 1/4 teaspoon black salt, 1 teaspoon cumin powder, 4 chilli flakes as required, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon black pepper, 1 teaspoon chaat masala.

Method

- Wash chicken. Pat dry. Cut into 1/2 strips and then into squares. Rub 1/2 tsp salt, pepper and red chilli flakes on it.
- Place a small steel bowl or a katori in a kadhai with a lid. Put the chicken around the empty steel katori. Place the coal pieces on the naked flame for 5-7 minutes, till they turn grey and red hot at the edges.
- Pour some olive oil on the coal and cover immediately to trap the smoke. Leave covered for 10 minutes for the chicken to acquire a smoky flavour. You can smoke the paneer also in the same way.
- Marinate onion, capsicums and mushrooms in lemon juice, salt, pepper, chaat masala, cumin powder and crushed garlic. Do not marinate pineapple. To serve, heat 2 tbsp olive oil in a pan. Add thymol seeds and wait for it to crackle. Add the marinated vegetables and pan fry without stirring much to get that charred, blackened look. Add pineapple and cook for 2-3 minutes.
- While the veggies are being cooked, heat 2 tbsp olive oil in another pan. Add grated garlic and stir. And then mix in smoked chicken. Cook on medium heat, stirring continuously otherwise the chicken will stick to the pan.
- Fry for 3-4 minutes without stirring much till chicken turns whitish and light golden from all sides. Remove chicken from heat when cooked.
- Mix chicken, veggies, pineapple and coriander. Serve in a platter along with some roasted almonds (optional) along with the toppings of your choice.

Grapes to do away with acne, skin dryness



With time, the skin begins to lose its elasticity and moisture. Prepare packs made of grapes to combat skin problems, says an expert.

- As a normal skin care treatment, grapes are good to reduce acne.
- The fruit's seeds help to strengthen blood vessels and enhance skin elasticity.
- Grape seed oil is rich in moisturizing content and also provides Vitamin C and E to the skin.
- Grapes can be mashed and applied as a facial mask, which helps in peeling off the dead skin cells. Leave it on for 10 to 15 minutes before washing it off.
- People with oily skin should

mash black grapes with some oil absorbent like multani mitti (Fuller's earth). To make it in paste form, mix it well with drops of rose water in it. Let it stay for 15 minutes on your face and then rinse it off.

Get facial glow back with the goodness of fruits

Orange and yoghurt pack: Have combination skin? Take an orange and squeeze it. Use three teaspoon of the juice and mix it with a tablespoon of yoghurt. The citrus property of orange helps in giving a refreshing glow to the skin. The fruit also has skin lightening agents. It helps in improving complexion as well as cleans the skin. The yoghurt maintains the

moisture level in the skin. Avocado, milk cream and honey pack: Take two teaspoons of honey and mash an avocado in it. Add another teaspoon of milk cream. All the ingredients in the mask are extremely nourishing and nutritious for dry skin types.

Pomegranate, turmeric, lime, Fuller's earth, sandalwood and banana pack: Best for normal skin type, mix half teaspoon of pomegranate juice, mash a small piece of banana to give thickness to the paste and add half teaspoon of lime juice with a pinch of turmeric powder. Further, add a pinch of Fuller's earth, and half a teaspoon of sandalwood powder. Mix everything together and apply on the face. It will help to clear the skin and give a healthy glow.

ARE YOU SLEEPING AT THE RIGHT TIME?

You may be aware that seven to eight hours of good quality sleep is what experts recommend for adults. But does that mean you can achieve these goals by sleeping at any hour of the night? Not quite.

Sleep has many benefits: it improves memory, promotes emotional stability and reboots cellular metabolism. But going to sleep late at night, even if you complete the recommended hours, may not have the desired positive effects on your body.

With the lockdown impacting our lifestyles, about 67 per cent of people in India are now sleeping after 11 pm. Even otherwise, a 2018 study found that about 53 per cent of Indians sleep late at night after scrolling through social media, while 18 per cent revealed that work or finance-related issues kept them awake at night, as reported by Economic Times. Studies, however, have argued that the timing of sleep is as important as the number of hours you sleep.

The human brain is actually wired to sleep after three-and-a-half to four hours after sunset. So, if the sunset is between 6:30-7pm, you are actually wired to sleep by 10-10:30 pm, the doctor emphasised. When light levels drop, it stimulates the cells in the retina that signal the hypothalamus. There is a peptide called pituitary adenylate cyclase-activating peptide (PACAP) which makes the SCN signal to other body parts by secreting melatonin, a hormone that regulates the sleep-wake cycle. If you start sleeping late every night, the body stops making melatonin at the right time.

Melatonin production is supposed



to start by 9 pm which then peaks by 1 am. But if you get into the practice of being awake and looking at the television screen or phone till late at night, over a period of time the brain stops making melatonin at the right time. If this starts in your youth, by the time you are older, you are unable to sleep even if you go to bed early.

What happens when you sleep late?

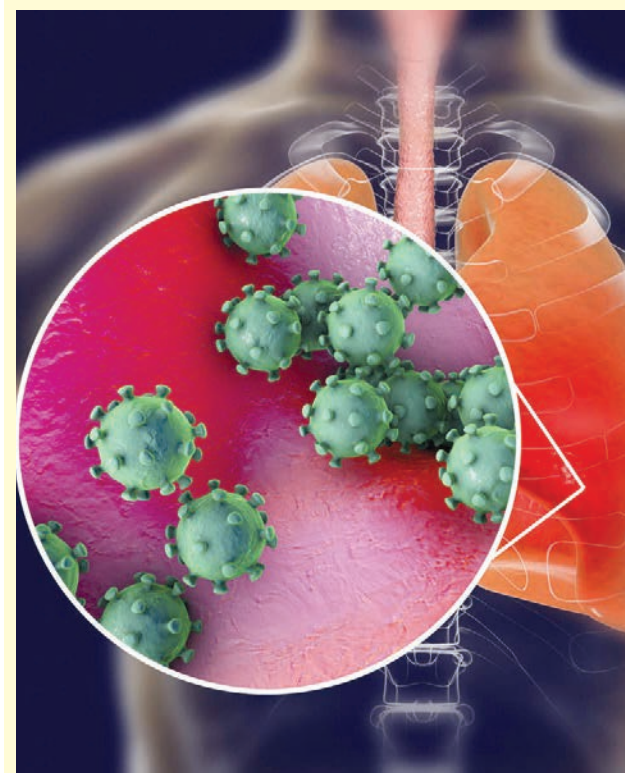
Social jetlag is correlated with obesity. So, despite good diet and exercise, people experiencing social jetlag are at risk of becoming obese. That is because the peripheral clock in your other body systems are not in sync with the brain's clock, Dr Desai explained. The desynchronised system of energy metabolism negatively impact peptides in the body — leptine and ghreline — that determine our hunger and satiety. Sleep harmonises energy metabolism in

the body. So, when you sleep late at night, it is likely to increase the risk of various disorders like diabetes, obesity, mood disorders and memory issues in older people.

How does one correct the time of sleeping?

For this, one should try and get into the habit of sleeping at 10:30 pm and waking up at 6:30 am. Here are some things to keep in mind to get good quality sleep at night. Besides exercising, having a regular bowel movement and an early breakfast are some other ways to get your sleep cycle on track.

If you are waking up at 6:30 am, you should have breakfast by 7 am, which signals the body that the day has begun, thereby reinforcing the circadian rhythm. Again, when you exercise in the evening, you feel energetic for the next few hours which can delay sleep. So it is recommended that you exercise in the morning.



CHECK YOU LUNGS' HEALTH DURING CORONAVIRUS

Maintaining the health of your lungs is no longer just limited to staying clear of breathing problems. With coronavirus pandemic, it has become even more important to pay attention to the life-giving pair within your ribs. From ways to protect your lungs to making you aware of the mistakes that are affecting them, we've got you covered.

You're not alone if, prior to the novel coronavirus pandemic, you thought only chain-smokers needed to worry about their lung health. But now, it makes sense to wonder if there's anything you can do to safeguard your lungs from some of the symptoms associated with this never-before-seen strain of coronavirus, like coughing, shortness of breath, and pneumonia.

How does coronavirus affect lung health?

What does the coronavirus have to do with your lungs, exactly? Board certified in Family Medicine practitioner Michael Richardson, MD with One Medical says: "When the virus enters your lungs, it can lead to irritation of the lung lining, causing you to cough."

The virus can cause so much irritation of the lung lining that it causes pneumonia, which is when air sacs in your lungs become inflamed and may end up filling with fluid, he says.

The more inflammation and fluid in your lungs, the harder it becomes to breathe, which can be life-threatening for those with weaker immune systems, such as the elderly and people with significant pre-existing medical conditions, he explains.

MDs' best tips for short- and long-term lung health

No matter who you are and what your health status is, taking care of your lungs is an important part of taking care of your overall health and wellbeing. With that in mind, here's what doctors say you can do to keep your lungs functioning optimally, during the COVID-19 outbreak and beyond.

Benefits of eating a healthy breakfast

Breakfast is an important meal as it provides energy for activities that lay ahead as it fuels you for the rest of the day. It breaks the overnight fasting period, gives a kick start to your metabolism and helps in maintaining sugar levels.

Nowadays, working people are so busy accommodating their daily schedules that they start ignoring their health by not taking proper meals and sedentary lifestyles. For instance, having only a mug of coffee or tea isn't enough to recharge yourself to get going throughout the day. Breakfast is the first healthy meal towards benefiting your body with improved concentration, enhanced mood, and much more.

Importance of eating breakfast

We have a set of reasons that will persuade your inner self to make breakfast your favourite meal:-

- **Maintains Weight:** Having nutrient dense breakfast helps control your appetite, sugar levels and hunger pangs. Breakfast supplies a major part of calories to your body which helps in avoiding overeating or binge eating in the next meal, improving your satiety level.
- **Elevates mood:** A wholesome breakfast should offer all the necessary nutrients that elevates mood by releasing the happy hormones, endorphin. As your body is already in a fasting state at night, breakfast works as a fuel to kick start your system. Balanced energy levels make



the start of a day better and elevates mood throughout the day.

- **Improves Concentration:** It helps your brain receive the much required glucose, which eventually helps improve alertness, focus and concentration. Have a combination of good carbs, protein, fat and micronutrients to get maximum benefits.
- **Boosts Metabolism:** Body is low in energy when you wake up in the morning. So, breakfast plays a major role to restore the energy level and those who miss it develop chances to go on starvation and eventually accumulate more fat. Therefore, nutrient dense breakfast helps a body boost metabolism for high energy levels.

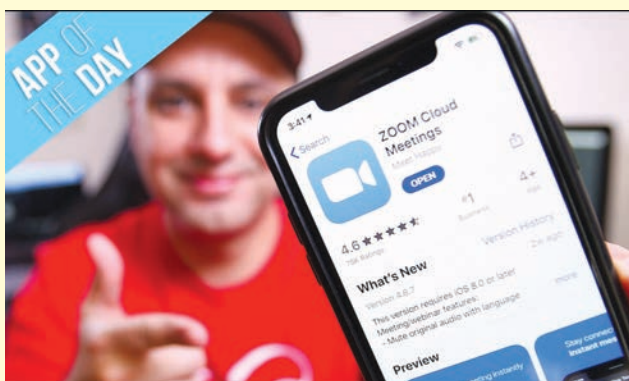
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ZOOM BRINGS NEW PASSWORD REQUIREMENTS, LONGER MEETING IDs

Earlier this month, Zoom CEO Eric S Yuan apologised for the privacy and security issues in the video conferencing platform. He also announced a 90-day feature freeze for the app during which time the company would focus on improving the security and privacy of the platform. Now, Zoom is keeping good on the promises it made.

The company has released a bunch of new features that are aimed at enhancing the overall security of the platform. Let's take a look at them one by one:

New password requirements: As a part of these changes, Zoom account users and admins will now be able to set minimum meeting password requirements to adjust the minimum length and require letters, numbers, and special characters, or allow only numeric passwords.

In addition to that all free Basic account users will have the alphanumeric password option on by default, Zoom wrote in a blog post.

Random meeting IDs: Zoom is introducing longer meeting IDs to enhance the security of its platform. As a part of the changes, the one-time randomly generated meetings IDs for newly scheduled meetings and webinars will have 11 digits instead of 9. Users' Personal Meeting ID (PMI), on the other hand, will remain the same.

Cloud recordings: Zoom is turning on password protection for all shared cloud recordings. Additionally, it is enhancing the complexity of passwords on users' cloud recordings.

Zoom is also enabling the use of third party platforms such as Box, Dropbox and OneDrive on its platform. This feature had been disabled temporarily.

PUBG MOBILE ROLLS OUT ARCTIC MODE IN VIKENDI

PUBG Mobile on Thursday rolled out its new 'Arctic Mode' which is available through a new update on Google Play Store and App Store. As the name suggests, this new PUBG Mobile mode is winter-themed which is slightly weird considering it's summers now.

The new Arctic Mode is available via a small update on Play Store for Android users, and App Store for iOS users. Once PUBG Mobile is updated, players can find the Arctic Mode in Vikendi map. Since it's new, Arctic Mode is also highlighted on the main page of the game.

Here, the main purpose is to survive the cold and harsh weather conditions. There will be period arctic storms throughout the game, and players must work to keep their body temperature normal as it will gradually drop. At the same time, players will have to fight enemies on the ground as well.

- Use a lighter to create an indoor fire, then forage for branches to keep the fire alive
- Hunt wild chickens, collect the meat and cook it to be eaten and restore body temperature
- Use resources such as the heater and health packs

In Arctic Mode, players will also be able to use snowboards which were available in the Winter Festival. The entire area isn't snow-covered as there are many green patches as well. But players can snowboard on the grass areas as well. PUBG Mobile has also introduced remote-controlled drones which can be used to navigate and scout surrounding areas for tactical damages.

IN NOT SO GOOD NEWS FOR EARTH, UNUSUAL MINI-OZONE HOLE OPENS OVER ARCTIC

As the world fights the new coronavirus pandemic, climate change is back to threaten us as over the last month, a new unusual hole in the ozone layer has started to form over the Arctic.

According to the European Space Agency, the ozone layer over the North Pole has been depleted plenty of times in the past.

Scientists using data from the Copernicus Sentinel-5P satellite have noticed a strong reduction of ozone concentrations over the Arctic.

Unusual atmospheric conditions, including freezing temperatures in the stratosphere, have led ozone levels to plummet -- causing a 'mini-hole' in the ozone layer, the ESA said in a statement.

While the ESA scientists expect it to close up later this month, it's a troubling update on the planet's environmental health.

The 'ozone hole' most commonly referenced is the hole over Antarctica, forming each year during autumn.

In the past weeks, scientists from the German Aerospace Center (DLR) have noticed the unusually strong depletion of ozone over the northern polar regions.

Using data from the Tropomi instrument on the Copernicus Sentinel-5P satellite, they were able to monitor this Arctic ozone hole form in the atmosphere.

"The ozone hole we observe over



the Arctic this year has a maximum extension of less than 1 million sq km. This is small compared to the Antarctic hole, which can reach a size of around 20 to 25 million sq km with a normal duration of around 3 to 4 months," said Diego Loyola from the German Aerospace Center. Arctic temperatures do not usually plummet as low as in Antarctica. However, this year, powerful winds flowing around the North Pole trapped cold air within what is known as the 'polar vortex' - a circling whirlpool of stratospheric winds.

By the end of the polar winter, the first sunlight over the North Pole initiated this unusually strong ozone depletion -- causing the hole

to form.

However, its size is still small compared to what can usually be observed in the southern hemisphere, informed ESA.

Claus Zehner, ESA's Copernicus Sentinel-5P mission manager, said: "The Tropomi total ozone measurements are extending Europe's capability of the continuous global ozone monitoring from space since 1995. In this time, we have not witnessed an ozone hole formation of this size over the Arctic." In the past, mini ozone holes have occasionally been spotted over the North Pole, but the depletion over the Arctic this year is much larger compared to previous years.

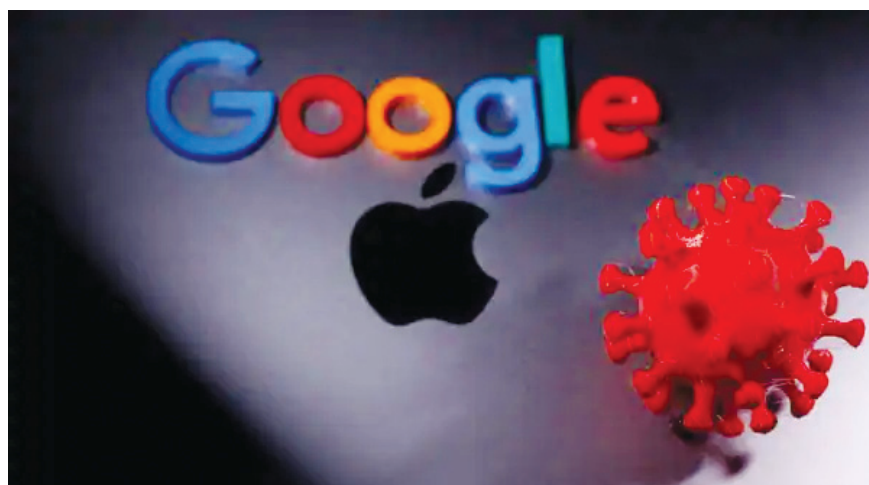
COVID-19: Apple, Google join hands to develop contact-tracing technology

Apple Inc and Alphabet Inc's Google said on Friday that they will work together to create contact tracing technology that aims to slow the spread of the coronavirus by allowing users to opt into logging other phones they have been near.

The rare collaboration between the two Silicon Valley companies, whose operating systems power 99% of the world's smartphones, could accelerate usage of apps that aim to get potentially infected individuals into testing or quarantine more quickly and reliably than existing systems in much of the world.

Such tracing will play a vital role in managing the virus once lockdown orders end, health experts say.

The planned technology also throws the weight of the tech leaders into a global conflict between privacy advocates who favor a decentralised system to trace contacts and governments in Europe and Asia pushing centralized approaches that have technical weaknesses and



potentially let governments know with whom people associate.

"With Apple and Google, you get all the public health functions you need with a decentralized and privacy-friendly app," said Michael Veale, University College London legal lecturer involved in European contact tracing system DP3T.

Centralized solutions such as those proposed in Britain and Germany would no longer work under the new technology, he said.

To be effective, the Silicon Valley system would require millions of people to opt in the system, trusting the technology companies' safeguards, as well as smooth oversight by public health systems.

The companies said they started developing the technology two weeks ago to streamline technical differences between Apple's iPhones and Google's Android that had stymied the interoperation of some existing contact tracing apps.

China tries to revive economy but consumer engine sputters

BEIJING (TIP): China, where the coronavirus pandemic started in December, is cautiously trying to get back to business, but it's not easy when many millions of workers are wary of spending much or even going out.

Factories and shops nationwide shut down starting in late January. Millions of families were told to stay home under unprecedented controls that have been copied by the United States, Europe and India.

The ruling Communist Party says the outbreak, which killed more than 3,340 people among more than 82,341 confirmed cases as of Thursday, is under control. But the damage to Chinese lives and the economy is lingering.

Truck salesman Zhang Hu is living the dilemma holding back the recovery.

The 27-year-old from the central city of Zhengzhou has gone back to work, but with few people looking to buy 20-ton trucks, his income has fallen by half. Like many millions of others, he is pinching pennies. "I put off plans to change cars and spend almost nothing on eating out or entertainment," he said.

"I have no idea when the situation will turn better."

Factories reopened in March after President Xi Jinping visited Wuhan, the city at the center of the outbreak, in a sign of confidence the virus was under control. But the consumers whose spending propels China's economic growth are still



afraid of losing their jobs or catching the virus.

They holding onto their money despite official efforts to lure them back to shopping malls and auto showrooms. Data due out Friday is expected to show the economy contracted by up to 9% in January-March, its worst performance since the late 1970s.

That is a blow to automakers and other global companies that hope China, after leading the way into a global shutdown, might power a recovery from the most painful slump since the Great Depression of the 1930s. "What is not fully back, or is completely missing, is the demand," said Louis Kuijs of Oxford Economics.

In Europe, the first tentative steps at winding back economically crippling restrictions were also running into resistance, as shoppers stayed away from the few stores that were reopening and some workers feared the newly restored freedoms could put their health at risk.

The streets of Rome were largely deserted despite an easing of restrictions this week that allowed some businesses to reopen. In China, e-commerce got a boost when families stuck at home bought groceries and other items online. But forecasters expect little to no growth in this year's total spending on clothing, food and other consumer goods.

REFUND TICKETS BOOKED DURING LOCKDOWN FOR TRAVEL TILL MAY 3: GOVT

MEW DELHI (TIP): A day after senior officials of Civil Aviation Ministry held an online meeting with top airline executives, the government announced a set of advisories for airlines to refund domestic and international tickets booked for the flights suspended due to lockdown. However, as per the advisories, airlines will be bound to provide full refunds only to those passengers who have booked during the first lockdown period — March 25 to April 14 — for travel between March 25 to May 3.

"Grievances were received from air travellers regarding refund for flights cancelled because of the nationwide lockdown to combat COVID-19. Advisories have been issued regarding refund for both domestic & international tickets booked for the flights suspended due to lockdown," Minister of State for Civil Aviation (Independent Charge) Hardeep Puri said in a tweet.

The original proposal of the government as discussed during Wednesday's meeting, was to ask airlines to reduce the period of credit shell being offered currently against cancellation of tickets from one year to six months and refund the unused amount after six months.

India to fill strategic crude oil reserves by early May



NEW DELHI (TIP): India will by early May fill its underground strategic oil storage with cheap crude available globally to shore up insurance against any supply or price disruption, the Petroleum Ministry said on Wednesday.

While the 5.33 million tonne of emergency storage — enough to meet India's oil needs for 9.5 days — was built in underground rock caverns in Mangalore and Padur in Karnataka and Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh by the government, state-owned oil firms have been asked to buy oil at cheaper rates from the market and fill them up.

The first shipload of 1 million barrels of crude oil was brought by Indian Oil Corp (IOC) from the UAE earlier this week.

"Taking advantage of the low crude oil price, India is filling the strategic petroleum reserves (SPR) to their full capacity. The first consignment of 1 million bbls of crude procured through @IndianOilcl unloaded at Mangalore SPR of @ISPRL1," the ministry said in a tweet.

G20 countries agree debt freeze for world's poorest countries

Finance officials from the Group of 20 major economies agreed on Wednesday to suspend debt service payments for the world's poorest countries through the end of the year, a move quickly matched by a group of hundreds of private creditors.

The actions to freeze both principal repayments and interest payments will free up more than \$20 billion for the countries to spend on improving their health systems and fighting the coronavirus pandemic, Saudi Finance Minister Mohammed al-Jadaan told reporters after a virtual meeting of G20 finance officials.

Saudi Arabia is hosting the G20 meetings this year. Wednesday's video conference meeting of finance ministers and central bank governors ran well over the scheduled two hours, delaying news conferences planned by al-Jadaan and International Monetary Fund Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva.

Covid-19 stimulus package to revive economy could be 2%-4% of GDP: Official

NEW DELHI (TIP): Expectations for a relief and stimulus package for individuals and businesses rose after Prime Minister Narendra Modi reviewed on Thursday, in a meeting with finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman, the impact on the Indian economy of the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) and the ongoing national lockdown aimed at limiting its spread.

According to a report in HT, chief economic adviser Krishnamurthy Subramanian is putting together the package.

People familiar with the matter said that the stimulus would be announced shortly, but none of the officials HT spoke to could give an exact date.

The meeting between the PM and the finance minister comes against the backdrop of demands by industry bodies of a package anywhere between Rs 14 lakh crore and Rs 16 lakh crore to revive the economy. There's been little economic activity since the lockdown was declared on March 25.

There has been some easing of restrictions since, and more will be eased on April 20, especially for manufacturing facilities in economic enclaves and businesses focused on rural India, but the lockdown is to continue till May 3.

Two people familiar with the matter said on condition of anonymity that the package will cover the farm sector, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and large businesses.

There could also be something in it for individual taxpayers, said a third person, adding that the size of the package could be anything between 2% and 4% of the GDP. That will work out between Rs 5 lakh crore and Rs 7.5 lakh crore. None of the three wished to be identified.

US WEEKLY JOBLESS CLAIMS TOP 5.2 MILLION IN LATEST WEEK

WASHINGTON (TIP): Another 5.2 million more Americans sought unemployment benefits last week, lifting total filings for claims over the past month above an astounding 20 million, which would underscore the deepening economic slump caused by the novel coronavirus outbreak.

The Labor Department on Thursday said 5.245 million new unemployment claims were filed last week, down from a slightly revised 6.615 million the week before.

According to a Reuters survey of economists, initial claims were expected to have fallen to 5.105 million in the week ended April 11. Estimates in the survey went as high as 8 million.

The report followed dismal data on Wednesday showing a record drop in retail sales in March and the biggest decline in factory output since 1946.

Economists are predicting the economy, which they believe is already in recession, contracted in the first quarter at its sharpest pace since World War II.

Weekly jobless claims, the most timely data on the economy's health, are being closely watched for clues on the depth of the downturn, when the waves of layoffs may let up and when a recovery might start.

"The decline in economic activity is breathtaking," said Joel Naroff, chief economist at Naroff Economics in Holland, Pennsylvania. "While we will see an initial upturn once the economy reopens, the strength and length of that recovery is not clear at all."



Shree Ganeshaya Namah

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



Bejan Daruwalla is available for astrological consultations. He can be reached at info@bejandaruwalla.com and on phone

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

Weekly Horoscope April 20 - April 26, 2020

ARIES: Ganesha says the Moon will drive you to attain success or pre-eminence in the world. But please don't get arrogant in the process and feel that you are above the law. You may get too domineering and this is something you have to be wary about. Try not to force your views on others. It may be wise and in your own interests to help others along the way.

TAURUS: Ganesha says this is an inflammable period and you will have to guard against excesses and becoming a law unto yourself. Do not also get into arguments. This is not the right time for any sort of discord as it could lead to more complications. Small issues can escalate and get blown out of proportion. Be calm and let the moment pass, advises Ganesha. You do not need the police or the courts to sort out your life, do you?

GEMINI: You are filled with revolutionary ideas which will force a transformation of some kind in your life. You may encounter someone who has a powerful effect upon you and shows you a good reason to change. This person is so convincing that you even listen to whatever is said, you may follow orders to the letter. In a marriage or love relationship, the two of you may disagree strongly on the management of money.

CANCER: Ganesha says do not waste precious time fighting over joint resources. It is not worth it. Do not make money the central theme of your existence, however important it is to your daily life. You learn a lot in this period, says Ganesha. It may be the right time to assert yourself in the world. You think of several ideas to forge ahead. But there could be some distress too.

LEO: Ganesha says hurts of the past begin to bother you and you feel very sensitive and vulnerable. There may be new and related pinpricks. You are distressed, hurt, and you distance yourself from the incident as quickly as possible. But there is a silver lining to this moment. If you move away and observe this hurt from a distance, you have an outstanding opportunity to gain new strength and confidence.

VIRGO: Ganesha says this is an excellent time for writers, filmmakers, artists and photographers. You delve deep into the creativity within you and make masterpieces come alive. You work from the soul; there is truth and honesty and no compromises. Ganesha blesses you. There is stability in your affairs and you move ahead with big plans. There may be a wedding in the family or an addition to it; even both.

LIBRA: Ganesha says this is an excellent time for all kinds of mental work as you are especially decisive and firm. You will be in an upbeat mood and will make a positive impression on those you meet. This influence also favours cooperative ventures and teamwork. You are good at negotiations and sorting out differences of opinion. There could be work-related travel too and you make many new plans for the coming period as you could be signing many new deals.

SCORPIO: You are hyper-active, your energy level is high, and you are restless to get going. You are brimming with confidence and new ideas and will surprise everyone with your brilliance. The travel continues. You are reaching out to the stars, if I may say so. There is money and honey and several other inducements to keep slogging away. There is love in the air and the hint of a new romance.

SAGITTARIUS: Ganesha says you check your balance sheets and realize that you are sitting pretty. You may visit a health spa for treatment and recuperation. If you have been going to one in the past, it may be a good idea to check out another one. Holistic treatments are similar in a sense but different health resorts will provide new experiences. Ganesha says that all will be well and health will not be a troublesome issue.

CAPRICORN: Ganesha says you are very sensitive and emotional now. There may be bereavement in the family and you put the blame squarely on yourself. You are not to blame; don't let the guilt eat you up. Ganesha says all chronic diseases will find a cure or will stabilize. It may also be a good time to go on a pilgrimage with the family in tow. Live with gratitude and peace. Go for it, urges Ganesha.

AQUARIUS: Ganesha says you are not blame; don't let the guilt eat you up. This is part and parcel of life and the grim reaper can't be kept away; he will arrive at any time in everyone's life. You spend time in prayer and with friends and in reflection. Work is not on your mind now. The family is the most important thing on your mind. You spend long moments in solitude and reflection. This too shall pass, says Ganesha.

PISCES: Ganesha says you slowly get back to the good mood of celebrations and big plans. It is possible now to make your ideas become a reality. This is an excellent time for new business deals and to sign new contracts. You will do wonders with a little foresight and wisdom. Once again, I repeat, don't be on a solo trip. Bring the team into your plans, at least a confidante. Let others whet your plans too. It will help in the execution.

Birthday Horoscope April 20 - April 26, 2020

April 20: Ganesha says you may feel enervated or still seeking along or private time. But there will be bumps and jumps in the road of daily activities that will require you to leave your cocoon and take care of stuff.

April 21: The wee hours could bring nervous fidgets of confusing feelings about something sudden. Partners will contribute a lot of ideas as the day goes on. Your best moment is right before midnight.

April 22: Bad feelings or relationship

problems in the morning could lead to retreat later or, by the later day comes, there'll be a lot to say. You may prefer confidentially if a secret is involved.

April 23: The best advice for everybody today is, "Take cover!" Lies, suspicions, accusations, obsessive thinking, and ugly power struggles court the day, all involving your potent.

April 24: You're going to need more than even logic and intuition this morning to get past defensive or insecure reactions. It's not till

tonight that reason prevails again and everyone kisses goodnight.

April 25: If you're trying to shine in your career today, you might have to develop a stronger sense of confidence and drama. Accepting a little help might be just what you needed.

April 26: If you've been holding things in about work or health and needing time to yourself, there could be an outburst; or a decision required can come suddenly or be a surprise.

WHICH GOD SHOULD YOU WORSHIP AS PER YOUR SUN SIGN

According to the Hindu scriptures, people believe that there are numerous Hindu deities. All these deities are Avatars or incarnations of Lord Vishnu, Lord Shiva, Lord Brahma and Shakti. Moreover, we worship the particular deity with whom we feel some connection. As per the Agni Purana, it is believed that if you worship God as per your sun sign then it brings more of auspiciousness in life.

When you worship a particular deity as per your sun sign, it helps to boost your celestial energy and it also makes an impact on the deity to pacify the planetary motions.

However, if you don't know which Gods are to be worshiped according to your sun sign, just go through the following points that will give you a clear perception about the same:

For Aries

Mars is the ruling planet for this sun sign. There is an unspoken connection between Lord Hanuman and the planet Mars. Both are lords of the day Tuesday (Mangalvaar) in mythology and astrology respectively. To strengthen the planet Mars, Arians should worship Lord Hanuman.

For Taurus

Planet Venus is the master of this zodiac. Taurians must wear white clothes and perfumes. Like Librans, they should also worship Goddess Laxmi. As Venus is ruled by Goddess Mahalakshmi, Taureans should offer prayers to Goddess Laxmi.

For Gemini

The governing planet for Gemini is Mercury. The ruling God for Mercury is "Srimannarayan", hence all Geminis must worship Lord Srimannarayan for fast benefits and good fortune in their lives.

For Cancer

Moon is the governing planet of Cancer. Goddess Gauri is the ruling God of Moon. Gauri is the personification of peace and compassion and, hence, if your sun sign is Cancer, you must offer



your prayers to this Goddess with utmost devotion to fulfill your desires.

For Leo

Sun is the ruling planet for Leo and Lord Shiva is the ruling God for this planet. Offering water to the Sun in the morning will bring success for you.

For Virgo

Those born under sign Virgo, have their ruling planet as Mercury and their ruling God is Lord Srimannarayan. Donating green clothes will be beneficial for your business.

For Libra

If your sun sign is Libra, it is ruled by Venus and the ruling deity of this

planet is Goddess Lakshmi. Thus, by worshipping Goddess Lakshmi, you can achieve good luck and wealth. Broadly speaking, Goddess Durga and all her avatars can be worshiped by Librans. Goddess Durga has nine main avatars. Among them Goddess Lakshmi and Goddess Santoshi are mainly worshiped by Librans. Santoshi Mata is the daughter of Lord Ganaesha. This deity is worshiped to get peace and prosperity.

For Scorpio

Mars planet rules this zodiac sign and, hence, all Scorpions should venerate Lord Shiva to strengthen their Mars planet.

For Sagittarius

Jupiter as their ruling planet, and their ruling lord is Sri Dakshina Murthy. Sagittarians must feed yellow

colored cows with green grass.

For Capricorn

The planet Mars is the ruling planet for Capricorn. Lord Shiva is the ruling God of this planet, hence, all Capricorns must offer their prayers to Lord Shiva.

For Aquarius

Planet Mars governs this zodiac sign. Lord Shiva is the principle deity who rules Mars. Thus, if you are born under the Aquarius sign, you must venerate Lord Shiva daily by chanting his mantra with pure heart and dedication.

For Pisces

Pisces is also ruled by the Jupiter planet. All Pisceans must offer their prayers to Shri Dakhsinamurthy for better results.



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contd from page 1

Governor Cuomo extends lockdown of State until May 15

also down significantly, Cuomo said, as is the three-day hospitalization average.

The state reported 606 deaths on Wednesday - still a "staggering" number but a decrease from 752 on Tuesday. Of the deaths, 577 were in hospitals and 29 were in nursing homes.

Health officials report more than 214,800 cases of the coronavirus in New York, with more than 14,000 deaths. Across the country, nearly 640,300 cases of COVID-19 have been reported and about 31,015 people have died.

In an effort to keep reducing the infection rate, Cuomo is expanding his executive order requiring masks in public. Announced on Wednesday, the order requires people to wear something that covers their noses and mouths when in places where social distancing is not possible.

He added to that order, stating that all riders and operators must wear a covering on private, public and for-hire transportation. The requirement will go into effect at 8 p.m. Friday.

With regard to lifting restrictions, Cuomo said officials must perform a risk versus reward analysis to ensure that normal operations can resume without the infection rate increasing. New York will work with other states in the region to coordinate a gradual reopening of businesses.

State officials will work to determine what businesses can be reopened with a

minimal threat to public health and how those businesses can operate in the "new normal," ensuring safety for employees and customers.

Cuomo said the numbers show "we can control the beast" and that the mitigation efforts are working. Experts estimate that the average number of people one sick person can infect has dropped below one - a measure they say suggests the rate of infection is stable. After China imposed some of the most drastic restrictions amid its outbreak, the rate dropped as low as 0.3.

Cuomo continued to stress the importance of good social distancing practices and a slow, phased reopening of the state. He acknowledged that the recent restrictions are some of the most life-changing ever implemented but insisted they are necessary to control the pandemic.

"Of all the unique aspects of this crisis, the most positive and surprising to me is how people are responding," Cuomo said. "People are choosing to do the right thing."

"I trust New Yorkers, you know. I believe if the facts are presented to the people of the state, New Yorkers will do the right thing."

"I can't put a mask on 17million people - they will decide if they'll do it. But they have done it because they have the facts, the information, they understand the consequences and what they have done is worked and it has brought this state forward and it will bring this nation forward."

"New York tough is more complex than the word suggests. It's smart, united, disciplined and loving. New Yorkers have

proven that time and time again, every day, for 46 days.' (Agencies)

contd from page 2

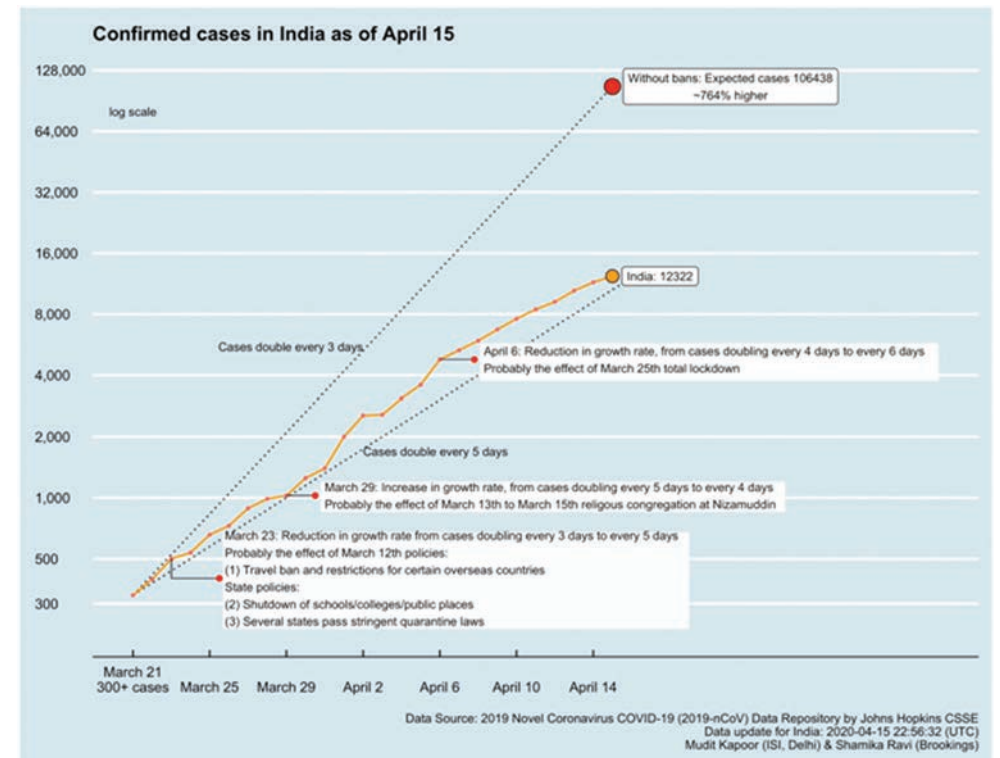
India's Governance Response to Covid-19

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Government of India is acutely aware of the need to balance our central concern about the welfare of our citizens with our global responsibilities. India is a major source of pharmaceuticals. We are committed to acting responsibly

during this crisis. There is no outright ban on exports of critical drugs and requests are being examined and responded to appropriately. Several consignments of critical medicines have been cleared and dispatched to the United States. Cooperation between Indian and US scientific organizations is also going ahead on how to mitigate and combat the virus. In a tragic way this crisis has brought us together and we see much greater India-US strategic and economic cooperation in a post-Covid world.

(The author is Consul General of India in New York. He can be reached at Cg.newyork@mea.gov.in)



contd from page 21

Trump proposes 3-phased country re-opening plan

New York's Democrat Mayor Bill de Blasio said that he had told Trump and Vice President Mike Pence that the restrictions should be kept everywhere because the areas with low infections now could end up like his city.

Before Trump's announcement, New York's Democrat Governor Andrew Cuomo extended the state's Stay-at-Home orders shutting down educational institutions and non-essential businesses till May 15.

Democrat Speaker Nancy Pelosi has told her legislators to rely on scientists and not on Trump and warned that Americans cannot return to work safely unless there is adequate testing.

Fauci, who is widely respected by the nation and so far by Democrats, backed Trump calling the plan "a rather robust program for re-entering into normality".

He gave the assurance that for the physicians, scientists, or public health experts involved in developing the plan "the predominant and completely driving element that we put into this was the safety and the health of the American public".

"We are a very large country and we have different dynamics in the country," he said explaining the phased and targeted reopening.

But he also warned: "There may be some setbacks that we may have to pull back a little. And then go forward." Trump initially wanted to loosen the restrictions on April 12, Easter Sunday, but on the advice of his medical experts, he held off. His next target date was May 1 and he may be able to partially meet it.

There have been public protests in some places against the lockdown.

The US has so far managed keep the infections and deaths far below the predictions of deaths that ranged from 2.2 million to 240,000 to 80,000 according to different models and scenarios of mitigation.

So far there have been only 671,151 infections and 33,268 deaths in the pandemic.

Some states have very few cases like Wyoming, a mostly rural state that has recorded only 296 cases and two deaths, while the pandemic's epicenter New York has had 293,661 cases with 14,832 deaths as of Wednesday evening.

Because of this, Trump leaves it to the Governors to decide how to proceed based on the guidelines developed by the medical experts in conjunction with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Trump said that some states already meet the gating criteria and can start the first phase "tomorrow".

Birx, a respected physician and epidemiologist who won her spurs in the battle against AIDS, is the

coordinator of the White House Coronavirus Task Force and she outlined the plan in detail.

To be gated in order to begin the phases, a state will have to have a downward trajectory of people with both influenza and COVID-19 symptoms as well those testing positive for the disease, in addition to having adequate testing for health care workers.

In the first phase, some of the workers can return to work in phases, with special accommodation for vulnerable people and social distancing, but telecommuting will be the preferred method.

Vulnerable people will be under Stay-at-Home rules and others will have to observe social distancing and groups of more than ten will not be allowed to socialize.

Religious meetings and events like sports can take place under social distancing norms.

If there is no rebound and the states again meet the gating requirement like cases going down further over 14 days, they can move to the second phase, where restrictions are further loosened to allow socialize in groups of up to 50, permit non-essential travel, and reopen schools and gyms, allow elective surgery.

After again meeting the gating criteria, states can move to the third phase, which will allow vulnerable people to resume public activities, drop workplace restrictions to allow full staffing and permit sports and other such events with limited physical distancing requirements. (Source:IANS)

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PEERMEDE: AN UNSPOILED HILL STATION OF SOUTH

A blanket of greenery on undulating hills; unending expanse of plantations; pine forests with crisscrossing rivulets and silver waterfalls; sprawling meadows, and a salubrious, quixotic climate -- Mother Nature seems to have held nothing back when it came to blessing Peermede.

Peermede, also known as Peerumedu, lies about 915 m above sea level, and is around 35 km from Thekkady on the Kottayam route. This unspoiled and picturesque hill station of the Sahyadri Ranges is a favourite haunt of many tourists to Kerala.

Years back, when the Travancore Rajas discovered this small but strikingly beautiful locality, they fell in love with its velvet greenery, cascading waterfalls and mist-cloaked hilltops. They made Peermede their summer retreat and added to the charm of the place with their palaces, colonial bungalows and so on.

The hill station ambience

Peermede, earlier a stopover for tourists on their way to Thekkady, has grown into a tourist destination only recently.

The hills of Peermede are covered in soft green grass, pine forests and plantations. Among its many attractions are small silver waterfalls, mist-engulfed valleys, rivulets that criss-cross the unending stretch of plantations, the lingering aroma of spices in the air and the calming effect that the place has on the body and the soul. If you are a tourist interested in farming and agriculture, Peermede, which has a wealth of flora including medicinal plants, is a great place to watch organic farming at close quarters.

Peermede is also a great place for trekking - especially the Kuttikkanam region. Kalthotti, Peeru Hills, Karandakapara, Grampi, Parunthumpara and Memala are some other places nearby that offer excellent trekking routes. Other scenic places like



Mathai Kokka, Pattumala and the Kokkad Hills are well worth visiting. The waterfalls in the area include Meloram, Nallathanni and Valanjanganam and these greatly add to the value of Peermede as a tourist destination.

Interesting sights

Kuttikkanam

The town of Kuttikkanam, in the vicinity of Peermede, is a well-known adventure sport destination providing great opportunities for trekking.

Kuttikkanam is at an altitude of 3,850 feet from the sea-level. The beauty of the place, the surrounding lush green hills and the cool climate make it ideal for a tranquil break. Kuttikkanam also offers breathtaking views of the sunrise and sunset. In winter, it gets pretty cold and if you wander too far from your accommodation, you could get lost in the fog.

With many professional colleges and educational institutions coming up in the area, Kuttikkanam is becoming a

prominent educational centre in Kerala.

Summer Palace

The summer palace at Peermede was built for the Travancore royal family in the early 1900s. Though it is now in a dilapidated condition, many facets of the palace evoke a glorious past.

The smoke-stained hearth, the durbar hall, which would have witnessed many a royal intrigue and discussion, the vast kitchen and dining area, the bed chambers and the endless corridors all tell tales of an opulent time. The palace also has a prison cell and an underground passage. Outside, you will find a huge central courtyard and stables. A caretaker at the palace will show you around the entire building.

Another landmark that has left the mark of the Travancore royalty on Peermede is the Ammachikkottaram (the Maharani's palace). Today, this erstwhile summer residence of Maharani Sethu Lakshmi Bai is private property. The summer residence of the Dewan of Travancore is also nearby.

Peeru Hills

This hill station is four km from Peermede and a kilometre from Kuttikkanam. It is named after the Sufi saint, Peer Mohammed as is Peermede. The view from the top of the hills, which is surrounded by ravines on all sides, of thick greenery and the gushing waterfall of Valanjanganam, is absolutely enchanting.

There is also a partially damaged mausoleum at the foot of the hills that attracts a lot of visitors.

St. George's CSI church, Pallikkunnu houses one of the oldest churches in the high ranges of Kerala, the St. George's CSI Church. The church, an architectural marvel in 17 acres of land, was built by Rev. Henry Baker Junior in 1867.

The teakwood beams, majestic arches and the beautiful ceiling stand testimony to Baker's dedication, eye for beauty and attention to detail. The church, surrounded by cypress and pine trees, also has a beautiful bell tower. Inside, you will see an old and much-used piano. Though it was renovated in 1990, the church still carries an old-world charm that attracts a lot of visitors.

During the last decades of the 20th century, Tamil Mass was conducted at the church for a few years, owing to a rapid increase in the number of Tamilians attending the service. The Church Mission Society appointed Nallathampi, a Tamilian, as the clergyman during that time. Mass in English too was conducted for foreigners. Even now, Mass in English is conducted once a month.

Another peculiarity of the church is that it is the resting place for the British planters and other Europeans who came to the area in the 19th and early 20th century. The churchyard carries many stones erected in memory of European planters. A birth and death record is kept at the church which carries the details of many Europeans who settled here during the 19th century.



Sri Lanka offers to host IPL 2020, RCB coach suggests Australia as alternative

With the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2020 season having been postponed indefinitely owing to the extension of the coronavirus-induced lockdown, one possibility being suggested is to hold the IPL at an alternate venue. The Sri Lanka cricket board has reportedly written to BCCI intimating them of their willingness to host the season.

Shammi Silva, the president of Sri Lanka's cricket board, told Sinhala daily Lankadeepa, "Apparently it will cost the BCCI and its stakeholders more than \$500 million to cancel the IPL. If they play it in Sri Lanka, it's easy for Indian audiences to watch the games on TV. There's precedent for this because they've played the IPL in South Africa before. We're waiting for the Indian board to respond to our proposal."

"It looks like Sri Lanka will be clear of the coronavirus before India," Reuters quoted the cricket chief as saying.

On the other hand, Simon Katich, the head coach of Royal Challengers



Bangalore, said his team would be happy if the IPL season is shifted to countries like Australia and South Africa.

"There would be a few teams – us in particular at RCB, we'd be very happy for it to be played abroad, because a number of our overseas players are Australian and South African, who really would enjoy

these conditions in Australia," Katich told SEN Radio.

There have been two past occasions when the IPL has been shifted out of the country. The UAE had hosted the first two weeks of IPL in 2014 when the Lok Sabha polls were held in India. The 2009 IPL had been moved to South Africa, also due to elections.



F1 may have to slim down for races without a crowd

Formula One could start the season behind locked gates and without spectators due to the COVID-19 pandemic but the glamour sport will likely have to slim down considerably to get the green light to go racing.

Across Europe, bans on mass gatherings and public events have been extended into July and August even as countries begin to emerge from the strict lockdowns that have put sporting activities on hold.

Formula One's season remains stalled, with seven races postponed so far and organisers talking of a reduced calendar possibly running into January. The BBC reported on Thursday, after team bosses held an online meeting, that the latest plan was to start behind closed doors in Austria on July 5 and then hold two races at Silverstone, a home venue for seven of the 10 teams. Racefans.net suggested Silverstone could be on for three races in four weeks and on different layouts.

Formula One's managing director Ross Brawn indicated earlier this month that radical measures were under consideration. "We're looking at the logistics of a closed race, how would we get the people there, how would we protect them, how would we make it safe, who would we allow into the paddock," he said.

UEFA has a plan for Champions League final in late August

UEFA is hoping the Champions League final can be played at the end of August in Istanbul, three months after the competition's showpiece was due to be staged.

The aim is to play the final on Saturday, Aug. 29 at the Ataturk Olympic Stadium in Istanbul, a person familiar with the planning told The Associated Press on Thursday.

However, the person said that date is only feasible if European leagues are able to resume playing around July or August, an aspiration set out by UEFA in a letter sent out to clubs and national associations two weeks ago.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss plans ahead of next week's UEFA talks.

Any planning to resume competitions is still only aspirational as large parts of Europe remain in lockdown to contain the spread of the new coronavirus.

Sport was largely shut down across the continent a month ago as governments banned mass gatherings.

The Champions League final was originally scheduled for May 30 before being postponed by UEFA on March 23.



Cricket Australia lays off staff till June-end

Cricket Australia on Thursday laid off majority of its staff till June 30 as it battled a financial crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic but remained hopeful of the T20 World Cup in October-November, followed by the India tour being held on schedule.

The Australian financial year starts on July 1 and ends on June 30, which means that employees have been laid off for a period of two and half months during which it is impossible to have any sporting activity with no chance of normalcy around the corner.

"We have made the decision during this period of isolation, where activity has naturally been reduced, to stand down our people on reduced pay (with the exception of a skeleton staff) effective 27 April for the remainder of the financial year," CA said in a statement.

Chelsea to provide 78,000 meals for medical, charity workers



LONDON (TIP): Chelsea will provide 78,000 free meals to Britain's National Health Service and charities that support the elderly and vulnerable during the coronavirus crisis, the Premier League club said Thursday.

The Blues' donation will help NHS staff working long hours across five hospitals.

"We are and have always been committed to supporting our communities, especially the vulnerable, and at this time we recognise this is more important than ever," Chelsea chairman Bruce Buck said.

"Our owner, Roman Abramovich, has

been instrumental in challenging us to find ways to support those in need."

Manchester United's Old Trafford stadium, normally a sea of red, will be lit up in blue to show support for the NHS during the pandemic.

Old Trafford was due to turn the colour of United's local rivals Manchester City to coincide with the weekly public "clap for carers" tribute on Thursday at 1900 GMT.

"While Old Trafford is not normally bathed in blue, it's been organised to recognise the extraordinary efforts of the frontline workers battling the COVID-19 pandemic," United said in a statement.

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