

Jagran

# mid-day

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## A SILVER LINING AMID MIGRANT EXODUS

# HOW WE REACHED OUR HOME, 906 KM AWAY, IN TWO DAYS

A family of 11, including two children, which set off for Pali in Rajasthan on foot from Mumbai on March 26, narrates how it managed to reach home, thanks to a chain of Good Samaritans along the way



Pappu (front right) with his family outside their home in Kalab Khurd village in Rajasthan

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A LABOURER, who began his long trudge from Virar on Thursday last week along with 10 members of his family, amid the lockdown that has brought the country to a standstill, reached his village in the Pali district of Rajasthan on Saturday afternoon. Pappu Singh alias Akash, 22, and his two nephews traversed the entire 906 kilometres in approximately 55 hours. The other relatives, who were behind them, reached on Sunday. » P03



**'We reached the Rajasthan border on Friday morning. Hitching a ride here became difficult. We would walk four to five kilometres and wait for a vehicle'** Pappu Singh

# 125KM

Part of the total distance of 906 km Pappu and his nephews covered on foot

## PM MODI SORRY FOR 'HARSH LOCKDOWN'



But no solution in sight for migrants' misery, as Centre shuts borders and asks states to take care of them

## WILL TAKE CARE OF MIGRANTS: CM

Uddhav Thackeray promises food and shelter for labourers marooned across state



## 15 NEW CASES IN CITY, TOTAL 123

One person dies in KEM, Kurla SRA building in quarantine, Saifee employees worried, IIT-B develops app to track those in quarantine



## CITY'S CATTLE FEED DWINDLING RAPIDLY

The 17,000 buffaloes that provide 1.25 lakh litres of milk daily have only seven days' food, as fodder trucks are stuck at borders

## HOUSING SOCIETIES JOIN THE BATTLE

Residents' associations step in to help the poor and the elderly by organising discount meals, veggie deliveries and more

## Notes from the frontline

Overworked doctors and health workers battling COVID-19 round the clock narrate their struggles, while pleading with citizens to stay indoors



Doctors suggest enrolling medical practitioners who have worked on ad hoc basis in the past

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THE situation is fast turning worrisome with people defying the government's lockdown orders to stay indoors. Above all, those told to self-quarantine are holidaying in Alibaug, Matheran and other places, said most of the doctors mid-day spoke to on Sunday. » P05

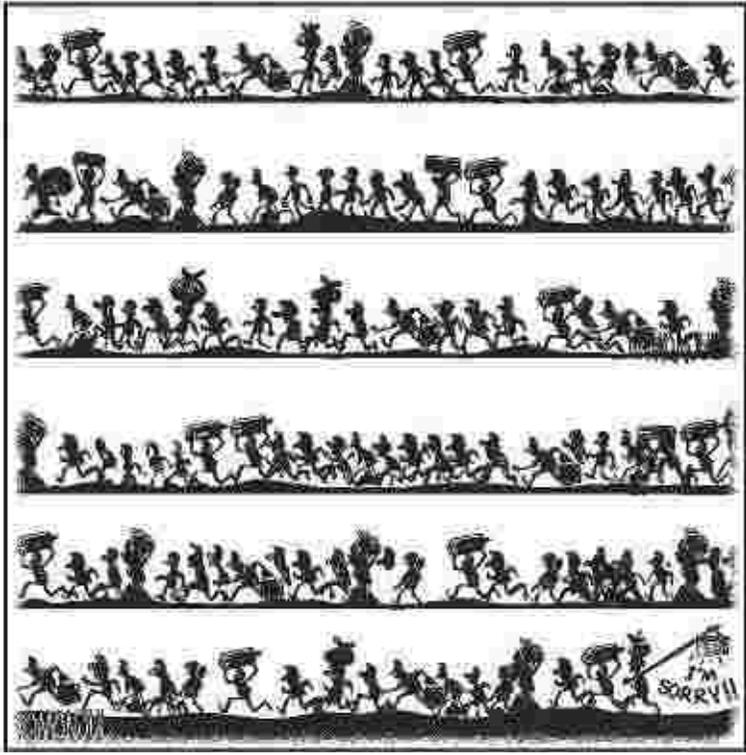
## 'Restaurants, property owners need to work together'

As National Restaurant Association of India seeks moratorium on rent, landlords explain their predicament with banks; will there be a solution soon? » P06



A restaurant in Dadar was only giving takeaways on Sunday. PIC/ASHISH RAJE

## MUMBAI MERI JAAN BY MANJUL



## More than 200 confirmed COVID-19 cases in state

**COVID-19**  
**TICKER**  
**203** ACTIVE CORONAVIRUS CASES IN MAHA AS OF TODAY

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THE state's count for COVID-19 patients crossed 200 on Sunday and two deaths were reported in the state on Sunday taking the toll up to eight. Civic officials said 15 new cases had been reported in the city and in majority of the cases, the patients had been in touch with another COVID 19 patient.

State health department officials stated that there are 203 confirmed cases of COVID-19. Apart from the 40-year-old woman who died at KEM hospital, a 45-year-old man died in Buldhana making it the first death to occur outside of Mumbai. The officials also stated that till date, 35 COVID-19 patients had recovered and were discharged across the state.

According to the BMC, there are 123 positive cases in the Mumbai Metropolitan cases. Three of the 15 patients had a history of international travel and a majority of the cases were from the suburbs. All the cases reported on Sunday were from the city, and three of them were senior

**266**  
No. of cases registered between Mar 20-28 for violating lockdown orders



Police have filed 266 cases between March 20-28 for violations of the lockdown. PIC/SAYYED SAMEER ABEDI

citizens.

### First +ve case in Mira-Bhayandar

On Sunday, first confirmed COVID-19 case was reported in Mira-Bhayandar with a 55-year-old testing positive. The man, a cancer patient, does not have any history of travel outside India. He had gone to Pune 12 days back and started showing symptoms four-five days back. He is now undergoing treatment at Kokilaben hospital. Chandrakant Dange, municipal commissioner of Mira-Bhayandar, said his family members have been sent to Kasturba and the doctor the man first went to has been home quarantined.

# Over 17k cattle in Aarey could die of starvation

Due to the lockdown, fodder for them has not arrived from other states; owners request government to help resolve issue

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OVER 17,000 cattle that provide 1.25 lakh litres of milk to the city on a daily basis from Aarey Milk Colony, could starve as fodder from other states has not arrived for them due to the lockdown.

The cattle owners have only one week left and have requested the government to allow the trucks of cattle feed to reach Mumbai.

According to the cattle owners, the fodder comes from the interiors of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Telangana and Karnataka but due to the lockdown and implementation of section 144, the trucks cannot be loaded, as more than four workers are unable to gather.

As the state borders are closed too, suppliers from other states don't want to take the risk.

The dry fodder also comes from Palghar district and there have been instances in the past couple of days where trucks carrying it have been stopped at district borders. Recently a truck was stopped near Vasai by highway police and the driver was allegedly manhandled.

"We have little cattle feed left with us and in coming 7 to 10 days our stock will get over. Our buffaloes will starve. We request the government to coordinate with other states and allow the transport of inter-state cattle feed trucks from Gujarat, Telangana and Karnataka as an essential service," said Feroz Shaikh, committee member of the Milk Suppliers' Association from Aarey Milk Colony.

There are over 17,000 buffaloes in Aarey Milk Colony and a total of 375 licence holders who own stables there. On a daily basis around 50 trucks, each carrying approximately 1 tonnes of cattle fodder, reach Aarey Milk Colony.

"On an average, over 1.25 lakh litres of fresh milk is supplied to Mumbai on a daily basis from Aarey alone, and if the issue does not get resolved, the health of animals will be affected. It could also cause a scarcity of milk. We request the chief minister to look into this issue," said another stable owner from Aarey.



**50**  
Weight in tonnes of feed usually needed at Aarey



The cattle owners have stock left for about a week; the cattle owners want the government to allow inter-state cattle fodder trucks to ply. PICS/RANE ASHISH

**'We request the government to coordinate with other states and allow the transport of inter-state cattle feed trucks from Gujarat, Telangana and Karnataka as an essential service'**

Feroz Shaikh, Aarey Milk Colony

# 'We would stop after 5 km and try to hitch a ride'

22-year-old records video thanking officer who helped him, apologises for lying about identity

Continued from page 01

WHILE they walked for 125 kilometres, the rest of the distance was covered by hitching rides

After reaching his village, Kalab Khurd, Pappu recorded a video thanking Boisar Crime Branch officer Bhimsen Gaikwad for his help.

Pappu also apologised to Assistant Police Inspector Gaikwad for having lied to him. According to the video message, Pappu has a diploma in solar energy from a government institute in Rajasthan. He has also trained as an electrician. Pappu had given his name as Prakash and said that the kids were his own. He came to the city in the beginning of March after giving his final exams to work as a labourer. The trio and their eight relatives had set out for their village.

Pappu's brother, Mahendra Singh, is an electrician working for the Indian Railway. The family's plans to go to their village after the kids' exams were scuttled with the lockdown coming into place. With no place to live and no money to eat, the villagers decided to go

**'My brother, cousins and other villagers were behind, while the kids and I got a lift till a toll plaza. That is when API Gaikwad noticed us and enquired where we are off to. I was scared and lied about my identity'**

Pappu Singh



(from right) Pappu with his mother, sister-in-law and brother, Mahendra

home on foot.

"The kids Pradeep, 6, and Jaydeep, 4, were with me. We were walking towards Gujarat on the highway around 10 am. My brother, cousins and other villagers were behind, while the kids and I got a lift till a toll plaza. That is when API Gaikwad noticed us and enquired where we are off to. I was scared and lied about my identity.

"API Gaikwad dropped us near the toll plaza at Gujarat border and helped us hitch a ride in a vehicle going near to Rajasthan border. He also gave money to buy food for the kids," Pappu said in the video.

"We reached the Rajasthan border on Friday morning. Hitching a ride here became difficult. We would walk four to five kilometres and wait for a vehicle," Pappu said. During this period, a traveller demanded ₹3,000 for a 100-km ride in



Mid-day's Feb 28 report

his car. Pappu arranged the money from a friend and made the payment online.

"I also came across kind people, who not only gave us a lift but also food to eat," Pappu added.

On March 28 afternoon, the trio reached Raipur taluka in Pali district. Kalab Khurd was another 15 kilometres away and they called a relative to pick them up. Pappu's brother, Ma-



Pradeep and Jaydeep (in white)

hendra and the others reached home on Sunday morning.

API Gaikwad told mid-day that he helped Pappu as he could see that the man was going through a difficult time. "I appreciate him coming clean through the video. However, that he lied to protect himself doesn't matter. He was just trying to get home. As humans, we should always be able to help others."

## Truck carrying 64 to UP stopped, siblings booked

Two siblings owning and operating a truck service were on Sunday booked for allegedly ferrying 64 labourers illegally to Uttar Pradesh, Saki Naka police said. The labourers were found crammed in the truck in the early hours of the day in Powai, an official said. "Amjad Ali Razzak Shah, 32, who was driving the truck and his brother Mohammad Shah who owns the vehicle, have been booked. They were charging ₹2,500 per person to transport them to Uttar Pradesh," an official said. Zone X Deputy Commissioner of Police Ankit Goel said the labourers were let off while civic authorities were asked to provide them food and other basic amenities. "We registered a case under section 269 (negligent act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life) and 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant) of the Indian Penal Code. Both have been detained," he said.

AGENCIES

## Thank you for your patience, CM tells state

Also tells migrant workers state will take care of them

WHILE thanking the state for its patience during the lockdown, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday, in a televised address, assured that his government will take care of all migrant labourers and provide them basic necessities like food and water.

The 'Shiv Bhojan' scheme offering meal at R10 will now be available at R5 from April 1, he said in a webcast.

Thackeray said the state has already set up 163 centres across the state to provide food and water to migrant labourers. "The state will protect them and provide food, but

they should not leave their place. I understand that they are anxious but they should not leave. They should avoid increasing the risk of infection, he said.

In view of the nationwide lockdown to contain the spread of coronavirus, several migrant labourers are left with no work and hence, they are leaving the state to return to their native places.

A number of them have been marching on foot, while some tried to make their way out of the state in goods trucks and tempos, but were caught during police checking.

"We have almost completed eight days of the lockdown, need to complete the remaining days. If we manage to do so, it will be an achievement. Thank you for your patience," he said.

Agencies

## Foreigners Czech out of India

Czech citizens soar out on Sunday as mammoth coordination exercise results in operation airlift

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MONEY may have wings but at times Czechs (pun intended) do too. On Sunday, March 29, at least 135 Czechs, along with some Germans, Bulgarians and Austrians flew out of Mumbai International Airport after a frenzied 24-hour exercise, with permissions, protocols and procedures leading to the take off.

"I was elated as the big bird, the Czech Airlines Airbus took to the skies," laughed Rashmi Jolly. Jolly is Hon. Consul General of the Czech Republic, in

Maharashtra and Goa. There were seven Czechs from Mumbai, approximately 29 from Goa and the rest from Pune.

### 'Goa is a big lure'

Jolly further said, "The Czech Republic is a land locked country and the weather is very cold. Goa with sunny climes, sandy beaches, spirit of susegade and chilled beer is a big lure," she added.

Tracing Czechs in Goa was a real challenge. "They were in unheard of small places. The

Trailblazers Travel Co. in Panjim sourced them." Next, the bring-them-back-binoculars were trained on Pune. A large number of Czechs at the Skoda/Volkswagon auto plant at Chakan near Pune were brought in buses to the Mumbai International Airport late Saturday night and early Sunday morning. The shrill trill of Jolly's mobile through the night was indicative that the machinery was in motion.

She said, "The Ministry of



Rashmi Jolly

Protocol, Maharashtra Govt and state police co-ordinated seamlessly. It was a sleepless night for all those in charge of a mammoth effort, from the time the wheels began turning. The Flywell Aviation Pvt. Ltd. in Delhi helped the Em-

**'The Ministry of Protocol, Maharashtra Govt and state police co-ordinated seamlessly. It was a sleepless night for all those in charge of a mammoth effort, from the time the wheels began turning. The Flywell Aviation Pvt. Ltd. in Delhi helped the Embassy of the Czech Republic there get MEA permission for the plane to land here'**

Rashmi Jolly, Hon. Consul General of the Czech Republic, in Maharashtra and Goa

bassy of the Czech Republic there get MEA permission for the plane to land here."

### The route

The aircraft flew from Prague to its first halt - Goa - where it picked up a group of passengers. It then winged to Mumbai. It took off from Mumbai yesterday at 6 am, refuelling was scheduled at Armenia, stopped at Hanover and finally reached Prague.

Jolly added, "Locating and getting the citizens to a common collection point is the tough part. Even now there are Czechs who may be in fairly remote places in Rishikesh or Haridwar. Many do not come for stock, touristy reasons. Some are here on a spiritual journey, drawn by the perception of exotic India."

While those in India may be in quest for life's more profound lessons, Jolly says the 24-hour operation taught her the undeniable truth to the adage, "Strength is in unity, for we would not be able to achieve this without the help of every agency and individual pitching in. Divisions of caste, class and country melt away in such times. This though should not be temporary but it should stay with us for life."

# daily dossier



@Memeghnad: How do you become a top performing student in a communist country? Full Marx.

## Parents, take the online route

In a lockdown, when parents and children are stuck at home dealing with an unexpected situation, a lot of anxiety comes into play. It's what led Chennai-based NGO Nalandaway Foundation to launch Art for Wellbeing - A Parent's Guide. It's an online platform that helps parents and children alike identify emotions, and work with coping strategies and easy art-based activities that take the load off. Soon after the launch, their website crashed twice in two days due to traffic. "We are transferring our anxiety to kids. They are intelligent and

aware but unable to process these restrictions, and parents lack skills to engage and explain the scenario to them. There are proven methods where art can help with coping and our objective is to provide them with a self-resource, keeping in mind the developmental needs of all age groups. It is a combination of activities to break the boredom and methods to cope with stress," Sriram Iyer, its founder told this diarist, adding that there are five age groups so far and the activities meant for 15-year-olds are suitable for adults too.



Sriram Iyer



## Tune in with the community

Social eateries have started a live music series called Social Indoors so that music enthusiasts don't miss out on their dose of groovy tunes. It features the likes of Ankur Tewari, Aditi Ramesh and Tejas Menon (in pic), who performed a set online on Sunday. So far, there are plans to host this every week. "We put a premium on bringing communities

together. Given the fact that we are dealing with unusual circumstances currently, we are teaming up with some great names in music for a live music series on our Facebook and Instagram pages. Called #SOCIALIndoors, we will go live every week from Thursday to Sunday at 5 pm. With this series, we intend to resume good old community listening in a fun way," Divya Aggarwal, of Impresario Handmade Restaurants, told this diarist.



## Somany magazines to read

Magzter, a subscription-based digital news stand with magazines from around the world has stepped in to offer some respite during these trying times. The popular content provider announced a month's free access to anyone who wants to read on Android and iOS platforms. "During social distancing, magazines and newspapers

are the most reliable sources of information. We felt this was a way to dispense accurate and factual information



to everyone. Also, people want to read varied articles for relaxation. Magazines on the other hand want a platform to put content out. So, this is a win-win for everybody," Gautam Ramdas, co-founder, Magzter, told this diarist. "It's not just us; Zoom has made video conferencing free as have other ventures. We wanted to do our part," he added.



## THE GYM LIFE

While Mumbai is under lockdown, a man works out at an open gym in Matunga. PIC/SHADAB KHAN

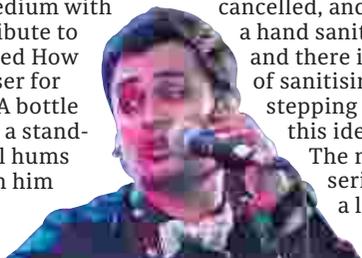
## Singing a sanitised tune

Mumbai-based singer and composer Omkar Patil has taken note of the rampant usage of hand sanitisers in the light of the pandemic, and their shortage. He uses music as a medium with no words to pay tribute to them in a track titled How to use hand sanitiser for live performance. A bottle of sanitiser here is a stand-in for a mic as Patil hums a tune. It ends with him saying 'Go corona' in a tone that is

catchy but serious.

"The line was always in my head and I wanted to produce something that was objective. Tours and shows have been cancelled, and I always have a hand sanitiser in my bag and there is a whole process of sanitising involved in stepping out of home, so this idea made sense.

The message is serious but the take a little lighter," he told this diarist.



## Live aid

Music is a source of solace during trying times, and it's fitting that a music streaming platform has come forward to provide support to artistes whose earnings have run dry due to the lockdown across the world. The firm is reaching out to people to donate money to selected music charities, and they will match each donated dollar till there is a collective amount of \$10 million. They have also introduced a feature that allows musicians to raise funds from fans. Log on to <https://covid19musicrelief.byspotify.com/en-us>.



# KEM doctors and staff panic after woman dies of COVID-19

Some doctors have alleged that the administration has not taken necessary steps to ensure that the infection doesn't spread; dean of the hospital denies allegations

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MUMBAI had a seventh casualty of COVID-19 after a 40-year-old woman from the western suburbs died on March 28 at KEM hospital. Since KEM hospital doesn't have an isolation facility for COVID-19 patients, her death left doctors and staff members in a state of panic.

Civic officials said that the woman was admitted at KEM hospital on March 28 and she had a history of hypertension. At the time of admission, the woman had severe respiratory distress and had complained of having chest pain for 3-4 days. She tested positive after her death and was confirmed as a casualty of Coronavirus.

Doctors at KEM said that her death has left the hospi-

tal staff anxious about their safety and some doctors alleged the administration has not taken necessary steps to ensure that the infection doesn't spread. One of the doctors said, "The patient was brought to casualty where regular patients come and later taken to the ICU. The doctors who were treating her didn't know that she was a COVID-19 patient. After she tested positive, the hospital didn't carry out disinfection of the area. The hospital didn't have protective equipment and the doctors who were treating her were given HIV protection kits."

He added that her body was kept in the morgue for several hours. "There are five staff members in the morgue. The hospital is not getting any of them tested. This is a highly infectious disease and the



KEM Hospital does not have an isolation facility for COVID-19 patients. FILE PIC

hospital administration isn't taking this seriously," the doctor said. KEM doesn't have an isolation facility for COVID-19 patients but it has a laboratory where samples are being tested.

A senior doctor alleged that the hospital administration had been negligent. "In my 20 years of service, I have not

seen such lethargy. The senior doctors not only tried to cover up the matter, they asked the interns and doctors in the ward to have a 'good bath' to avoid getting infected." He added that several doctors at the hospital are now unable to meet their own family members since they are worried that they may be carriers.

Civic officials said that the woman is from the western suburbs and her husband is a taxi driver. "We suspect that her husband may have been infected by someone he ferried. We will send him and their 13-year-old son for testing on Monday," said a civic official. He added that the building she lived was sanitised on Sunday and residents have been kept in quarantine.

Dr Hemant Deshmukh, dean of KEM hospital denied the allegations. "The patient was kept in isolation in the ICU and didn't come in contact with any other patient at the hospital. Around five doctors who were treating her have been quarantined and will be sent for testing in another 3-4 days," he said.

The woman stayed with six people and all be sent for testing to Kasturba Hospital.

'We don't see number of patients, we just work hard'

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WITH the entire country under lockdown to contain the Coronavirus (COVID-19) spread, medical officials are leading the attack to fight the dreaded pandemic that has killed more than 31,000 people worldwide.

One such doctor from Kasturba Hospital agreed to speak to mid-day on the condition of anonymity wherein, the doctor told us how they are managing the workload, their 8-hour duty, how they treat COVID-19 patients and what precautions they take to avoid contracting the deadly virus.

"Currently, we are not under any stress despite there being a lot of work. In fact, we all have a strict 8-hour duty. Sometimes we do wonder about how long all this would continue or when the antidote will be developed. But we don't look at the number of patients. Our focus is to work hard, even if it conducting tests to treating the patients and ensuring that they are discharged soon," the doctor working at Kasturba Hospital said.

When asked about the precautions they are taking at a personal level, the doctor said, "While everybody wears personal protective equipment while being on duty, we ensure to wear face mask even when we are home. Once we reach home, we take a hot water bath immediately and our clothes are washed separately."

The doctor denied there being a shortage of protective gear for the medical staff at Kasturba Hospital. However, the doctor quickly pointed out that the protective gears vary from hospitals to hospitals.

"Different hospitals have a different set of personal protective types of equipment. While in a few sets, the headgear is a surgical cap in another set the headgear is made of a solid material thus providing more protection. The gears should be uniform everywhere so that it can provide maximum protection."

The doctor further added that they are not allowed to carry any their belongings inside the COVID-19 wards. "All the equipments are provided by the hospital and we leave them in the hospital once the duty ends. Moreover, we sanitise all our personal belongings such as wallets, mobile phones immediately after reaching home," shared the doctor.

**EIGHT**

No. of hours doctors have been told to work each day

## In quarantine, hospital staff sends SOS for breakfast

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FOR 30 employees of Saifee Hospital at Charni Road, who are quarantined, Sunday morning was a harrowing time as they got breakfast only after themselves making repeated calls to get it arranged. The staff which includes doctors, nurses and non-medical employees, was quarantined after a doctor at the hospital tested positive for COVID-19 and died, now fears they might face issues getting food again.

mid-day had reported that a 53-year-old cardiac surgeon with Saifee Hospital tested positive for Coronavirus. The civic body shut down several sections of the hospital and quarantined other employees. The man's 85-year-old father, who was also associated with Saifee Hospital and died at Hinduja Hospital on Thursday had tested COVID-19 positive.

### 'Made calls for breakfast'

One of the doctors in quarantine said, "There was no issue as such on Friday and Saturday, Sunday began with no breakfast till 10.30 am or 11.00 am. It was only after repeated calls to the ad-

ministrative staff, that they got it. We were worried if we would get lunch and dinner so I made calls to my friends asking them to source food for 30 of us in quarantine, through social workers. But in the afternoon we found the administration will arrange food for us."

### 'Arrange own food'

He added, "We hope this arrangement is not temporary as we were told the reason for delay in breakfast was absence of kitchen staff. We were also told to arrange for our own food. How are we supposed to do so? We even have to stay away from our family. I cannot expect my family to bring me food as our housing society has asked them to home quarantine themselves. Being a medical professional I understand the importance of quarantine but unavailability of food is a problem and I hope the administration continues to send it."

Late on Sunday the doctor said that he had tested negative for COVID-19. However, there was no official confirmation on this.

There was no response from the spokesperson of Saifee Hospital.

## 'People jumping quarantine, going off on family holidays'

Continued from page 1

WHILE many health care workers and doctors, on the front line of the fight against Coronavirus, in Mumbai and Palghar haven't returned home since the lockdown, most are able to see their families for just a few hours. Even as they continue to work round the clock to contain the disease, some people are blatantly ignoring their advise and risking infecting others.

The doctors said when health workers visited the homes of self-quarantined people, they found the doors locked, and on asking around, the neighbours told them that they have gone on a holiday with their family.

"My children and husband wait every night for me to come home for dinner, but my duty keeps me at the hospital as I try to convince thick-headed people who have been stamped with home quarantine (HQ) to remain indoors. But these people, living in posh high-rises of South Mumbai, drove their lavish car packed with family members, to Alibaug and Matheran," said a civic doctor. A doctor,



Doctors ask people to follow home quarantine guidelines

who gave birth to twins recently, has been working tirelessly. "Before the outbreak, my husband or house help used to bring the twins to hospital [for breastfeeding] but it is not recommended now. So, I feed my babies only after returning home," she said.

Another doctor told mid-day how little he get to see his wife and children these days. "But they understand that we are on a mission to fight the deadly virus. It is very challenging and risky. But we have been given enough protective kits like hand gloves, masks, sanitisers, etc," he said.

Many doctors have suggested that the government con-

# COVID spoils fruits of labour

A youth on a mission to revive farming in a Palghar village is left with four tonnes of unsold watermelons; starts barter system to prevent the produce from rotting away

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OUT of the 100 families at Ainsheet village in Palghar's Vada taluka, around 25-30 have owned farming land for generations. "We are surrounded by the Vaitarna River on three sides and the Vada city on the other. Until 20 ago, we grew vegetables and fruits like chikoo, mango, coconut and bananas," said Rohan Thakare.

Twenty years ago, with liberalisation, each home saw the rise of government servants and contractors, and farming took a back seat. Thakare, too, moved to Thane in 2007 to study management and now he runs a security company with technology partners in Israel.

"A lot of my work took me to Israel. We use their technology for smart city solutions, cyber security and command and control centre," said Thakare, adding that his partners there are also into farming. "Every time I visit Israel, they take me to one of their farms. They have a very systematic approach; they segregate and pack the produce on the farm itself and know in advance who their buyers are," the 32-year-



Rohan Thakare with his watermelon harvest; (right) the barter system he started to help the villagers during the lockdown



old said. He was inspired to revive the farming practices in Vada and began spending his weekends working the farms again.

Compared to 25 years ago, only four farms are actively growing produce today. The first challenge was youth moving to the city for work.

"I understand that not everyone wants to do farming. So, we set up a BachatGadh (trust fund) and got them to take over the marketing and distribution of what we would grow," says Thakare. He even took a bunch of them to Israel

to observe their farming techniques.

Last December, he harvested organic watermelons and this March they saw a crop of 12 tonnes that sold locally for R18-20 per kg. He sold most of it, but four tonnes are lying on the farm due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) lockdown. The price has dropped to R11/kg. "We had tied up with OOO Farms to transport the leftover produce to the city, but we couldn't. It would have easily sold for R30-40 per kg in the city. We are now distributing it to the locals for free as it will rot oth-

erwise," said Thakare.

Come April end or early May, their next batch will be ready for harvest, but with this lock down, he might have to discard the entire crop. "This is a learning curve for us, we will see what happens. We had also decided to apply for a loan," he said.

For now, he has started a barter system where villagers exchange fruits and vegetables. "We know how much our produce costs. So far, I have exchanged my watermelons for veggies, dal and fruits."

He is also inspiring villagers to do it among themselves. On Sunday, they are planning to set up a barter market. "We will try and implement this on

a regular basis, not just during the lockdown," he said.

Thakare is also eyeing on making watermelon syrup that is used for drinks and flavouring. "For now, it comes from Malaysia. The plan is to make our own."

Under Thakare's vision, the villagers have also agreed to build Ainsheet village tourism. "We are going to make traditional huts where people can come and stay by the river, take part in farming activities and try our local cuisine. One pilot hut is already ready. The architect we hired uses vernacular architecture that utilises natural and locally available material like stones, bricks and lime," he said.

## IIT-B creates app to track those flouting quarantine

**PALLAVI SMART**  
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In an effort to help the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) keep track of those undergoing quarantine, a team of professionals and alumni of the Indian Institute of Technology-Bombay (IIT-B) have designed an app — CORONTINE. The app, which has an in-built geo-fencing feature, can help authorities register the asymptomatic carriers of Coronavirus and track them to check whether they are within their quarantined zones. The technology is ready to use and proposals have been sent to the Centre and the BMC.

According to the team, which has designed the app, CORONTINE is flexible, comprehensive, scalable and ready-to-use.

The app automatically generates alerts (sms, email, etc) if users move out of their quarantined zones. The platform provides for organising zones into regions and several other such features. It is extremely customisable as per the needs of the agencies.

Explaining the concept, Prof Ganesh Ramakrishnan, Department of Computer Science and Engineering, IIT-B, said, "We believe CORONTINE will be really helpful in preventing the spread of COVID-19. Using it the authorities can track the asymptomatic carriers and use their manpower for other useful activities."

He further said, "Eventually this app can be used to alert non-infected people if they come in contact with potential carriers."

The team of developers includes Prof Ganesh Ramakrishnan, Department of Computer Science and Engineering; Prof Manjesh Hanawal, Department of IEOR, and alumnus Ashvin Gami.

**₹11**

Price/kg the melons had dropped to

## Restaurant body asks landlords for rent waivers

**PHORUM DALAL**  
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AFTER writing to the Centre for a deferment of various payments, the National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI) has written an open letter to landlords asking for a waiver on rent and CAM (Common Area Maintenance) from March to at least June. Landlords, however, have asked how they can do that when they too have business to run.

NRAI has also asked for a waiver of minimum guaranteed rents for six months post resumption and a 50 per cent reduction of CAM for the same period. It has also proposed a revenue-sharing deal not exceeding 10 per cent for six months after operations resume. The letter from Anurag Katriar, President, NRAI and CEO of deGustibus Hospitality, reads, "This appeal is aimed at ensuring our mere survival during such extraordinarily troubled times; we aren't trying to profiteer at the expense of the landlords."

Restaurant landlords work in two ways — the first category earns rent from multiple properties and has no



Sai Sagar restaurant in Bandra West wears a deserted look. PIC/BIPIN KOKATE

loan overhead. The second category works on Lease Rent Discounting (LRD) wherein, for instance, a landlord with a property worth R10 crore charges a rent of R5 lakh. This R5 lakh is paid to a bank as EMI for a new loan to buy another property and build a portfolio.

### Fight this together

Nikhil Govani, director of Utopia Group that owns Victoria Mill which houses ShangHigh, Flea Bazaar Café and Lord of the Drinks among others, confirmed that currently, they are not charging rent. "We are

facing a pandemic and have to fight this together. It is a matter of humanity that we are not charging our tenants," he said.

A default on EMIs converts the loan into an NPA (non-performing asset) and banks could eventually seize the property. The RBI recently deferred interest on loans for three months.

An important detail here is that banks won't allow property-owners with an LRD to enter a revenue-sharing model with restaurants as loans are issued on a particular valuation. A revenue-sharing deal

would reduce the rent which is supposed to be paid as EMI. This would reduce the loan amount too.

### We have businesses to run

A landlord with a varied restaurant portfolio in the city, on condition of anonymity, said, "We save money from our existing business, cut corners in our expenses, save money to buy properties to earn a monthly income after paying EMIs."

Once the property becomes loan-free after 12 years, it begins to generate income. On average, a good restaurant earns double its rent per month. "Like restaurants, landlords or property owners also have overhead costs. CAM includes salaries of minimum-wage workers like watchmen, liftmen, house-keeping staff. If they want a 50 per cent cut, are they saying we cut salaries by half too?" he asked.

While there have been de-

ferments on payments, the liabilities remain. "If my EMIs bounce, there will be litigation. Will the restaurateur be able to use the premises? Whatever the government offers the restaurants, it will have to extend to landlords. If they allow a deferment on EMI, we will extend the same to our tenants. If restaurants want any deferment, then once the lockdown is over, they should gradually pay the balance along with the rent," a source said on condition of anonymity.

Another landlord said, "I lease commercial properties. My clients haven't paid rent since March saying business was bad and they are now shut. I have an LRD and a LAP (Loan Against Property). I managed to pay EMIs in March. But what happens in April? We will write to banks for a moratorium. Landlords and restaurant-owners will have to work it out together. They need us and we need them."

**'It will be easier for restaurateurs to have a discussion on rent with landlords who have not done LRDs. Both parties need to focus on the long-term relationship and work out a mutually benefiting way forward'**

Chirag Maru, real estate expert

# Mumbai's Good Samaritans home deliver to sr citizens

At Cuffe Parade residents' association gets subscription meal delivery; at Dombivli, residents home deliver essentials to house-bound seniors

HARIT N JOSHI  
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AMID the lockdown to fight Coronavirus, the Cuffe Parade Residents Association (CPRA) is ensuring restrictions don't cause too much hassle to residents in the locality. With over 60 buildings and societies in Cuffe Parade, the CPRA swung into action from March 22.

Initially, it encouraged the residents to help each other out, especially the senior citizens living alone, as house help and cooks couldn't come anymore due to the lockdown. The association then negotiated with restaurants in the locality for subscription of meals to societies, and on Sunday, the first set of orders was delivered.

"It [the service] will be subscription based and we have managed to get it at a good 30 to 40 per cent discount. A vegetarian thaali will cost ₹250 and a non-vegetarian thaali ₹270 inclusive of all taxes and delivery charges. We have also taken all precaution of hygiene and safety," CPRA president Aditi Jain told mid-day.

Former India women's captain Diana Edulji, who was among the first residents to register for the service, said, "The initiative for senior citizens is a god's gift. As my cook can't come, my sister



(Left, centre) Residents of Atur Terraces receive their meal from a restaurant during lockdown; (right) residents of a Kandivli society cooking on the premises for the homeless

(Behroze) and I have booked our meals. Their packaging, hygiene and delivery were excellent. The food quality was also very good."

Besides, the CPRA has also tied up with grocery stores in the locality; residents can place orders over WhatsApp and pick-up at the slotted time. "Some grocers have agreed to deliver to senior citizens," said Jain.

Following the March 22 order, the CPRA had introduced 'Buddy System' wherein residents helped each other. "Anyone heading out to buy grocery, purchased some for their neighbours or other families in the building too. Some families helped senior citizens living alone, watchmen and security guards with meals," said Jain.



"Our main objective is to ensure everyone is together in this fight against Coronavirus," Jain concluded.

In Kandivli, a housing society has been cooking for the homeless

"We have been cooking for homeless people near MG Road in Kandivli West. On Sunday, we distributed 387 packets and we are planning to make 600-700 per day. We distributed the food packets maintaining a safe distance during distribution. We all need to come forward like this," Bhavesh Rakhasia.

In Dombivli West, volunteers are helping residents of housing societies at Phule Road with essential services. Nikhil, a resident, said that about six to seven volunteers from then neighbourhood



have come together to lend a helping hand to those in need. "They have been asking people not to come out of their houses... If any resident needs something, they try their best to get it to them," he added.

Sunil Chitre, one of the volunteers, said, "We go to the Nagar Sevak's office and sit there for about an hour, waiting to people to call for help, and then we send volunteers. We have also decided to escort fruit and vegetable vendors to the buildings. "If anyone wants to purchase anything, either they can come down and buy or we will go to their doors and collect the money and list of items they want. We will then pay the vendors and deliver the items," he said.

With inputs by  
Gaurav Sarkar



## IRCTC DISHES OUT 2,000 FREE MEALS

Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) has geared up its base kitchens in Mumbai Central and CSMT to prepare distress meals in large quantities for the poor and needy. "To begin with around 2,000 dal khichdi-pickle meals were distributed by on Sunday at Mumbai Central," an IRCTC spokesperson said. IRCTC will also be preparing 1,000 to 1,500 food packs from Sunday at Ahmedabad base kitchen which will be distributed by collector Ahmedabad to needy stranded people. The number will go up as per demand.

TEXT/RAJENDRA B AKLEKAR

## Vasai-Virar MLA promises free ration to 3L families

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NEARLY three lakh families, including those of migrant labourers, in Vasai-Virar City Municipal Corporation won't have to struggle for their daily meals during the lockdown, MLA Hitendra Thakur has assured, with his plan to provide basic rations to them.

Hitendra has announced that he would provide packets of basic essential groceries like dal, rice, oil and spices, to families free of cost until the lockdown ends. On Saturday, the Thakur clan met the district administration to discuss the crisis several lakh families in the region are facing due to the restrictions imposed to tackle the deadly Coronavirus.

"We are working out modalities on how to distribute these food packets. One option is through public distribution system [popularly known as ration shops] or by delivering them in their localities with the help of party workers," Kshitij Thakur, MLA and son of Hitendra told mid-day. He added that the Thakur clan will bear the cost of the food packets.

Vasai-Virar is home to several thousands of migrants who work in Mumbai and other satellite cities around the financial capital of India. With the shutdown, these families, who live hand to mouth, are struggling to have even one



The food packets were given to the poorest of the poor

**'We have told farmers to supply the food items that we will distribute among people. We have placed an order for 12 tonnes of onions'**

Kshitij Thakur, MLA, Nalasopara

meal a day.

The move will also benefit the farmers who are struggling to sell their produce in the absence of farm labourers and transport, said Kshitij, who represents Nalasopara.

The MLA said the police and local authorities have assured all cooperation to avoid crowding. Area-wise time slots will be given for the distribution.

## BE(a)ST-ly tales: Staff at peril sans protection

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THE BEST Undertaking's transport department, which primarily consists of bus drivers and conductors, is being called to work every day during the lockdown, claims staff. A large number of them are left without work, after waiting together without masks all day, for a vehicle to be assigned to them.

According to a BEST employee, transport is the only department that has been called to work every day at its total capacity. This is unlike the 50 per cent system that some other departments have going for them, with workforce split into two, each half operating on alternate days.

"Since the number of buses plying on roads is less than the transport department's total workforce, it leaves many of us without work," the



BEST drivers and conductors are forced to wait together without masks, gloves or sanitisers, all day for buses to be assigned to them employee said.

### 'No masks, no sanitisers'

"There is no concept of social distancing at bus depots. Many of us wait close to each other, without masks, gloves, or hand sanitisers," he added.

Furthermore, even though AC buses have completely stopped plying, drivers and conductors who operate them

on contractual basis are also being called to work — they too are left unprotected and packed into groups.

A BEST driver said that only 20 per cent of buses are currently used. "We were given masks once but they were disposable. Sanitisers are only given to the office admin employees. We are constantly in contact with each other while

we wait for a vehicle. The vehicles are not being sanitised. Plus, we have been instructed to only allow government and essential services employees into buses. How do we know if any of them has tested positive?" he said.

A source from the BEST Workers' Union said that the management has not been able to mark routes that should be prioritised at a time like this, which is why more drivers and conductors are being called to work than required.

'Calling as per requirement' While confirming that all BEST routes and all 27 depots have been functional every day, BEST spokesperson Manoj Varade said, "We have not been calling 100 per cent of the drivers and conductors to work. We have been calling staff as per requirement. There is nothing of the sort that there are too many people waiting at bus depots."

# Those working on post-mortems could get infected, fear city docs

LTMG hospital in Sion has written a letter to dean refusing to conduct autopsies on people who have died of fever-related issues and acute respiratory distress syndrome

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A HIGH-LEVEL meeting held by top city forensic surgeons to discuss the modalities of conducting autopsies on patients who have died of Coronavirus brought an important concern to the fore — non-availability of six-layer body bags to wrap such bodies. While Sion hospital has already written to the dean refusing to conduct autopsies on people who have died of fever-related issues and acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), those at the meeting also said special care needed to be taken while transporting such bodies for cremation.

The meeting was chaired by Police Surgeon Dr S M Patil and attended by professors and HODs of Department of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology of three civic medical colleges Nair, LTMG and KEM — Dr Shailesh Mohite, Dr Rajesh Dhare and Dr Ravindra Devkar.

## Extra cautious

Sion hospital Dean Dr Dhare said, "We have to be extra cautious while handling such bodies as many a times patients themselves do not reveal their travel history or if they are carriers of the virus, as they do not show symp-

toms for a couple of weeks, and by the time they visit the hospital it's too late. Also, there are instances when patients undergo treatment for weeks together, but after their deaths the doctor concerned does not issue death certificates. In such cases, the bodies are sent for autopsy, which can be dangerous, as those working on post-mortems could get infected."

In his letter (copy with this paper), Dr Dhare stated that the department handling patients with fever and ARDS should certify the cause of death, as there is a high risk of transmission of the infection from bodies to doctors, attendants and mortuary staff. "If there is any medico legal issue or suspected foul play or any unnatural case, the department concerned should contact the HOD (forensic medicine) for further coordination and decision," the letter concludes.

A source, who was present at the meeting, said, "Civic chief Praveen Pardeshi has directed the dean of Sion hospital, Dr Mohan Joshi to procure body bags at the earliest.

When asked, Dr Joshi confirmed this and said, "We have not found the six-layer body bags so far. Moreover, each body bag costs around ₹6,000, so we are also looking



The special Coronavirus protective kit comprises face mask, boiler suit, goggles, shoe legging, hand gloves and waste disposable bags

for alternatives. Spraying of disinfectants like sodium hypochloride on the bodies and covering them with specially treated polythene sheets need to be done."

## 'Clarity needed'

When contacted, Police Surgeon Dr Patil said, "We need to get clarity on deaths of people who tested negative for COVID-19 and also deaths in home quarantine. The deaths that happen in hospitals get certified by treating doctors. The second concern is about the transportation and cremation of Coronavirus deaths. A forensic surgeon will soon speak

to health experts at Kasturba Hospital to understand the method they have adopted to handle and transport bodies of those who died of the virus."

About body bags and protective gear, Dr Patil said, "We have already procured special Coronavirus Protective (PPE) kit, which consists of face mask, boiler suit, goggles, shoe legging, gloves and waste disposable bags, for the staff who cut open the body. About 100 packets have been ordered, each of which costs between ₹700-800. And we have equal number of HIV special gear for doctors (each costing ₹1,000-₹1,200), which can be

used while dealing with suspected COVID-19 deaths. But if the BMC health department or treating doctors certify every COVID-19 death, then the bodies won't reach the autopsy centre at all."

## Infected lungs

A forensic surgeon said, "The Central health department clearly states that in case an autopsy is done on a COVID-19 deceased, special care should be taken while opening the lungs, as it will be highly infected." However, a forensic professor said from the academics perspective, it was important to conduct sample autopsies to study the extent of damage the virus does to lungs and also the severity of the pneumonia can be ascertained. However, in our country, it will be purely the central government who will have to give special permissions and designated place for conducting such specialised autopsies, which can be done by a team of experts whose research work could help medical professionals understand the virus better," a forensic professor said,

"In China, multiple autopsies have been done on numerous COVID-19 victims and they are in the process of completing their research findings," said Dr Dhare.



Reeva with mother Urvi and father Kailas Cheda

## 4-year-old gets her birthday party via video

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EVEN as the country remained under lockdown, a family in Andheri brought together their friends and families to put smile back on their daughter's face. Reeva was upset about having to celebrate her fourth birthday without her friends, but her father Kailas Cheda decided to not let the lockdown come in the way of her happiness.

Kailas, a resident of Jay Prabhats society at Adarsh Nagar, searched for an app to allow multiple people to video conference at a time. He contacted his friends and family to come online in the evening. The birthday party began at 6 on Friday evening and an hour later.

"My daughter was upset that nobody will come to her birthday party. To cheer her up, we decided to celebrate a social distancing party at home. We found an app where 100 people can join at a time. We requested the parents of my daughter's friends, and close family members to install this application."

Around 85 families came together and sang happy birthday to Reeva as she cut her cake, said Kailas. Reeva's mother Urvi said they also played a few games on the conference call.

# Solitary musings in locked-down Bombay

What's it like for a working professional living alone in an apartment during the present lockdown?



Fiona Fernandez

THE history nut that I am, this 21-day lockdown is causing an alert and very fertile mind to use analogies from my fave subject at every bend. Trust me, it's not all sweet victories and visionary leaders, especially if you happen to be one of the countless working professionals who lives alone in Bombay. I hope some of you who read this, will be able to identify how this inexplicable situation has forced us to hit the reflect button on a gazillion things.

When the Big Guy put the country under lockdown last Sunday, as a test drive, I was

forced to peek outside of my window at 4.50 pm (yes, we are still to figure how most Indians read time); entire families had assembled by their windows to play their part in the Great Indian Utensil Philharmonic Orchestra. Members of my typically middle-class housing colony were trying to outdo one another with thalis, conch shells and even horns. While tutaris would be played in the old days to greet armies in Maharashtra before or after they went into battle, here the inconceivable 'tunes' continued for 15-20 minutes, egged on by chants of "Go Corona, Go."

Creating a daily newspaper remotely is probably how the Maratha armies would have felt when they went to war — comparatively smaller in number yet, tactically smart to face adversities. Coordination is key,

and soon enough, I had to pull deep into my reserves to negotiate all hurdles, from technological glitches to meeting deadlines with people having different Internet speeds; it was treading into new, uncharted terrain. And before you realise, like quicksand, you are already knee-deep in the action, as you slip into autopilot mode. This is how Chhatrapati Shivaji's enemies must have felt during a long, tense siege to capture one of his forts. Everyone stays put, and patient.

Even before the Big Guy returned on Tuesday night with news of the 21-day lockdown, my house help, Laxmibai foresaw the future. Unlike Rani Laxmibai of Jhansi, she decided to not step out; alas, with no warning, "Kal se mummy nahi aayegi," read the stark message from her daughter's phone.

Remember that chapter where Shivaji attacked Shaista Khan, Aurangzeb's general in the middle of the night, and chopped off his fingers? This also meant zero human contact for a while.

I whirred into action, and decided to head out early next morning to stock on supplies from my trusted cold storage and provision store. I managed to locate a local Tanaji Malusare; a face-masked autowallah who played saviour and even ferried me home without a fuss.

By Day 3 of the lockdown, yoga and meditation became my new best friend. I've practised it for seven years; somehow, these sessions seemed priceless. Try it, if you haven't. It can easily be your ticket to some sanity and self-discipline. Kitchen confidential took a different meaning as all the tried-and-tested and 'Instant Recipes for I'

trials began. Tears (only for onion-peeling) and loads of experimentation resulted in lot of chuckles. You master the art of laughing at your own jokes.

Every morning a new doomsday prophecy would creep to mind, and slowly add newfound twists and turns. This is how the Jews in Nazi Germany would have possibly felt. Trapped. And here, we are not even at war, but a locked-in state. I returned to my copy of The Diary of Anne Frank and read it in one sitting.

By Day 5, I could predict which song the RJ was going to play next on his/her playlist; and yes, there were moments when I'd smile or laugh at some friendly banter between them and a caller. The plants on my mini window garden received some serious TLC, too, and I could swear they began to look a lot greener. The bird calls from

the trees in the complex offered a natural calming effect, too; I could now actually hear their symphonies. My new friends' circle looks promising.

Mind you, all the while, being surrounded by mostly grim news, it's important to toss it off before you tuck in, with mindless, light entertainment. Make it a thumb rule.

I tread gingerly and with trepidation into Week 2; it's anyone's guess how the mind and brain will battle new challenges. I've got my new gang, my yoga, my books and some greasypaint from the (non-historic) battles of last week.

Gloria Gaynor's "I will survive" is playing on the radio.

mid-day's Features Editor Fiona Fernandez relishes the city's sights, sounds, smells and stones...wherever the ink and the inclination takes her. She tweets @bombayana

Send your feedback to mailbag@mid-day.com

# Seal state, district borders to block movement, says Centre

Warns that those violating the curb will be sent to 14-day quarantine

**COVID-19**  
**TICKER**

**1,024** ACTIVE CORONAVIRUS CASES IN INDIA AS OF TODAY

**NEW DELHI:** The Centre on Sunday asked state governments and Union Territory administrations to effectively seal state and district borders to stop movement of migrant workers during the nationwide lockdown and warned that those violating the curb will be sent to 14-day quarantine.

During a video conference with chief secretaries and DGPs, Cabinet Secretary, Rajiv Gauba and Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla asked them to ensure that there is no movement of people across cities or on highways as the lockdown continues.

"There has been movement of migrant workers in some parts of the country. Directions were issued that district and state borders should be effectively sealed," an official statement said. States were directed to ensure that there is no movement of people across cities or on highways and there should be strict implementation of the lockdown. Only the movement of goods should be allowed. Those who have violated the lockdown and travelled during the period of lockdown will be subject to minimum 14 days of quarantine in government quarantine facilities, the statement said.

District magistrates and SPs should be made personally re-



Migrant workers and their families line-up outside the Anand Vihar bus terminal to leave for their villages during a government-imposed nationwide lockdown, in New Delhi, on March 28, 2020. PIC/AFP

sponsible for the implementation of these directions, it said.

The two top central government officials told the chiefs of police and civil administrations of all states to make adequate arrangements for food and shelter for the poor and needy people including migrant labourers at the place of their work. The Cabinet secretary and Home Ministry officials are in constant touch with the state chief secretaries and the DGPs.

Video conferences were held by the Cabinet secretary and the Home secretary on Saturday evening as well as Sunday morning with the chief secretaries and the DGPs.

**27**  
Total no. of deaths due to the virus

## Please forgive me for the lockdown: Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday sought the nation's forgiveness for imposing a monumental lockdown on the country, saying it was a question of life and death and expressed confidence that "we will definitely win the battle" against the Coronavirus menace that has claimed 25 lives in India so far. In his monthly Mann ki Baat radio address to the nation, Modi also praised the front-line workers in the fight against the virus as well as countless workers in the essential

services who are ensuring the country doesn't come to a complete standstill in the 21-day lockdown announced on March 24. "I seek forgiveness ... I strongly feel, you will forgive me. When I see my poor brothers and sisters, then I definitely feel that they would say what kind of prime minister is this who has put us in this trouble. I specially seek their forgiveness. You had to undergo problems. I understand but there is no other way out to fight the Coronavirus for a country with a population of 130 crore," he said.



## 'CONSEQUENCES OF A COMPLETE ECONOMIC SHUT DOWN WILL BE DISASTROUS'

**RAHUL GANDHI,**  
Congress leader



'It is critical for us to understand that India's conditions are unique. We

will be required to take different steps than other large countries who are following a total lockdown strategy. The consequences of a complete economic shut down will disastrously amplify the death toll arising from COVID-19'

**ARVIND KEJRIWAL,**  
Delhi chief minister



'I appeal to all of you (migrant workers) not to go to your villages.

Stay wherever you are, because in large gatherings, you are also at risk of being infected with the Coronavirus. The Coronavirus will reach your villages and families through you and it will then spread across the country'

**SANJIV SINGH,**  
Indian Oil Corp chairman

'We have mapped demand for all fuel for entire April and beyond. We have refineries operating at levels enough to meet all of the demand. Besides all bulk storage points, LPG distributorships and petrol pumps are functioning normally. There is absolutely no shortage of any fuel. LPG consumption however continues to grow and we are servicing all customers'

**KAPIL SIBAL,**  
senior Congress leader



'Modiji why? For Janata Curfew, four-day notice and for 21-day

lockdown, four-hour notice. No preparations in advance before lockdown. Migrants, jobless walking up to 200 km to reach home without food, shelter. Lakhs stranded on highways, clueless and incompetent'

## Swiggy, Zomato to deliver groceries in Goa

In face of failed efforts to run a volunteer-based system to home-deliver essential goods for nearly a week now, Goa CM Pramod Sawant announced that Swiggy and Zomato had been roped in to deliver food and grocery

items to people's homes. "eCommerce operators such as @swiggy\_in, @ZomatoIN, and other platforms have been permitted to deliver food and other grocery items. #GoaFightsCOVID19," Sawant tweeted.

## Newspaper hawkers to get passes

Delhi Police issued WhatsApp numbers for newspaper hawkers so that they can get their movement pass (curfew pass) made from their homes itself. Delhi police spokesperson, Anil Mittal on Saturday said all the station in-charges have been asked not to stop newspaper hawkers in the morning while distributing newspapers. He said, "Due to nationwide three-week lockdown the newspaper hawkers were facing trouble while distributing newspapers in the morning. In order to make things smooth for them we have issued two WhatsApp numbers for every district on which the newspaper hawkers can request for the movement pass."

## SpiceJet pilot tests positive for COVID-19

SpiceJet said on Sunday that one of its pilots who did not fly any international flight in March has tested positive for the Coronavirus. "One of our colleagues, a first officer with SpiceJet, has tested positive for COVID-19. The test report came on March 28. He did not operate any international flight in March 2020," a spokesperson of the airline told PTI. "The last domestic flight that he operated was on March 21 from Chennai to Delhi and since then he had quarantined himself at home," the spokesperson added. As a precautionary measure, the spokesperson said, all crew and staff who had been in direct contact with him have been asked to self-quarantine by staying at home for the next 14 days.

## Contributions for PM-CARES fund pour in

● In fight against the Novel Coronavirus or COVID-19 pandemic, country's premiere investigating agency CBI has decided to extend monetary support to the government in the need of the hour with its officials pledging to donate their one-day salary in PM-CARES fund.



● The Railway Ministry will donate ₹151 crore to PM-CARES fund to help in combating the Coronavirus threat, Union Minister, Piyush Goyal said on Sunday. "Following PM's call, I, Suresh Angadi, will donate one month's salary, 13 lakh rly, PSU employees will donate one day's salary, equal to ₹151 cr to PM-CARES fund," Goyal tweeted.

● Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday approved a proposal for the contribution of one day salary by the employees of Ministry of Defence to the PM-CARES fund to fight COVID-19. It is estimated that around ₹500 crore will be collectively provided by the Defence Ministry to the fund from various wings, including Army, Navy, Air Force, Defence PSUs and others.

# Coronavirus death toll across the globe crosses 31,000-mark

The tallies, collected from the World Health Organisation, likely reflect only a fraction of actual number of infections

**PARIS:** The worldwide number of officially confirmed fatalities from the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) rose to 31,412 on Sunday, according to a tally compiled by AFP from official sources.

More than two-thirds of the deaths from Coronavirus have now been recorded in Europe.

Over 6,67,090 declared cases have been registered in 183 countries and territories since the epidemic first emerged in China in December. Of these cases, at least 1,34,700 are now considered recovered.

Italy, which recorded its first Coronavirus death in February, has to date declared 10,023 fatalities, with 92,472 infections and 12,384 people recovered. Like Italy, Spain has more fatalities than China with 6,528, as well as 78,747 infections.

By continent, Europe has listed 3,63,766 cases and 22,259 deaths to date, Asia 1,04,596 cases and 3,761 deaths, the Middle East 46,596 cases and 2,718 deaths, the US and Canada together 130,120 cases with 2,250 deaths, Latin America and the Caribbean 13,544 cases with 274 deaths, Africa 4,267 cases with 134 deaths and Oceania 4,208 cases with 16 deaths. **Agencies**

## 6,67,090

Total no. of declared cases worldwide

More than two-thirds of the deaths from Coronavirus have now been recorded in Europe



Healthcare worker take samples from a driver at the University Hospital in Burgos, Spain on Sunday. PIC/AFP

## 'Things will get worse before they get better'

**LONDON:** British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who is self-isolating after testing positive for the Coronavirus (COVID-19), has written to every UK household asking people to stay at home and follow the social distancing rules to fight the pandemic, warning them things will get worse before they get better.

In letters which will arrive through the post for nearly 30 million homes along with a leaflet outlining the UK government's advice, at an estimated cost of 5.8 million pounds, Johnson

**'We know things will get worse before they get better. But we are making the right preparations, and the more we all follow the rules, the fewer lives will be lost'**

Boris Johnson in his letter says he will not hesitate to impose stricter measures.

"From the start, we have sought to put in the right measures at the right time. We will not hesitate to go further if that is what the scientific and medical advice tells us we must do," his letter reads. **Agencies**

## Spain records 838 deaths in 24 hours

**MADRID:** Spain confirmed another 838 deaths in 24 hours from Coronavirus on Sunday — a record bringing the total number of deaths to 6,528, according to health ministry figures. The number of confirmed cases in Spain has now reached 78,797 — after the one-day increase of 9.1 per cent.

Except for a brief lull recorded on Thursday, Spain's death toll has been rising daily.

However, officials have pointed to a slower growth rate for both deaths and confirmed cases and expressed hope that the peak of the outbreak was approaching. **Agencies**

## Europe, US virus deaths surge as Trump decides against NYC lockdown

**MADRID:** The Coronavirus death toll shot past 20,000 in Europe on Saturday, as US President Donald Trump decided against putting the hard-hit New York region under quarantine.

Trump decided late Saturday against imposing a broad lockdown on New York and its neighbours after a strong pushback from local political leaders and warnings of the panic it could spark.

"A quarantine will not be necessary," Trump tweeted, about eight hours after he stunned New York metropolitan region — the epicentre of the US outbreak with a proposal to place it under quarantine. The Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, however, asked residents not

**Trump decided against imposing a broad lockdown after a strong pushback from local leaders and warnings of the panic it could spark**

to travel except for essential purposes.

Trump's reversal came on the same day the US death toll topped 2,100, more than doubling in just three days. Of the fatalities, more than a quarter were in New York.

Officials say they fear New York may follow the deadly path charted by Italy, with health officials exhausted and hospitals desperately short of protective equipment and ventilators. **Agencies**



US National Guard soldiers handle COVID-19 swab tests at Lehman College in New York on Sunday. PIC/AFP

## Saudi intercepts missiles over curfew-locked Riyadh, border city



It was the first major assault on Saudi since the Huthis offered to halt attacks on the kingdom last September. FILE PIC/AFP

**RIYADH:** Saudi air defences intercepted ballistic missiles over Riyadh and a city on the Yemen border late Saturday, leaving at least two civilians wounded in the capital that is under curfew in a bid to curb the spread of the Coronavirus.

Multiple explosions shook Riyadh in the attack, which the Saudi-led military coalition blamed on Yemen's Iran-aligned Huthi rebels who have previously targeted Saudi with missiles, rockets and drones.

It was the first major assault on Saudi Arabia since the Huthis offered last September

to halt attacks on the kingdom after devastating twin strikes on Saudi oil installations.

"Two ballistic missiles were launched towards the cities of Riyadh and Jizan," Saudi Press Agency reported, citing the coalition fighting the rebels.

**The assault comes despite a show of support by all of Yemen's warring parties for a United Nations call for a ceasefire to protect civilians from the Coronavirus pandemic**

Their interception sent shrapnel raining on residential neighbourhoods in the cities, leaving two civilians injured in Riyadh, a civil defence spokesman said in a separate statement released by SPA.

There was no immediate comment from the rebels.

At least three blasts rocked the capital, which is under a 15-hour Coronavirus curfew, just before midnight, said AFP reporters. Jizan, like many other Saudi cities, faces a shorter dusk-to-dawn curfew.

The assault comes despite a show of support on Thurs-

day by all of Yemen's warring parties for a United Nations call for a ceasefire to protect civilians from the coronavirus pandemic.

Saudi Arabia, the Yemeni government and the rebels all welcomed an appeal from UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres for an "immediate global ceasefire" to help avert disaster for vulnerable people in conflict zones.

The Yemen government condemned the attack, which it said undermined efforts to scale down the conflict amid the COVID-19 outbreak. **Agencies**

# comment

THOUGHT  
FOR THE DAY

I think we all have empathy. We may not have enough courage to display it — Maya Angelou, poet

## The pandemic has changed something for good

One of the fallouts of the Coronavirus outbreak is the slew of helplines that have started concentrating on the mental health of the population.

Without going into the merits or shortcomings of the initiative, this edit is about the larger perspective.

The fact that such measures have been taken, is an acknowledgement of the need to address the anxiety and fear of people. There are experts and trained counsellors, including

therapists on the line, disseminating knowledge and dealing with numerous problems and doubts.

This should also go some way in chipping away at the stigma associated with mental health problems. That such a large number of persons can and do avail of these facilities should show us that there is no shame in seeking such help.

Under different circumstances, we have seen that those seeking therapy or some kind of help are mocked or at

some level, shamed into feeling that they are unable to tackle their problems on their own.

In many cases, families hide the fact that one of their own is going to a mental health counsellor, for precisely the same reason, they are afraid of being ridiculed or humiliated in some ways.

Mental health professionals in India have acknowledged that barriers are breaking down, perceptions are changing to some extent. Yet, we do

have a long way to go towards obliterating unfortunate myths and the derogatory lens through which mental health is looked at here.

Coronavirus qualms have brought mental health into the mainstream in a way. Experts talk about how the great challenge to the human race may alter us forever in some ways. This change in attitude may be one of them. That it took such a dire scenario to bring that about is a sobering thought.

# Liberation from fear of death

MONDAY  
BLUES

Ajaz Ashraf

A hush has fallen over India, as the countrywide lockdown to slow community transmission of the Coronavirus disease, or COVID-19, has had people retreat indoors. Yet the hush does not have the feel of quietude but of eeriness, because people have chosen to silence the noises peculiar to our residential colonies. Our neighbours do not play music or TV at a high decibel level, or let children holler and thud around. Even the comforting sound of the pressure cooker whistling has surprisingly become rare. We have become collectively anesthetised.

Noise, in India, symbolises normalcy and happiness. Tourists express the bliss they experience in remote mountain getaways by making noise. Silence, to us, is synonymous with sadness and gloomy seriousness. We are mourning life as we knew it. COVID-19 is undermining, bit by bit, our certitude, which is anchored in the belief that we are destined to live until we are at least 70 or 80 or 90 years old. We script the minutiae of our lives, down to keeping aside money for our old age. Premature death had always been for the unfortunate.

We are now terrorised at the thought of the invisible virus penetrating the armour of security we bought, and striking and adding us to the list of the dead. Our anaesthetic silence is because we have been shocked into mulling the fragility and ephemerality of our existence. Face-to-face with death, we are frightened, in which state, as is our default mode, we have become silent, in the hope of evading the predator.

Death is a precondition to living. Existentialist philosopher and theologian Paul Tillich wrote that humans are the only species capable of contemplating their death. It spawns in them the fear that fate and death could lay waste dreams conceived to

In the face of the seemingly apocalyptic Coronavirus, instead of just a fight-flight response, could we also ponder and find room for some empathy and compassion for a world beyond ours?



People queue up to receive food packets arranged by a local organisation and residents in Kalbadevi on Sunday. PIC/BIPIN KOKATE

satisfy our egos. We are then haunted by the meaninglessness and emptiness of our lives. We deny or repress our existential angst, which, German Philosopher Martin Heidegger thought, could lead us to accept our mortality, and turn our being, and living, into a liberating experience.

All death anxieties are existential in nature. But the anxiety reflected in our mournful silence today conforms to what psychoanalyst Robert Langs called predatory death anxiety, which arises from the perceived threat to our lives, individually and collectively. It kicks in us a fight-flight response. No quarter is given to the predator, which must be annihilated.

The Coronavirus is, however, a treacherous foe. It is invisible, multiplies rapidly, has no certain cure,

and there is no vaccine, as of now, for inoculating ourselves against it. The virus is indiscriminating in its attack, felling the rich and the poor. Its unpredictability has shattered our illusion of controlling the levers of our lives. We have retreated indoors to regroup in our war against the Coronavirus.

A degree of anxiety is necessary for survival. But the eerie hush, which has not been prescribed under the lockdown, and reports of our despicable actions suggest that death anxiety is turning the nation neurotic. Landlords have evicted healthcare workers and airline crew because they are feared to be carriers of the Coronavirus. We have created a new class of untouchables to defy mortality. The fear of death has turned

us callous, evident from the government not even giving a thought to the heart-rending impact the lockdown could have on daily wage-earners, who are now trekking hundreds of miles to reach their natal places.

Even Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his speech announcing the countrywide lockdown, harped on the need of maintaining social distance by asking citizens to keep themselves and their family safe. There is a world beyond our family that requires compassion. Our fear of death has been fanned. Those who are middle or upper class have sought to cheat death by stocking up food as if preparing for an apocalypse.

Face-to-face with death, this might be the moment for us to find liberation from the fear of death. This might be the moment for us to fathom what it must feel to be uncertain of the next day's meal, to be denied basic healthcare facilities, to have children die of infections that are curable. This might be the moment for us to empathise with the Kashmiris who languished under a lockdown for months. This might be the moment for us to comprehend that the politics of hate is a harbinger of death for many.

This might also be the moment to serenade those who saved their neighbours during the February riots of Delhi, just as the nation appreciated officials on the frontline of the battle against COVID-19 at 5 pm, March 22. It is as brave to fight the Coronavirus as it is to challenge an unruly mob baying for blood. As our social and political neurosis threatens to become acute, we must reflect on death and turn our existential angst into harbouring compassion for all. That is where our liberation lies — from the fear of death and the Coronavirus.

The writer is a senior journalist

Send your feedback to  
mailbag@mid-day.com

## LETTERS

### PM must take steps to mitigate migrant crisis

Our prime minister suddenly announced that India will be in lockdown for 21 days, without making plans for the poor. Now this has become a serious issue for the country. People who work away from their hometowns are facing difficulties returning home and can't stay in cities as they have nothing to live on. We hope the PM takes active steps in solving this serious problem.

M N ULLAH

### Good to see all Indians cooperating

It's good to learn that Indians are helping the government fight against COVID-19. Following the instructions of the prime minister, Muslim clerics urged people on Friday to offer Zuhr at home across the country.

SHAHIN AHMED

### Hats off to the country's large-hearted donors

Akshay Kumar was first of the block to announce a donation of a mammoth ₹25 crore within minutes of Modi announcing a 'PM-Cares Fund' to fight Coronavirus in our country. Good Samaritans like Akshay Kumar are a boon to mankind and he has always come forward to help whenever the country has faced a crisis. The Tata Group too chipped in with ₹1,500 crore and I am sure many would follow in the days to come. The unprecedented crisis has united us all and India as a nation will set an example for others to fight any crisis with grace.

SATYANARAYAN KABRA

### have your say!



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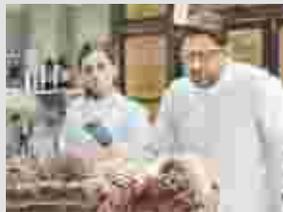
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## 'Couldn't miss out on Neeraj's Special Ops'

**Manoj Bajpayee** bets big on director-friend's thriller and Arshad Warsi's *Asur* as he shares his current favourites with mid-day

### STAY IN-TERTAINED

Where stars make your watch-list

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MANOJ Bajpayee, who had headed to Uttarakhand for a shoot, is nestled there amid the lockdown. "My family joined me before the lockdown was announced. While 95 per cent of the unit left to be with their families, we decided to stay back," shares the actor when we connect with him on a call. "It is freezing cold here because of the rains, and the network is [slightly weak]," he laughs, but adds that little comes close to the solace he finds in the mountains.

One would assume that the poor connectivity will hold back *The Family Man* star from exploring the digital world, but Bajpayee reveals that he has binged on the new Indian releases over the past 10 days. "I am hooked to my iPad. I couldn't have missed Neeraj Pandey's series, *Special Ops*, so that was the first thing I caught up on. I quite enjoyed Voot Select's *Asur*."

Continued on page 14



# Being humane

With Salman bearing expenses of 25,000 daily wagers, father Salim Khan tells mid-day how Khan-daan is taking care of their staff and SKF employees as well

**UPALA KBR**

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OVER the past 10 days, as this paper continuously chronicled the plight of daily-wage workers, a singular aspect came to the fore — the employees' unflinching faith that Salman Khan will stand by them in their hour of need. The superstar hasn't let them down, and has decided to bear expenses of 25,000 daily wagers. Not only that, the actor's father — noted screenwriter Salim Khan — tells mid-day that his sons have lent financial assistance to their staff at their respective studios.

The veteran says, "I don't want to comment on [Salman's contribution to the 25,000 workers] as I don't know much about it. But our family has a principle — hamara paisa jahan jaaye, wahan dikhna chahiye aur kisike kaam aana chahiye. [Since the past fortnight], we

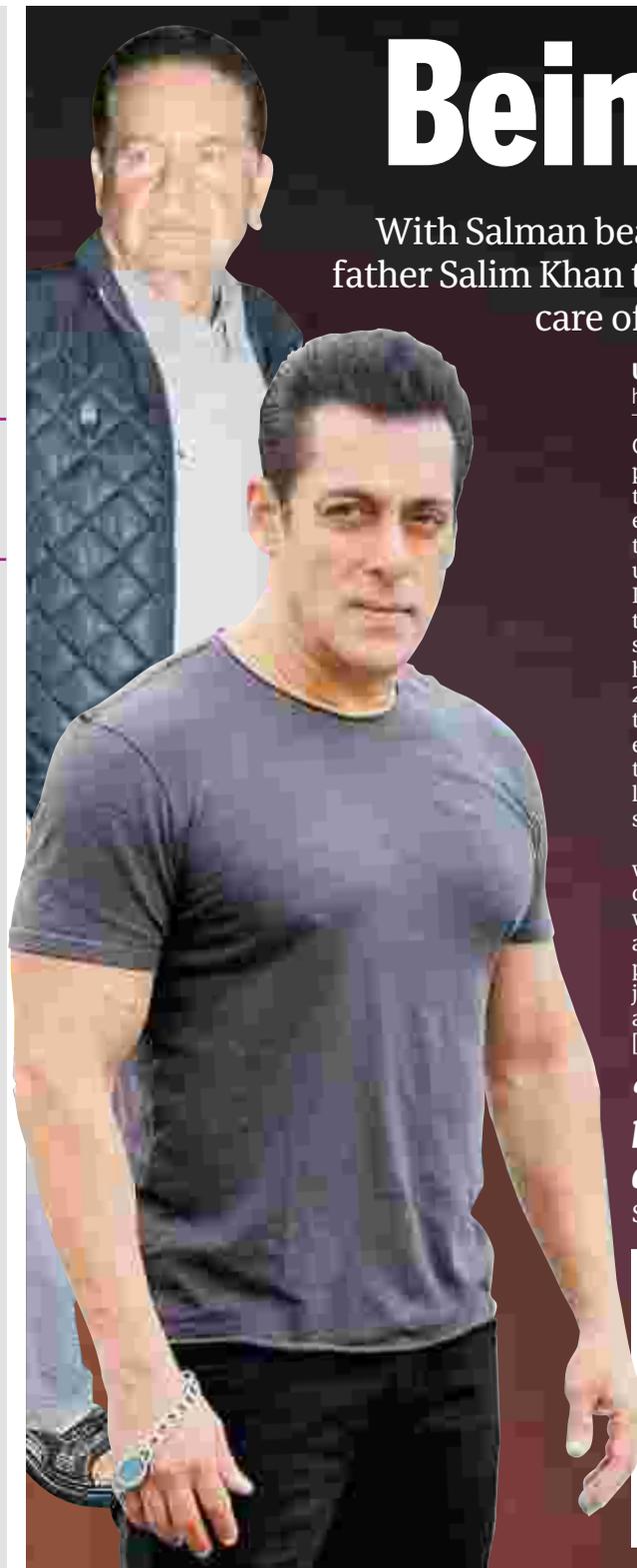
**'Hamara paisa kisike kaam aana chahiye'**

Salim Khan

have been arranging meals for our building and Salman's security guards. We must all look after our staff."

A source from Salman Khan Films (SKF) reveals that as soon as the suspension of shoots was announced mid-March, the studio dispersed the monthly salary to its employees. "Salman is also taking care of the ration of those at his studio who are in dire need." Arbaaz Khan, who runs his eponymous studio, says, "We have asked all employees to stay home; their salaries are taken care of as are their other needs."

Meanwhile, Ashok Dubey, general secretary, FWICE, reveals that the top brass of SKF reached out to the organisation on Saturday, enquiring about the daily wagers. "I informed them that they earn about ₹15,000 a month. They said that Salman wants the account details of the 25,000 workers, and he will sponsor them. Salman bhai also contributes ₹5 lakh every month, thus taking care of their medical expenses." Ashoke Pandit, chief advisor, adds, "Salman and Salimji have always helped the industry."



### Bollywood's generous act

Besides Akshay Kumar who contributed ₹25 crore to the PM CARES Fund, Varun Dhawan donated ₹30 lakh, and Randeep Hooda and his entrepreneur friend contributed ₹1 crore.



Rajkumar Rao made a contribution to the PM's relief fund as well as the state government's relief fund. Hrithik Roshan and Kapil Sharma also did their bit for the cause.

## 'London shows pushed to summer 2021'

Namit Das reveals June premiere of Nair's musical *Monsoon Wedding* delayed due to pandemic

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ALMOST 19 years after its glorious run at several international film festivals followed by an adaptation at Berkeley, Mira Nair's *Monsoon Wedding* was to get a stage rendition at two of the most prestigious theatres in the UK. The musical was to open at Leeds Playhouse on June 22 for a

three-week run followed by shows at The Roundhouse in London from July 17 to August 29. However, the musical — that reflects the Indian culture through the story of a Delhi-based family coming together for a lavish wedding — has now been postponed.

Namit Das, who is one of the composers and also a part of the cast, says, "[The shows are] unfortunately cancelled because of the COVID-19 outbreak. We will do the show in 2021 once the pandemic subsides."

The actor, who has worked closely with Nair for a long time, will also be seen

in her web series, *A Suitable Boy*, based on Vikram Seth's best-selling novel of the same name. "Monsoon Wedding [the musical] is where I met Vishalji [Bhardwaj] and other delightful musicians from all over the world. Mira keeps throwing surprises at us, and we become better artistes as we move along with her. A day of work with her feels like an achievement!"



The musical is based on the 2001 hit, *Monsoon Wedding*

# music

JAN HOWARD  
PASSES AWAY

Jan Howard, country singer and songwriter and long-time member of the Grand Ole Opry, died on Saturday March 28 at the age of 91. She recorded several songs as Bill Anderson's duet partner

# 'My music is valued because I value it first'

Mithoon's offerings may be few and far between, but his die-hard fans don't mind waiting. He tells lyricist Manoj Muntashir why

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MANOJ Muntashir complains that he often finds his social media inbox littered with pleas from Mithoon's female fans, seeking an interaction with him. He is set to prepare an invoice for the job to present to the composer, who does every bit to evade questions pertaining to his romantic interests, despite Muntashir's repeated attempts. Here's all that the duo discussed in an interaction at Muntashir's vibrant Andheri office in early March, before they departed with the promise of creating a music piece for the "emotional" ending of Tom Hanks' *Cast Away*.



## JAMMIN' WITH

Mithoon and Manoj Muntashir

**Manoj: How did you save yourself from being entangled in this wave of re-creations?**

**Mithoon:** I am always tempted to create original songs. Six years ago, I had recreated a song called *Aye mere hum safar*, which did well. But, I missed the happiness that one derives [while working on original compositions]. Even in the credits roll, [original composers] Anand Milind's name was placed before mine. So, it wasn't guilt [that bothered me]. But, there was no joy. Many people say composers are not celebrated enough. But they don't understand the joy we derive when a newspaper seller sings our song at a signal.

**Manoj: There are few composers whose names are used by directors as a selling point. They are proud to say: 'Mithoon is composing for us.' But, people also complain that you take too long to finish a song. Do you feel insecure about not meeting deadlines?**

**Mithoon:** Like they say, ignorance is bliss. I don't know much about [how a delay in meeting a deadline can affect

me]. And I prefer that it remain that way. I want to be consumed by music. In the Bible, it is written that the lord made the world in six days. On day one, he said, 'Let there be light.' And yet, he made the sun and moon on day four. So, I interpret this as the lord referring to the light within us, that is brighter than sunlight.

**Mithoon: What went behind the making of Teri mitti [Kesari], which, according to me, is the best written song?**

**Manoj:** At times, all we need is a trigger. Sometimes, our directors and the people around us turn out to be blessings. They elevate us from being ordinary writers. Kesari's director Anurag Singh was responsible for it. The tune was already established by Arko. Anurag referenced Kaifi Azmi's words in *Kar chale hum fida*, and asked me that if it had to be represented in today's scenario, how would [I do it]. I kept that brief in mind. If a soldier

is shot, and knows that he will die within the next 10 minutes, what will he think in the interim? Will he be sad, upset or happy? So, the song was written from that point of view. If you see [a soldier] dying, you'll notice him smiling. Death is a painful process. But that smile comes from the joy of dying for the country.

More worthy than any award for me was when I got a call from Punj, from a soldier who was a zamindar. When people would ask him why he was becoming a soldier, and choosing a job with a ₹25,000 salary [despite being

wealthy], he never had an answer. My song, he said, gave him the words he needed to do so.

**Mithoon: [How important] is it for a musician to stay away from formulas and templates?**

**Manoj:** There's absolutely nothing that I can say with as much certainty as I can this — setting a template implies death of music. We should be thankful that we don't have a formula. Every song has a journey, and if you begin to search for the roadmap that led to its making, [that isn't right]. None of the people who have made it big, have a roadmap. If you do, you'll be a one-film wonder. A good way to [approach your work] is to leave ego behind. Don't carry the weight of your laurels. Be the student you were when you started, each time you work on music.

**Manoj:** You received much acclaim for your song in Kabir Singh, which is Tujhe kitna chahne lage. There's something I noticed about it. If you study Kabir's character, who is aggressive and angry, it is tough to fathom how this

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'Creating a template implies death of music. If you do so, you will be a one-film wonder'

Manoj Muntashir

»



spiritual song, which is all about surrendering, suits him. But that song helped the film tremendously. Many people have complaints against the character, and rightfully so. But what made Kabir relatable was his simplicity and vulnerability. And it is your song that gave us a peek into his heart, and made us see how weak in love he is. I don't think there's anyone who is as weak as a lover, just like there is no one who is stronger than him.

**Mithoon:** As much as I've never seen it that way, that's true.

**Manoj: You don't have a social life. In fact, the people who love you will, for your own good, never invite you to a party.**

**Mithoon:** As a teenager, I would feel everything that a man who is in love feels, but, that excitement would be to meet Pyareji [Pyarelal Sharma, of Laxmikant-Pyarelal]. At 16, I was assisting my father [Naresh Sharma], who worked with orchestras for films. In the studio, every musician would have a different viewpoint, and as a young musician, I would want to hear each one, so that I could learn. But there was one voice that [mattered the most], and that was of Laxmikant-Pyarelal. He [Pyarelal Sharma] is my *tayaji*. But, I never [exploited that] relationship. I was passionate about learning from him. He is among the most passionate artists that this industry has seen. He wouldn't tolerate mediocrity. I wanted to experience him in that form.

**Manoj: You have few releases in a year, and keep your fans waiting for them. Is it a calculated move to keep them eagerly anticipating what's next?**

**Mithoon:** The truth is that I celebrate and respect my music first. If I play something on the piano, and like it, I respect that bar [of music]. I won't simply tell my team to [work on] it and send it off to a client who is calling repeatedly for a song. My laptop is kept in my locker, because that's my wealth. I value it so much. For me, my music is a revelation. It must be kept on a pedestal. It is valued, because I value it first.

PICS/ATUL KAMBLE

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'As a teenager, I would feel everything that a man who is in love feels, but, that excitement would be to meet Pyareji [Pyarelal Sharma]'

Mithoon

»



# 'Story yet to be written'

Honey Singh turns down biopic offers, says he has a lot more to achieve to deserve one

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HONEY Singh doesn't bat an eyelid before admitting that life hasn't been the same for him since he admitted to battling bipolar disorder, years ago. "I have never hidden any part of my life from anyone," says the singer, who recently made his comeback with the song Loca. The "ups and downs", he says, have made his life "enjoyable". "A lot of people have warmed up to me. There have been many calls from production houses that want to work with me to tell my story, and produce my biopic. I have had two proposals from international [production houses]. But, I'm not ready for that yet. I have a lot to achieve, and the rest of my story is left. I will make a film when that's complete."

Even as he took time off since 2017 to attend to his mental health, Singh says he continued to work on new music. "I have never been in rehab. I was undergoing treatment at home for two years, during which I

wrote some songs. I am releasing them slowly, and there will be new music coming out soon, as well. I believe there is a good reason for me to have taken ill, and I am happy when I look back [at what I've been through]."

Be it before or after announcing his illness, Singh has repeatedly been criticised for his lyrics, with many terming them derogatory. However, the singer believes his words are only

a reflection of the goings-on in society. "Alcohol is [available at] restaurants, clubs and pubs. There are liquor shops on the streets. When alcohol is a major part of our economy and society, why shouldn't I write about it?" questions the singer, adding that the youth and their lifestyle serve as fodder for his songs. "I have many friends who keep me updated with the current slang. Social media is also a big help in enabling me to know what people want to hear, and what they talk about."



## 'Daughter Ava's experiencing new things'



Continued from page 12

IT stars Arshad Warsi and Sharib Hashmi, who is a dear friend and a big part of The Family Man. I also watched Guilty on Netflix. Besides that, Platform was a crackling watch."

An optimist at heart, the actor views the current scenario as an opportunity to spend quality time with family, and acquaint his daughter Ava Nayla with the simpler joys of life. "It's a different experience for her since she is born and brought up in Mumbai. She has grown up amid the hustle-bustle of a city, and now, she is getting to experience new things. Spending time with the local kids and playing with them is a refreshing experience for her."

## Disneyland indefinitely shuts doors

DISNEYLAND and Walt Disney World will not be opening their doors for the public anytime soon.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, the two theme parks, based in California and Florida, were expected to open on Wednesday next week. But, in light of the rising number of cases, the theme parks will remain closed till further notice.

"While there is still much uncertainty with respect to the impacts of COVID-19, the safety and well-being of our guests and employees remains The Walt Disney Company's top priority," a statement from the company reads.

"As a result of this unprecedented pandemic and in line with direction provided by health experts



and government officials, Disneyland Resort and Walt Disney World Resort will remain closed until further notice," it added.

Earlier, Universal Studios Hollywood announced that its park

would extend its closure to April 19. Disney further said that it will extend paying hourly parks and resorts cast members through April 18.

Agencies



## Emily wants to be Poppins again

ACTOR Emily Blunt says it is her wish to revisit the world of Mary Poppins, once again.

The actor, 37, took on the role of the magical English nanny in Disney's Mary Poppins Returns, which was a direct sequel to the 1964 original.

"I don't know if it'll happen, but I loved playing Poppins so much. I don't necessarily like to revisit parts I've already done, but the

**Blunt took on the role in Mary Poppins Returns, a direct sequel to the 1964 original**

ones I found joyous, I'd think about them," the actor said.

Blunt is currently looking forward to the release of her latest film, A Quiet Place 2. The film, directed by her husband,

actor John Krasinski, was scheduled to release worldwide earlier this month, but has now been postponed in the wake of the pandemic.

## Work on Ajay-starrer underway

Chanakya director Neeraj Pandey says team is taking project forth while practising social distancing

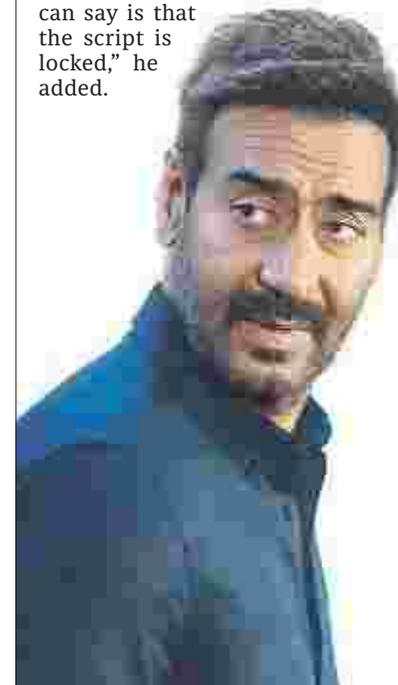
DIRECTOR Neeraj Pandey says despite the 21-day lockdown in the country, the team of his next, Chanakya is working on the Ajay Devgn-starrer while practising social distancing.

Devgn is set to play the eponymous role in Chanakya, a historical drama on the master economist and royal advisor to the first Mauryan emperor Chandragupta.

The movie will mark the first collaboration between Devgn and Pandey, known for films such as A Wednesday (2008), Baby (2015) and MS Dhoni: The Untold Story (2016).

Pandey said though the crew can't have meetings for the time being, they are constantly having discussions about the project over phone or mail. "It is a work in progress. We are having discussion on anything and everything. The various heads of departments, including VFX, concept, costume, art, production design, and location, are regularly in touch. There are many things that we have to discuss about, including how the script will be approached," the filmmaker said.

While all production activity is currently suspended in the Indian entertainment industry, Pandey said it is too early to suggest that the shoot of Chanakya will also be affected. "Let's see how things pan out in the near future and then we will see. All I can say is that the script is locked," he added.



# have you heard?

STAY  
HOME

Gulzar has expressed the importance of staying indoors through his poem, Ghar mein rahiye, mehfooz rahiye. The lyricist-writer says this is the only way we can save ourselves, the country and the world



## Life is like an ice cream

**Taimur Ali Khan** loves ice cream and we often see him and cousin **Inaaya Naumi** enjoying it. So, it's no surprise that Tim loves to draw ice cream cones. **Kareena Kapoor Khan** shared one of his artworks, which had three scoops of ice cream

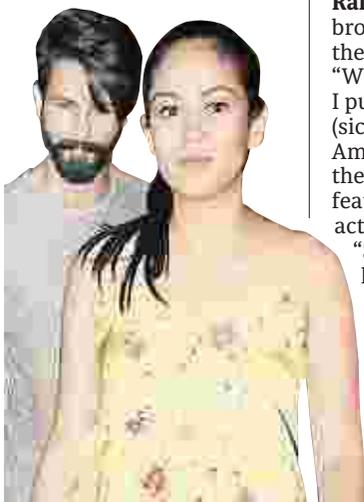


— the way Taimur likes it. She referred to him as the “in-house Picasso (sic).” The dotting mother further wrote, “The world is your ice cream, my love. QuaranTim diaries (sic).” Keep them coming, Bebo.



## Pots and pans

**Shahid Kapoor** can cook too. Wife **Mira** shared the news that he is keeping busy in the kitchen. She posted a picture of one of the dishes he had made (above) and wrote, “Waiting while the husband cooks me some pancakes... the good life... tables might turn (sic).” She later posted, “Success. I’m glad I put my feet up so he can step into my shoes (sic).” It appears Sasha had got it right.



## Calling Big B

**Karan Johar**’s son **Yash** thinks **Amitabh Bachchan** can drive the pandemic away. The filmmaker shared a video in which he is seen asking Yash, “Who do you think will take it away?” To which, the tot replies, “Amitabh Bachchan but he no coming to my room (sic).” KJo was lost for words.



## In the swing of things

**Rakul Preet Singh** and brother **Aman** are reliving their childhood days. “When was the last time I pushed you on a swing (sic)?” asked the actor. Aman is also following in the sister’s footsteps. He features in the upcoming action drama, *Ram Rajya*. “Social distancing has helped me cherish priceless moments with family and siblings after years. I know these are tough times but all we can do is look at the brighter side of things (sic),” wrote Rakul on social media.



## Keeping in step during lockdown

**Shakti Mohan**, along with singer-sister **Neeti** and actor **Mukti**, is in quarantine at her farmhouse. While she is on a hiatus from work, Shakti

has been conducting online sessions along with the faculty of her dance university. Fans can pick up different dance styles every evening during the

lockdown. “It’s a great time to learn a new skill (sic),” she says. Shakti is also loving nature and the serenity if the picture is any indication.



## Rhyme and reason

**Varun Dhawan** has come up with a rap video on the lockdown, urging people to stay in self-quarantine. “You can’t go to the parlour, you can’t go to the street, you can’t go to the sabzi mandi,” the actor croons. Unlike most Bollywood folk, who have been sharing videos doing workouts, cooking and jhaadu pocha, Dhawan is putting creative skills to good use.



## SHOT IN THE DARK

### Top star’s family on tenterhooks

This leading star has a reason to worry. One of his relatives, who had been ailing for a while, has been hospitalised. Given the current situation, any respiratory illness needs immediate attention. The relative has undergone the required tests and is awaiting the results. The actor’s large family is in a state of panic as the said person had interacted with them as well as the star a couple of days ago. They are hoping that everything goes fine. But till the relative gets a clean chit, their anxiety continues.

## TELLY TATTLE

### Stop shaming airline crew

**Divyanka Tripathi Dahiya** is upset about pilot brother, **Aishwarya**, being Corona shamed. He was in self-isolation in hometown Bhopal for two weeks as a precautionary measure. But rumours flew thick and fast in the neighbourhood that he had tested positive for COVID-19. The *Yeh Hai Mohabbatein* actor shared the family’s ordeal in an Instagram post. She wrote, “Corona shaming is the most dastardly act one can indulge in. My brother dared to keep flying till the last government directive so

that several stranded international passengers could return home. The risk he took for the well-being of others. Airline staff have been made to leave their houses, many are being ill-treated, their families are being stigmatised... just because they chose to serve you over their life (sic).”





# Offer a silver lining

As one of the most vulnerable to the coronavirus infection, it's important to provide senior citizens at home with all the support for their physical and emotional well-being

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AS per guidelines published by the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, older adults (65 years and above) are at a higher risk of contracting COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus. In fact, research indicates that the elderly, especially those with pre-existing medical conditions such as heart and lung disease, diabetes or cancer, are more likely to have severe infection than any other age group. Accordingly, experts and authorities are strongly urging the elderly to stay at home and avoid all social contact as far as possible. "However, being socially isolated at this difficult time can present a new set of challenges for individuals belonging to this age group," explains Dr Sagar Mundada, psychiatrist at Health Springs.

## Emotional concerns

"Of late, mental health professionals have been receiving an increased number of calls about elderly individuals, especially those already diagnosed with diabetes, experiencing severe panic attacks. The knowledge that they are at increased risk is especially difficult to come to terms with; many are refusing to step out of their rooms and mingle with their families. There is a sense of despair that everything has ended for them," Dr Mundada says.

Amol Deshmukh, founder



of MedRabbits, a home healthcare service provider, adds that many elderly individuals, especially those who live alone, are uncertain about how to manage their existing medical needs, such as routine check-ups and testing for existing medical conditions, as well as their everyday routines while minimising social contact. "The elderly are being asked to avoid hospitals and health clinics for fear of exposure. Many are also reliant on visiting help for their daily chores, such as cleaning and shopping for essentials," he says.

## All round support

Your attitude towards the pandemic can go a long way in influencing that of an elderly family member at home, says Dr Mundada. While being cut off from their social groups can be difficult for older parents or grandparents, the increased presence of children and grandchildren can benefit their mental health. Additionally, it is important to help alleviate anxiety and provide a secure support system.

• **Be inclusive:** If older members are made to feel like outcasts despite everyone being at home, their feelings of loneliness get stronger, warns Dr Mundada. "Include them in all family activities, be it a game you are playing or even the music you are listening to. Once a day, give them an outlet

to discuss their feelings and fears. Don't invalidate their emotions or perceive their anxieties as criticism about the quality of care being provided by you. Instead, hear them out and reassure them of your support," he advises.

• **Reduce anxiety:** Being constantly exposed to news and statistics about the pandemic can take a toll on mental health. While the younger generations may view it more objectively, such updates can create fear and anxiety in the elderly, shares Dr Kersi Chavda, a consultant psychiatrist at PD Hinduja Hospital. "Restrict the number of times your family checks the news to twice a day. Make sure to also watch humorous or other light-hearted content. Resist the urge to keep discussing the pandemic at home. At the same time, educate the elderly about legitimate sources of information so that they don't become inadvertent victims of fake news," he says. Dr Mundada emphasises on discussing any pandemic-related updates that your parents or grandparents



Sagar Mundada



Kersi Chavda

receive so that you can help dispel myths and misconceptions. Don't hesitate to seek help from a mental health professional if the anxiety is uncontrollable or is affecting their routine.

• **Keep it social:** Psychologist Priyanka Bajaria recommends using this time to familiarise older members of the family with technology. "Include a 'social contact hour' in their routines when they can call or video call extended family members or their friends," she advises.

• **Set boundaries:** Despite the best of intentions, it can become difficult to coexist with elderly family members who are excessively controlling or critical, says Dr Mundada. With everyone at home all the time, friction can hit the roof, he says. Avoid this by laying down clear guidelines about social conduct within the household.



Priyanka Bajaria



Amol Deshmukh

Be firm but compassionate while enforcing the same.

## Practicality is key

To ensure that the elderly have access to vital healthcare and daily essentials while also minimising the risk of exposure, experts have these suggestions.

• **Live-in staff:** During the lockdown, it is advisable to have trusted staff live in with the elderly, says Deshmukh. This ensures that senior citizens receive necessary assistance with daily chores such as buying groceries and maintaining general hygiene. Dr Salah Qureshi, MD-Internal Medicine at Axis Hospital, adds that any deliveries received by the elderly should be non-contact and wrapped in paper instead of plastic bags to reduce risk of exposure.

• **Phone a doctor:** The Government of India has recently published telemedicine guidelines for virtual consultations. This ensures that the elderly can seek medical guidance over text as well as video and voice calls. Dr Qureshi adds that

## Boost immunity

1 Ensure that the haemoglobin count for the elderly is maintained at healthy levels; low haemoglobin levels can suppress immunity



2 Eat more turmeric, ginger, garlic, cumin, black

pepper, ghee/coconut oil (in controlled quantities), wheatgrass, pumpkin seeds and tulsi leaves

3 Add foods that boost lung health and clean out the respiratory system.

These include oregano, carrots, thyme, fenugreek and pineapple

4 Increase consumption of foods rich in Vitamin C – oranges, lime, lemons and melons

5 Beans, nuts and whole grains are rich in zinc, which helps with immunity, as are seafood, meat and eggs



Inputs by  
Luke Coutinho  
and  
Kajal Bhatthana,  
nutritionist

doctors are encouraging patients to call them as often as necessary to seek guidance. Physical visits are recommended only for emergencies.

• **Strict about hygiene:** Luke Coutinho, a holistic lifestyle coach at Integrative Medicine, says, "When coming indoors, it is necessary to thoroughly wash your hands, dip your clothes in hot water and bathe before interacting with elderly people. Avoid entering their room directly." He adds that it is important to sanitise commonly touched objects regularly, such as remote controls, switchboards, doorknobs, handles and spectacles.

• **Bring the outdoors in:** Encourage seniors to expose themselves to morning sunlight in balconies or terraces, says Coutinho. Many online channels are offering yoga classes for senior citizens, he adds. Involve them in non-strenuous daily activities such as chopping and peeling vegetables and fruits.



# No time to waste

Single-use items in the age of stockpiling can cause harm to the environment. A Mumbaikar leading a zero-waste lifestyle tells you how to take the eco-friendly route

**DALREEN RAMOS**  
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EARLIER this month, in the United States, major F&B companies announced that they were stopping the use of reusable mugs as a precautionary measure to maintain hygiene standards. While videos of clear seas and blue skies surfaced due to the halt of human activity, Hong Kong's beaches were piled up with single-use face masks. The current global scenario forces us to rethink our lifestyle choices, but the environment shouldn't be a second thought. We invited Sushank Tomar, a Thane resident who practises a zero-waste lifestyle to share tips on minimising environmental damage while at home.

**Do a waste audit:** Tomar, 23, who is part of a youth organisation called Muse Foundation that works on different aspects of the society including menstrual hygiene and environmental awareness, says that such a lifestyle demands individuals to come out of their comfort zone. "It's not convenient in the initial stages. There are some things like a sanitiser or a smartphone for which there might not be a replacement. But it's definitely possible to sustain it," he says. In a scenario where garbage collectors might be off duty, it is important to audit your waste yourself ie identify the kind of waste you generate.

The simplest way is to bifurcate material into wet and dry categories. "If your dry waste comprises 50 per cent plastic and 30 per cent paper, for instance, find alternatives for those categories first," he suggests.

**Compost wet waste:** Take an old container and make about eight holes across the sides and the bottom. The first layer should be dry waste comprising coconut husk, dry leaves and grass, and cardboard. After ensuring the layer is thick enough, add your wet waste ie organic items. Then add a layer of dry waste again so it becomes like a sandwich. Composting entails carefully studying the composition of carbon (browns) and nitrogen (greens). The ideal ratio is 25-



Tomar's compost bin at home

35 parts of carbon for one part of nitrogen. Tomar cautions, "It should not be too dry or too wet. If it's the latter then it will begin to stink which indicates that the nitrogen quantity is higher. So, you'll have to add dry leaves."

**Make cloth masks:** To wear a mask or not to

wear one has perhaps been the most-asked question this month. But choosing a disposable one when you aren't at risk makes no sense. "I use cloth masks and sterilise them. My friends have made masks with two layers of fabric as well. The biggest complaint related to a zero-waste lifestyle was that people don't have time. But now they do," Tomar says. So, if you have some sewing skills, just make a mask.

**Differentiate between recycle and reuse:** Tomar maintains that going zero waste means completely opting out of non-biodegradable items. "There's this misconception that if you consume packets of chips but later recycle the packaging, you're doing a good thing. But you need to know that there's a limit to which plastic can be recycled, too," he says. Recycling, he adds, requires an item to be 100 per cent in its purest form. So, while a PET bottle can be recycled, tetra packs comprising plastic and paper cannot. Also, online resources related to going zero waste often don't make sense in an Indian context. Tomar advising people to become local explorers, adds, "In Thane, I scoured shops that sell eatables like chips and pasta in bulk, and those who use plastic-free packaging for their goods. It's the good ole Indian concept of relying on a kiranawala."



Sushank Tomar (inset) makes his own hair oil and body scrub. While the first comprises aloe vera and Nilgiri oil, the latter is made from coffee powder and brown sugar. He advises people to use materials that suit them

# Binge on the real deal

Watch food shows that the city's top chefs and culinary gurus are already tucking into



Barack Obama and Anthony Bourdain in No Reservations

## How the famous eat

The show that pastry chef Pooja Dhingra recommends is Travel the World with David Chang: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner. In it, the celebrated chef gets famous personalities like Seth Rogen on board. Dhingra says, "I loved the episode with Chrissy Teigen, and really wish I could have been a fly on the wall during its taping."



## Global desi

One of chef Prateek Sadhu's picks is Mind Of A Chef, in which, he says, "Professional chefs look at a number of delicious cuisines from around the world and dissect the recipes in order to prepare them in their own style." He also recommends Raja rasoi aur anya kahaniyaan, which explores several regions of India and royal dishes.



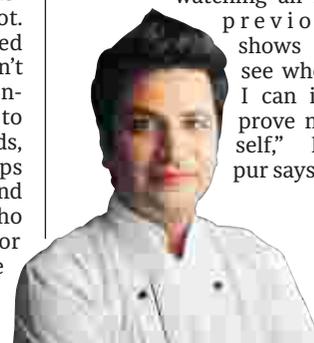
## Learn like a chef

Chef Kunal Kapur is binge-watching Ugly Delicious and Salt Fat Heat Acid, while cooking at home and coming up with recipes for his upcoming book. "I love the travel and food insights these two shows have to offer. Also, chef David Chang's willingness to acknowledge the areas in which he isn't well informed and being forthcoming to learn with child-like zeal is something that moves and inspires me. I made the tacos from his episodes. I've also started watching all my previous shows to see where I can improve myself," Kapur says.



## Bourdain's the man

There are hundreds of food shows available for people to watch right now, but food historian Kurush Dalal says that he has always had a soft spot for late Anthony Bourdain. "I'd recommend any of his shows, be it Parts Unknown or No Reservations," he says. Dalal also throws in a good word about Iron Chef, saying, "I have always respected it because it's a serious bunch of cooks who face challenges against each other."



By Karishma Kuenzang and Shunashir Sen

# Look on the bright side

Young minds, and you, could do with hope and positivity. India's fave children's book authors curate a reading list of happy endings for readers of The Guide

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HAPPINESS can be found, even in the darkest of times, if one only remembers to turn on the light." These words by Hogwarts headmaster Albus Dumbledore that had warmed our hearts years ago have been coming back to us in the past couple of weeks. How often have we all as kids resorted to stories — whether by curling up with books or spending hours listening to our grandmothers — to tide over a bad day? Apart from missing friends and giving up the freedom to play just about anywhere, children across the world have been trying to comprehend new words like lockdown and pandemic; words that even we, adults, are still getting used to. In such times, stories of hope and sunshine are all we have. We reached out to a few children's authors to share their reccos for these testing times.



## Feel good

If you're looking for some feel-good stories, check out *Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame, says author Ranjit Lal. "It's a beautifully written, fuzzy, warm book that will leave you feeling good. It's filled with unforgettable characters like Mole, Ratty, Mr Badger and Toad of Toad Hall." The author of *How Wondrous Is That: Nature's Bizarre* also suggests *Rosy is My Relative*, by Gerald Durrell. "It's a comic story about the adventures of a young man who's been bequeathed a lovable elephant, with a weakness for drink, by an uncle and is determined to get rid of the benign beast before it ruins him," he adds.



## Get some inspiration

Chennai-based Sandhya Rao, who recently authored the book *Zakir and His Tabla*, picks *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* by William Kamkwamba and Byran Mealer. "It's about a little boy in Malawi, Africa, which has faced a famine. The boy, who is interested in science, goes on to invent a windmill that changes the economy of the state. It's a positive and inspiring story," she says, adding that parents should set aside time to read together with their kids during this phase.



## Mischief managed

"There's nothing like a well-written school series to keep tweens occupied for hours," says Bijal Vachharajani, author of *A Cloud Called Bhura*, suggesting the *Nimmi* series by Shabnam Minwalla. "It is

about eleven-year-old Nimmi who loves coining words such as spectacular and is always up to something. It can strike a chord with tweens, who may see themselves in these stories." She also encourages kids to try *Puchku Seeks a Song* by Deepanjana Pal, saying, "It encourages young readers to understand the value of friendship and what it means to be there for each other, which is especially relevant now."

**BIJAL Vachharajani** also recommends **The Adventures of Stooob series by Samit Basu**

## Also check out

- *Asterix and the Chieftain's Daughter* by Jean-Yves Ferri
- *Scribble Witch: Notes in Class* by Inky Willis
- *When Ali Became Bajrangbali* by Devashish Makhija
- *Rusty and the Magic Mountain* by Ruskin Bond
- *Jataka Tales* (ACK)



## Comic relief

Bal Sahitya Puraskar winner Paro Anand's first pick is *Fly-away Boy* by Jane De Suza, a book about a boy called Kabir who keeps trying to fit in, but can't, and then goes missing. "It's told with a lot of humour and seems light-hearted, but it is also an important read for parents," says the author of *No Guns at My Son's Funeral*. She also suggests *You Don't Know Everything, Jilly P!* by Alex Giona, a book that deals with discrimination and special needs. "The story is contemporary, has young people's language, and is very uplifting."

# Alone but together

City musician Mali is bringing together glimpses of the lockdown around the world via a crowd-sourced montage video for her song



A screenshot of an empty neighbourhood that Mali received for the montage video based on her new track

**KARISHMA KUENZANG**  
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THE words of songs could take up the empty spaces on the screen — like walls or buildings — during the lockdown," explains Khar-based musician Mali aka Maalavika Manoj, about the video of her upcoming single *Age of limbo*, which aims to do just that — fill the gaps during social distancing. The video is her latest project; she has a whole bunch



of songs ready for release sourced after having reached out to followers on Instagram from around the world. These include videos of empty roads or balcony views from their homes. "I had planned to shoot a video for a single, which has now been delayed. But I still want to release new stuff, keeping the situation and mood of things in mind, especially since people have a lot of time to view content," she elaborates.

*Age of limbo* was inspired by a scene where a man is standing on the Israel border; on one side people can be seen chilling while on the other side, people aren't sure of how long they are going to be alive. "It's more pertinent to what's going on now, when you are unsure when things will get back to normal, and it can be a challenge to stay positive. But we need to remember that the beauty of this is that we are all in this together irrespective of nationality, religion, colour, or economic background, and will get out of it together," she explains.

Her friend, Jishnu Guha will be editing the compilation of video clips from Singapore, Delhi and other parts of the world, to create a three-and-a-half minute video. The duo is brainstorming on ideas at the moment and collecting content. They are open to drone videos, stills and bits of investigative journalism for the next two weeks. The song, which has a James Bond-esque sound, may have elements of darkness but is uplifting at the same time, aided by the "big sound", thanks to the horn section. Mali has accompanied all her requests for inputs with a disclaimer — don't step out to shoot the videos; capture footage only from your homes.

ing on the Israel border; on one side people can be seen chilling while on the other side, people aren't sure of how long they are going to be alive. "It's more pertinent to what's going on now, when you are unsure when things will get back to normal, and it can be a challenge to stay positive. But we need to remember that the beauty of this is that we are all in this together irrespective of nationality, religion, colour, or economic background, and will get out of it together," she explains.



**'We need to remember that the beauty of this is that we're all in this together'** Mali

LOG ON TO maalavika.manoj on Instagram

# Should I be friends with my toxic ex?



## DR. LOVE

**My ex-girlfriend broke up with me around a year ago, and this left me in a very bad state. It was worse because she did it by chat message while I was on a trip, after which she ghosted me for weeks. Although the entire thing lasted for a month-and-a-half, it was very hurtful for me. She told me it was because she wasn't 100 per cent sure and didn't want to waste my time. She also said she ended it via chat because she knew she wouldn't be able to do it looking at me in person. Since then, I know I am over her and have been having all kinds of random thoughts about that episode. We barely talk and she has approached me a couple of times, but a common friend has suggested I keep my distance. This friend says she is toxic, and that it is in my best interests to avoid her. Should I keep**

**following this advice or is it immature to continue down this path?**

— AD  
I suppose your decision depends entirely upon what kind of relationship you intend to have with your ex, and why. If you think the two of you can be friends, because you want her to be one, you can try and find a way of accommodating her in your life. If you believe you are over her, but can't get over how she hurt you, there is no reason why you need to be in touch. Your common friend may mean well, but the decision will ultimately be yours, because you alone can gauge whether or not your ex's presence affects you in a way that is harmful. Time and space will allow you to evaluate how you feel about this. If you don't know what the right thing to do is, you don't have to do anything until you find some clarity. Think about why you want her in your life, in whatever way, or why she wants to stay in touch.

The inbox is now open to take your most carnal and amorous queries. Send your questions on email to [lovedoc@mid-day.com](mailto:lovedoc@mid-day.com)



## WORDSEARCH OUTDOORS PLAY TIME

Can you find the words connected in one way or the other with the theme indicated by the title in today's Word Search? The words may be read horizontally, vertically or diagonally either forwards or backwards, but always in straight lines. Use a ruler to cross them through as you find them.

B	G	I	R	L	S	E	S	L	I	D	E	B
E	U	Q	B	D	Y	D	E	T	H	R	O	W
V	S	D	I	K	O	I	K	S	W	I	N	G
L	A	S	D	S	B	R	I	S	K	S	H	H
O	C	A	G	I	S	R	B	L	R	S	A	Y
V	T	N	T	U	E	Q	F	A	U	J	O	L
E	I	E	T	E	T	S	R	P	N	J	C	I
R	V	C	I	Y	A	M	I	Z	N	P	L	V
H	I	N	P	G	K	M	E	E	I	A	I	E
C	T	A	D	R	S	G	N	W	N	R	M	L
T	I	D	N	E	B	A	D	Q	G	K	B	Y
A	E	R	A	N	B	M	S	E	T	A	M	E
C	S	I	S	E	X	E	R	C	I	S	E	I

Activities, Area, Bikes, Boys, Brisk, Buddies, Catch, Climb, Dance, Energy, Enjoy, Exercise, Friends, Game, Girls, Kids, Lively, Mates, Pals, Park, Push, Revolve, Ride, Rings, Running, Sandpit, Skates, Slide, Swing, Team, Throw

## MEDIUM SUDOKU

	8			3		5		
	5			4		2		
1			2					7
2				7	8			
		7					8	
				5	9			3
4					6			9
		1		5			4	
	6		9					3

**WHAT TO DO** Fill each empty cell with a digit from 1-9, ensuring that no digit is repeated in any row, column or 3x3 square.

## FIENDISH SUDOKU

8		5		10		6		17	
22	13	3	14	12				10	16
				18					
	12	5		5		17			
		21	12	13	4			10	
13	5					14			9
				29					
9		16			9	6	8		11
	13			10					

**WHAT TO DO** Place the numbers 1-9 exactly once per row, column and 3 x 3 bold-lined box. Additionally the sum total of the squares in each dashed-line shape must match the total given in that shape, and you may not repeat a number within a dashed-line shape.



**ARIES**  
If you cannot flow with the tide, today you must at least avoid trying to swim against it, as your efforts may prove counter-productive.

**GaneshaSpeaks.com**  
Your friend, astrologer & guide  
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181\*



**CANCER**  
People around you are likely to be miffed at your temperamental behaviour today. They may also resent your fault-finding ways.



**LEO**  
You will be a taskmaster today, and anyone under you trying to evade their responsibilities shall do so at their own peril.



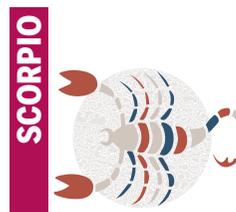
**TAURUS**  
Today you will be preoccupied with arranging transport, accommodation and various other minor details for a company trip.



**CAPRICORN**  
If you happen to be a student desperate to go abroad for advanced studies, you are likely to see a ray of hope today.



**LIBRA**  
Your creativity will come to the fore today, and your aesthetic sense will be appreciated by everyone in your surroundings.



**SCORPIO**  
In all probability today you are going to encounter tough challenges and tricky problems. It would be best to seek help from elders.



**SAGITTARIUS**  
Even as you do your best to keep your loved ones happy, you shall realise the futility of trying to please everyone all the time. Accept this.



**VIRGO**  
Your business acumen is likely to come under the scanner today. This is the time to not let your self-confidence flag.



**GEMINI**  
Today you are likely to feel in a bit of a foul temper. This can lead you on into futile arguments. Others may find your attitude provocative.

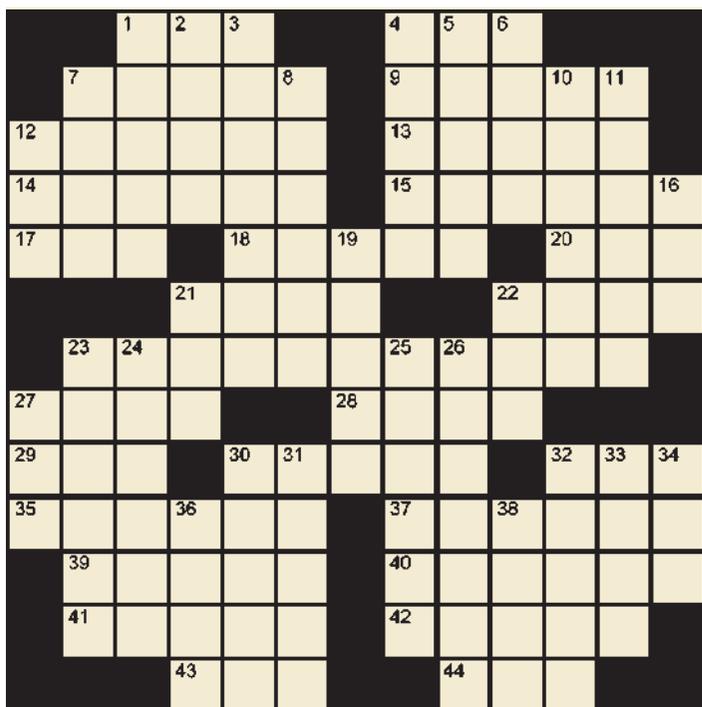


**AQUARIUS**  
Though you may have too much work yourself, you will still help others with their workload. Give priority to your own work first.



**PISCES**  
You have good communication skills and tend to experience things more intensely than others, which shall come in handy.

CLASSIC CROSSWORD 10036



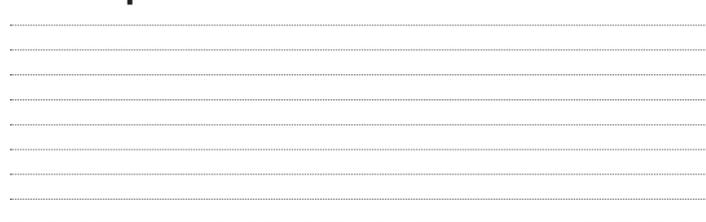
ACROSS

- 1 Young lion, for example
- 4 Briny — Arabian for one
- 7 Gold measure
- 9 Italian isle
- 12 Arctic plain
- 13 Flu type
- 14 Manger
- 15 Put up opposition
- 17 A Japanese copper coin
- 18 Pointed at a target?
- 20 Soapy water or soap bubble
- 21 A people of Japan
- 22 Applies lubricants to
- 23 Important; noteworthy
- 27 Display or practice model (abbrev.)
- 28 Thank God It's Friday, acronym
- 29 Equal Time Point
- 30 Culpability
- 32 Vacancy, abbr.
- 35 Flat-topped straw hat with brim
- 37 Boorish; loutish
- 39 Threw or hurled?
- 40 Black Sea port in Ukraine
- 41 Prima \_\_\_\_: at first sight of evidence?
- 42 Attacked or engaged in a fight (3,2)
- 43 Leather made from the skin of a young goat
- 44 Tutelary god in ancient Rome

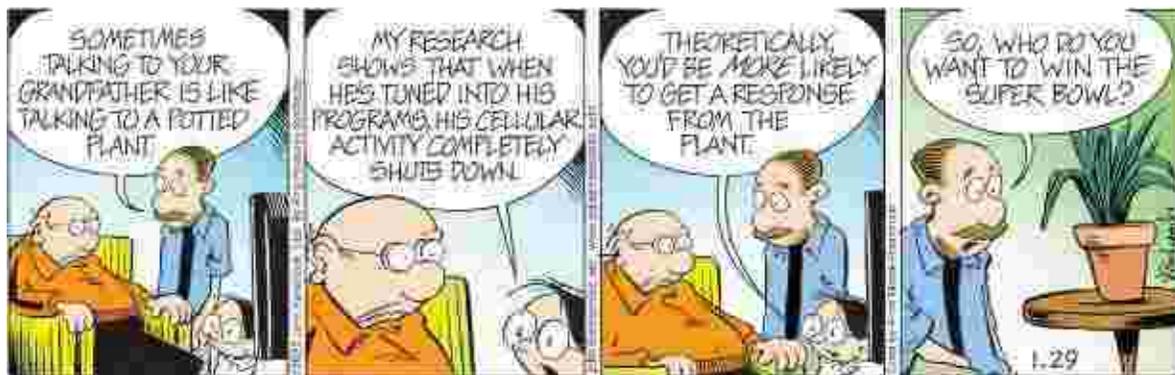
DOWN

- 1 Clerical dignity
- 2 Asian language
- 3 Advantageous purchase
- 4 Frighten or startle
- 5 Relaxed
- 6 Army Photographic Intell. Serv.
- 7 Restore to health or relieve of disease
- 8 Sesame paste
- 10 Partially dried grape
- 11 Affront
- 12 Time To Station, abbr.
- 16 Tax deducted at source, in short
- 19 Civilian dress
- 21 In the past
- 22 LummoX
- 23 Begin a journey (3,3)
- 24 South African antelope or posh car?
- 25 Ice-houses for Inuits
- 26 City fortress
- 27 Colloquial word for a young debutante
- 30 Very clever people
- 31 Persuaded or induced
- 32 Eye shield
- 33 Org.
- 34 Afternoon refresher of local origin?
- 36 Fold of fabric
- 38 White cheese

Scribble pad



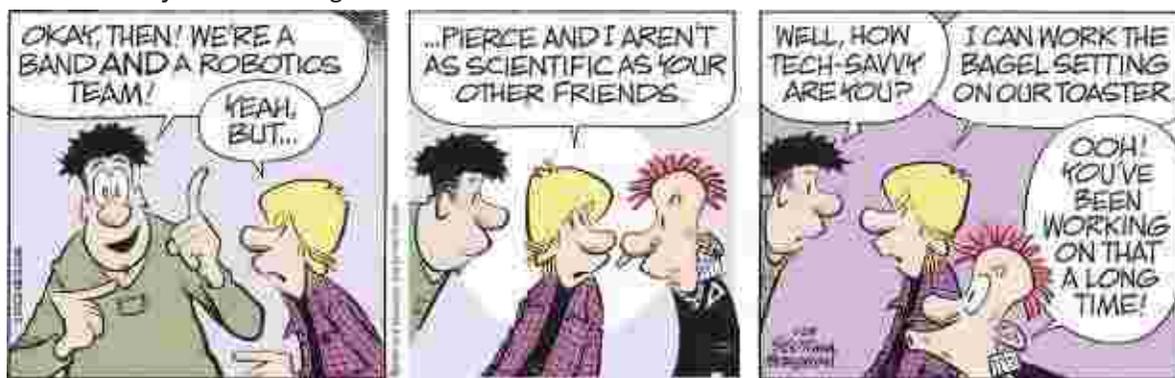
THE BRILLIANT MIND OF EDISON LEE — JOHN HAMBROCK



CALVIN & HOBBS — BILL WATTERSON



ZITS — Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman



BETWEEN FRIENDS — Sandra Bell-Lundy

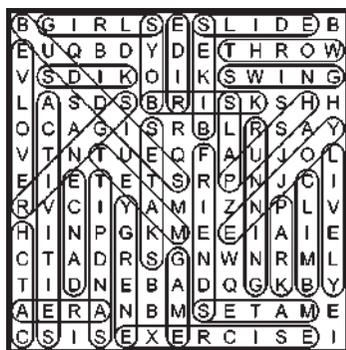


TEASER

Use 4 4's and only 4 4's along with any mathematical operators to make a total of 664

SOLUTIONS

WORDSEARCH



MEDIUM SUDOKU



FIENDISH SUDOKU



CLASSIC CROSSWORD



TEASER

664 (0) = 4^4/4 + 4!



# Indian shooters will shine in Tokyo: Rahi

Pistol champ Sarnobat believes postponement of Olympics to next year due to the Coronavirus pandemic offers country's 15-member shooting contingent ample time to plan better and hone individual skills

**SUBODH MAYURE**  
subodh.mayure@mid-day.com

TOKYO Olympics-bound pistol shooter Rahi Sarnobat is confident about the 15-member Indian shooting contingent's success at the Games that have been postponed to next year due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Despite a forced break from training due to the ongoing national lockdown, the Munich World Cup gold medalist felt that Team India will have enough time to prepare once normalcy is restored. The 25-metre pistol champ said that her fellow shooters needed just two months to get back on track and in form.

In an interview with mid-day, Sarnobat, 29, currently at her parents' home in Kolhapur, says that books have replaced the pistol for now as reading helps her deal with criticism in a positive manner. Excerpts.

## How tough is it to deal with this mandatory break due to the lockdown?

It's very difficult but the good thing is that we have sufficient time to start preparing again [for the Olympics]. It's not like the Olympics will begin immediately after the lockdown. As shooters, we are used to challenges, so I'm sure we will get through this too.

## How do you look at the postponement of the Tokyo Olympics?

As a team, we shooters get hardly any time to train together before the Olympics because the qualification process continues till the last four-five months before the Games. So, I feared that, had the Games been on schedule, we would not have got enough time to be ready for it. But now, as our final team of 15 shooters have qualified

and there is almost a year to go for the Olympics, we have ample time to prepare. This is like a bonus period that we must utilise by planning better and improving our skills.

## After this break, how much would you need to get back to your rhythm in training?

We will need a minimum of two months to get back on track and in rhythm. Though we are trying to keep up with some of the basic things like fitness and diet at home, the fact remains that we are unable to practise at our shooting ranges and that makes a difference in the end. This is a limitation that most shooters face and we have no

option but to deal with it. But as we have already qualified for the Olympics, we don't have that added pressure of qualification. That's a big positive.

## You were the youngest Indian shooter at the 2012 London Olympics, and now you will be the most experienced of our 15-member Indian shooting team. How confident are you

## about yourself and the team's performance in Tokyo?

I always aim to give my best, whether it's a World Cup or the Olympics or even a practice session for that matter. So, Tokyo will be no different. As a team, we have this mindset that even if someone asks us to get up in the middle of the night and shoot, we'll do

it. Besides, this time, at the Olympics, the Indian shooting team are ranked World No. 1 so that should give all 15 of us a lot of confidence as we pick up our guns in Tokyo. I'm sure the Indian shooters will put up an outstanding show in



India pistol shooter Rahi Sarnobat during a practice session at the Balewadi Stadium in Pune last year. PIC/GETTY IMAGES



Shooter Rahi Sarnobat with her books at home in Kolhapur

Tokyo next year.

## How are you spending most of your time during this lockdown?

I always enjoyed reading books but due to my busy training and competition schedules, I hardly get time to read. So, this lockdown is a golden opportunity for me to catch up on my reading. I have a large collection of books. Currently, I'm reading two Marathi books—Sarth and Tantu written by SL Bhyrappa. After this, I'll read two other books, Cheers and Sakhi written by VP Kale.

## Does reading help in your shooting too?

Interestingly, it does. I have been shooting for the last 15 years. Initially, I was quite perturbed by people analysing and criticising us whenever we make mistakes. It's not easy to handle criticism especially when you know that you have always given your best. But I have realised that people are entitled to their opinions, and I should handle things better. Reading helps me handle criticism better. Books offer different perspectives and that helps you understand others. So, if I deal with things off the range in a better manner, I eventually end up shooting better too.

## Vihari keen to sharpen skills for Oz tour

**NEW DELHI:** Confined to his home due to the nationwide lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, India cricketer Hanuma Vihari is using the time to sharpen his skills for the year-ending Australian tour.

"I am going to use this time to focus on my fitness, sharpen my skills for county cricket as well as for the Australia tour in late 2020," Vihari, who was part of India's last tour of New Zealand, was quoted as saying by ESP-Ncrinfo. "Mentally, I'm trying hard to stay positive. There is no cricket for three-four months but I have signed with an English County team. My contract starts in late August. So, fingers crossed," added Vihari.

PTI

## Smith's ban on leadership ends

**MELBOURNE:** The two-year leadership ban slapped on Steve Smith after the ball-tampering scandal in South Africa ended on Sunday, leaving the master batsman free to captain Australia again.

Smith, 30, led the team until he was suspended for 12 months over a brazen attempt to alter the ball with sandpaper under his watch in the 2018 Cape Town Test. There have been calls for Smith to take back the Test captaincy from Tim Paine, but it's unclear if he wants to, with Paine, 35, seemingly intent on playing on. Coach Justin Langer last year praised Paine's leadership as "brilliant."

AFP

## Cancel County C'ship, says Cook

**LONDON:** Former England captain Alastair Cook has called on cricket chiefs to cancel the English County Championship if the season cannot be played in full due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The England and Wales Cricket Board have postponed all domestic action until at least May 28. The County Championship, which to begin on April 12,

"I hope they don't try and have a six-game County Championship. If there is no time for a meaningful County Championship, there is no sense in having it," Cook told the BBC.

PTI

## BFI starts online coaching for Oly-bound boxers

**NEW DELHI:** Their training halted by the coronavirus-forced national lockdown, India's Olympic-bound boxers will be provided online classes by their coaches from Monday to ensure that aspects like mental well-being and nutrition are taken care of.

Nine boxers—MC Mary Kom (51kg), Simranjit Kaur (60kg), Lovlina Borgohani



India's top boxer MC Mary Kom

(69kg), Pooja Rani (75kg), Amit Panghal (52kg), Manish Kaushik (63kg), Vikas Krishan (69kg), Ashish Kumar (75kg) and Satish Kumar (+91kg)—have qualified for the Tokyo Games, postponed to 2021 due to the global pandemic which has caused thousands of deaths.

In a conference call with these boxers on Sunday, Boxing Federation of India (BFI) President Ajay Singh took stock of their preparations amid a national lockdown till April 14 to fight the pandemic. "This is a challenging time for all of us and is all the more reason for us to take care of ourselves... stay fit, continue with the exercises as directed by the coaches and try to maintain your weights as much as possible," Singh told the boxers.

"We will tide over this crisis soon and get back to the ring but staying motivated is absolutely necessary," he added. Elaborating on the 45-minute discussion, BFI's Executive Director RK Sacheti told PTI that the areas of concern are diet

**Indian boxing's High Performance Director, Santiago Nieva, who is in Patiala at the moment, will be conducting classes for the boxers**

control and mental health.

"They are at their homes right now where diet can go for a toss. So the idea behind these online classes starting tomorrow is to ensure that they are kept aware of their nutritional needs," he said.

Sacheti added that India boxing's High Performance Director Santiago Nieva, who is now in Patiala after completing a 14-day self-isolation period in Delhi, will be conducting the classes.

# Waiting Games over?

Tokyo 2020 organisers eye July 2021 for delayed Olympics after city governor wants event moved to a less hot and humid time of the year, claims report

**TOKYO:** Tokyo Olympics organisers are eyeing next July as a start date for the postponed Games, Japanese media reported on Sunday, following the historic decision to delay the event due to the coronavirus.

Given the ongoing pandemic and need for preparation time, the likely plan would be for the Games to begin on July 23, 2021, public broadcaster NHK said, citing sources within the organising panel. It came after Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike raised the idea on Friday of moving the event to a less hot and humid time of year. She argued that this would make marathons and other races easier to endure, meaning they could be held in the capital in-

stead of in northern Sapporo city, where the International Olympic Committee (IOC) had decided to move them.

## Decision on dates next week

The Tokyo 2020 team led by Yoshiro Mori is currently discussing possible dates with the IOC, according to the Asahi Shimbun newspaper. On Saturday, Mori told a Japanese TV station that "some kind of conclusion" would be reached within a week.

The Olympics were scheduled to open on July 24 this year with the Paralympics on August 25, but Japan announced last week it had secured agreement from the IOC to postpone the Games.

Meanwhile, World Athletics

president Sebastian Coe said that the decision to postpone this year's Tokyo Olympics has saved athletes from "mental turmoil". "We didn't want to have the athletes in a position where they were countering government advice, maybe even breaking the law," Coe said.

## Risk to families

"And of course in the back of their minds was always that concern, it wasn't just their own training programme, but that they ran the risk of infecting themselves, their families, their kids, grandparents or parents, and we just wanted to take them out of that mental turmoil," he added.

AFP

## Olympic chief fears escalating costs

**TOKYO:** It will be a major challenge on deciding who covers the additional costs arising from the postponement of the Games, Tokyo 2020 president Yoshiro Mori has warned International Federations. "The extra cost that will arise is inevitable," Mori wrote in a letter to the Federations. "Deciding who will bear these costs and how it will be done will be a major challenge," he added.

# Ronaldo, Juve boss agree to pay cut

## CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

**MILAN:** Juventus announced that they had cut their players' and coach Maurizio Sarri's salaries after all Italian sport was suspended until at least April 3 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"The economic and financial effects of the understanding reached are positive for about 90 million euros (€752cr) for the 2019-2020 financial year," said a club statement.

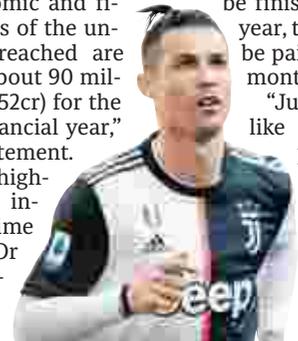
Juventus' highly-paid stars include five-time Ballon d'Or winner Cristiano Ronaldo and Wales

midfielder Aaron Ramsey. Italian champions Juventus, who led second-placed Lazio by a point in Serie A before the suspension of the season, said they had agreed a "reduction" for pay from March until June. Juve added that should the season

be finished later in the year, the players could be paid extra in those months.

"Juventus would like to thank the players and the coach for their commitment at a difficult time for everyone," the Turin giants said.

AFP



# NBA club New York Knicks owner Dolan tests positive for COVID-19

**LOS ANGELES:** American business tycoon and New York Knicks owner James Dolan has been diagnosed with COVID-19, becoming the first US major sports owner to test positive for the virus, the Knicks announced Saturday night.

Dolan, 64, who also owns the National Hockey League's New York Rangers, is self isolating after experiencing "little to no symptoms". In a tweet, the Knicks said Dolan continues to carry out his duties as the executive chairman of the New York-based sports and entertainment company Madison Square Garden Co.

The NBA postponed its regular season after several



NY Knicks owner James Dolan

players, including Utah Jazz center Rudy Gobert, tested positive for the new coronavirus.

The NHL has also suspended its season. Colorado Avalanche announced on Thursday that one of their players had been diagnosed with the coronavirus, becoming the third NHL player to be stricken with COVID-19.

AFP



A man anchors his boat in front of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic rings in Tokyo, Japan. The Games have been postponed to next year. PIC/GETTY IMAGES

# Footballers stranded in foreign lands learn to live sans the game

**LONDON:** The riches, glamour and glory of playing football in front of packed stadiums attracts the world's top players across borders but with the European game in lockdown, many have been left isolated from their families.

Coronavirus has forced governments across Europe to impose restrictions on travel and personal freedoms. Footballers' daily routines have been upended with no games to play for the foreseeable future and training sessions now conducted alone at home or via video-conferencing to maintain some semblance of team spirit.

"It is a way to keep in contact with each other, to start a little

bit of routine because I think that is important," said Brighton manager Graham Potter.

"Our guys are all here in the UK. That is why it is important for us to keep in contact and regular dialogue and make sure everyone is alright. They are away from families, they are missing families and that is something we understand. We sympathise with that, but we felt it was right to limit international travel and to

stay at home and be safe."

Other clubs allowed their stars to jet home. PSG's Neymar and Thiago Silva returned to Brazil and Edinson Cavani headed to Uruguay.

By contrast, Chelsea's Spanish winger Pedro Rodriguez was stuck in London as he and the rest of the Blues squad were forced into self-isolation when teammate Callum Hudson-Odoi tested positive. "It's hard not to be able to see my children," said Pedro Rodriguez, whose

children live in Barcelona, told Spanish radio station Cadena SER. "I imagine there are many people like me. I tell them to stay in the house and that I miss them."

For others, the greatest concern is filling time and the void left by no football.

"I am obviously a little bored since two weeks have passed since the beginning of the quarantine at home," Juventus' Polish goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny told Sky Sport Italia. "I am alone in Turin because my family went to Poland. Having said that, however, I must say that I am having a peaceful time. I sleep a lot."

AFP



Chelsea star Pedro

# F1 season might end in Jan, says Ferrari boss

**ROME:** Ferrari team principal Mattia Binotto believes the coronavirus-hit Formula One schedule could push the world championship into a January finish.

So far, Grand Prix races scheduled for Bahrain, Vietnam, China, Netherlands, Spain and Azerbaijan have been postponed.

"We have decided to give total freedom to the FIA in terms of scheduling," Binotto told Sky Sport Italia. "We are looking at several options: If you hold them one right after the other, you can run two or three races in January."

AFP



Mattia Binotto

# City's Etihad stadium to be used by UK's NHS

**MANCHESTER:** Premier League champions Manchester City's Etihad Stadium will be partially taken over by the UK's National Health Service (NHS) to help in fight the pandemic.

City will make available the stadium's executive boxers and conference rooms to train doctors and nurses during the crisis.

"We are proud of the role our supporters play in helping local food banks and recognise the increased strain likely to be placed on these charities by the impact of coronavirus," a joint club statement said. "At a time of challenge for our community, we are pleased to come together with our fans to help vulnerable members of society in a City United."

IANIS

# close of play

## Bianca's I-love-you moment

Tennis champ from Canada reveals fan got romantic after winning bet over her clinching US Open last September in NY

CANADIAN tennis ace Bianca Andreescu, the reigning US Open champion, has revealed that she encountered a crazy fan after she won the last Grand Slam for 2019 in New York.

The fan had bet \$10,000 on her winning the tournament and managed to meet her after his and her triumph.

"This guy actually watched each and every one of my matches. He came to the finals and said, 'I love you,'" she remarked while talking to Tennis Channel's Confessional Cart.

The interview that was conducted in a golf cart, provided an insight into Andreescu's habits.

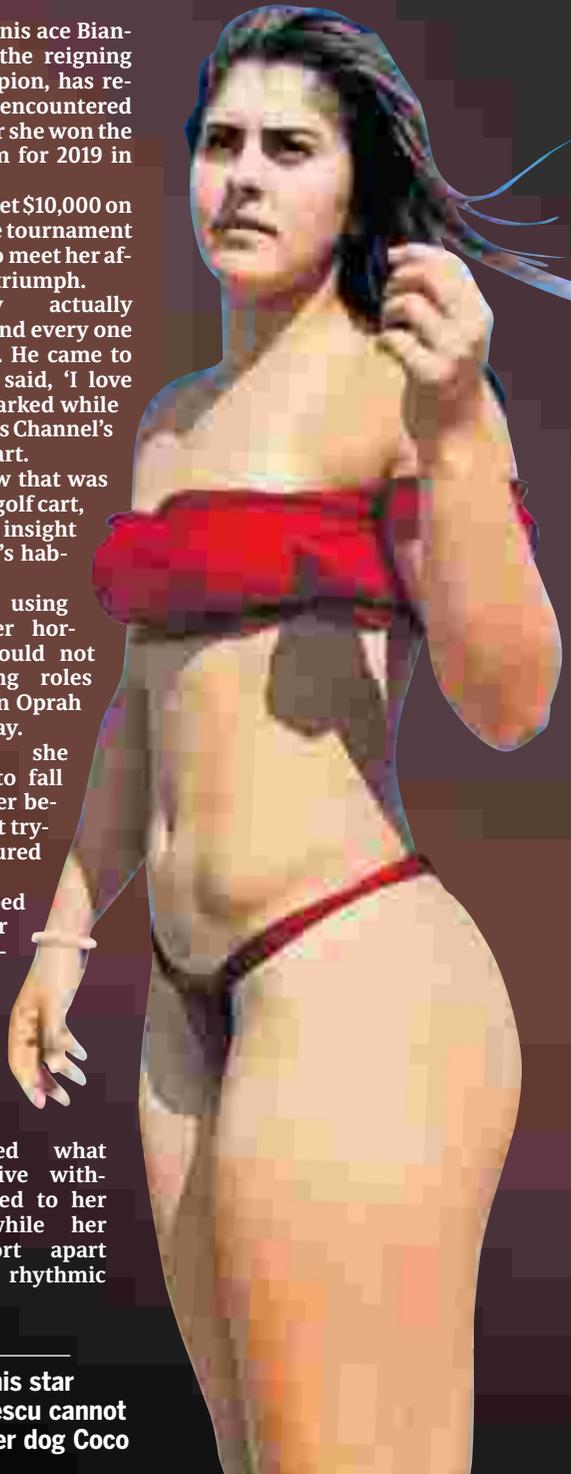
She loves using Google for her horoscope and would not mind switching roles with chat queen Oprah Winfrey for a day.

However, she wouldn't like to fall on stage like her because, "I am not trying to get injured again."

Winfrey tripped on stage earlier this month during her 2020 Vision: Your Life in Focus Tour while Andreescu is recovering from a knee injury.

When asked what she cannot live without, she pointed to her dog Coco, while her favourite sport apart from tennis is rhythmic gymnastics.

Canadian tennis star Bianca Andreescu cannot live without her dog Coco



## F1 star Seb: Look after older people in Coronavirus crisis

FORMULA One great Sebastian Vettel doesn't want to appear as being an advice-giver but stressed that this is no time to take things lightly. Vettel said on a Ferrari-produced video that people must look after the older folk in this time of crisis.

"Take it serious. Take care of yourself, take care of other people, especially older people. Keep your distance...wash your hands. The most important thing is that you should

respect other people and respect the situation. Don't take it too lightly and be responsible," Vettel stated.

According to a New York Times article, Germany has done well to protect the older citizens. "States banned visits to the elderly, and policymakers issued urgent warnings to limit contact with older people. Many seem to have quarantined themselves," said the report. Vettel, 32, is a four-time Formula One world champion.

## Women's cricketer Knight joins NHS as volunteer

LONDON: England women's cricket team captain Heather Knight has joined the National Health Service (NHS) as volunteer to help the healthcare system fight the COVID-19 pandemic in the United Kingdom.

Knight, 29, who has played 7 Tests, 101 ODIs and 74 T20Is for England will help in transporting medicines and spreading awareness about the pandemic in the United Kingdom that have reported at least 14543 cases of the novel Coronavirus.

"I signed up to the NHS' volunteer scheme as I have a lot of free time on my hands and I want to help as much as I can," Knight wrote in her column for BBC. Knight, who returned from Australia after leading England to

the semi-finals of the Women's T20 World Cup recently, is now living under the UK's lockdown rules.

"My brother and his partner are doctors, and I have a few friends who work in the NHS, so I know how hard they are working and how difficult it is for everyone," she said. Besides helping transport medicines, Knight will also speak to people about the importance of self-isolation under the current circumstances.

PTI



**'My brother and his partner are doctors, and have friends who work in the NHS, so I know how hard they are working'**

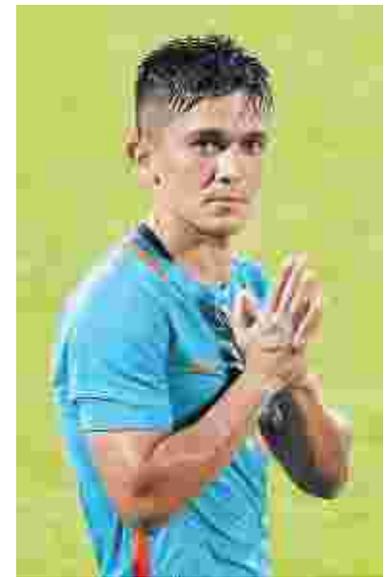
## She Woz robbed at a grocery



DUE to the current Coronavirus pandemic, people across the globe are queuing up shops, stores and supermarkets to stock up their essential needs and groceries to see them through till the lockdown ends.

Former Danish tennis ace Caroline Wozniacki is no different. The demand for goods are so high that many super markets do not have all the items listed and most of them are out of stock. On her recent trip to buy groceries, Wozniacki encountered a funny incident, where a commodity she had in her cart went missing by the time she reached the billing counter.

Revealing her recent ordeal, she tweeted: "Went to the store to load up on groceries today! Finally found a puzzle that wasn't sold out and someone steals it out of our cart before we even checked out."



## Everyone is struggling in these challenging times: Chhetri

KUALA LUMPUR: India football captain Sunil Chhetri on Sunday featured in an Asian Football Confederation (AFC) campaign to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and requested people to do all they can to overcome "these challenging times".

In the latest instalment of the continental body's BreakTheChain campaign, the Indian talisman was accompanied by Chinese Football Association (CFA) vice-president Sun Wen, acknowledged as one of the greatest women players to have graced the world stage, and Myanmar captain Kyaw Zin Thet. "Everyone is struggling in these challenging times. I must urge you to follow the advice of the World Health Organization and the best medical practices put in place by your local governments. It is our responsibility to do our part by maintaining our hygiene and if necessary, to stay at home.

"Let's work together as a team to break the chain and stop the spread of COVID-19. I stand with everyone in India and around the world to put these challenging times behind us and hope that we can all return to our normal lives soon," added Chhetri.

PTI

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