

# The Salandi Samachar



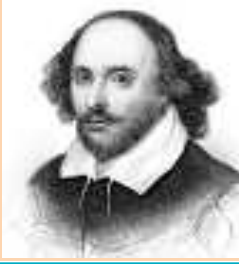
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Founder - Sahitya Ratna Apurba Ranjan Ray

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## Pakistan realises merit of regional cooperation: India on Islamabad inviting SAARC nations for coronavirus COVID-19 meet

**New Delhi:**(U.N.S) Recalling its move on SAARC for a regional joining the initiative. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi had bution being 10 million dollars. Pakistan was initially hesitant with the



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strategy, India on Thursday appreciated Pakistan finally showing enthusiasm for regional calls on coronavirus COVID-19. Pakistan on Thursday hosted a meet on COVID-19 pandemic in which the country had invited all the SAARC countries. India also participated in the meet. Sources said, "Good to see Pakistan has realized the merit of regional cooperation and

called for SAARC video conference in March. Speaking on this, sources said, "Regional cooperation is an important part of dealing with COVID-19". After the meet, the SAARC emergency fund was established and health and commerce ministers spoke on the current crisis. SAARC emergency fund has a corpus of 18 million dollars with India's contri-

meet, sending junior advisor for the SAARC head of state video conference meeting. The country was last to announce its contribution for the SAARC COVID-19 meet. It also did not participate in SAARC agriculture meet on COVID-19 citing non-involvement of SAARC secretariat even though other countries participated.

## Maharashtra worst hit, Delhi second as coronavirus

### COVID-19 cases in India jump to 23,077, death toll at 718

**NEW DELHI:** The total number of confirmed coronavirus COVID-19 cases in the country jumped to 23,077, while the death toll spiked to 718 on Friday (April 24, 2020), according to the latest figures released by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.



India recorded its sharpest spike in cases with 1,684 cases and 37 deaths in 24 hours. Meanwhile, there are 4,748 recoveries in the country so far. The confirmed coronavirus cases include 17,610 active cases, 4,748 cured/discharged, 1 migrated, and 718 deaths, according to the government figures. According to the morning update by the Health Ministry, Maharashtra continues to be the worst-hit state with 6,430 cases of which 840 patients have recovered and 283 patients have died. Delhi's count stands at 2,376 of which 808 patients have recovered, while 50 patients have lost their lives.

Gujarat, being third on the list with respect to positive COVID-19 cases, has 2,624 cases with 258 recovered and 112 dead. Tamil Nadu's

detected positive for coronavirus.

While some states have relaxed the lockdown rules, others have extended the lockdown beyond May 5. With the virus taking a toll on the economy, the Union government is weighing options for a stimulus to protect wages of workers employed in micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) as the sector fights a survival battle. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will meet the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday to discuss the financial package that was announced earlier. Meanwhile, the United States which is the worst-hit country in the world saw a record number of deaths in 24 hours. Around 3,100 people have succumbed to novel coronavirus in the US in 24 hours, while the death toll in the country is past 50,000-mark. The global death toll has crossed 1,90,000.

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## Russia calls India's decision to send medicines 'nobel', says gesture will be reciprocated



Nikolay Kudashev, the Russian envoy to India, lauded India's 'comprehensive efforts' that resulted in significant "decrease in the rate of infection".

**New Delhi:** (U.N.S) Russia has called India's decision to send hydroxychloroquine medicines, to combat the coronavirus COVID-19 crisis, as "nobel", adding that the gesture will be reciprocated. Nikolay Kudashev, the Russian envoy to India, lauded India's 'comprehensive efforts' that resulted in significant "decrease in the rate of infection".

On India sending hydroxychloroquine, called a gamechanger drug, to Russia Kudashev said, "The generous decision of the govt of India to lift the ban on the export of important medicines to treat COVID-19 patients despite the increased demand in this country was very much

appreciated in Russia. Be sure, it will be reciprocated. In our understanding, the conducive atmosphere for this noble decision was created during earlier contact of our leaders, President Vladimir Putin and Prime Minister Narendra Modi followed by conversation and contact between top diplomats."

Speaking on how Moscow and New Delhi is collaborating to deal with the crisis, he said spread of the infection is a global challenge, adding that in this battle, Russia and India fight a common enemy. "We follow closely the steps taken by the Centre and regional administrations. Comprehensive efforts resulted in a significant

decrease in the rate of infection and we see a number of recoveries growing."

"In Russia too, govt introduced various measures to tackle the diseases, apart from lockdown and social distancing, additional hospitals are started, vaccines are tested. This allows preventing the unchecked spread of the infection. Of course, people are at the centre of all our efforts during the COVID pandemic," he said. He added, "While keeping in mind safety pf people in Russia, we also remember the citizens stranded abroad in lockdown. The Embassy of Russia with the help of Indian authorities facilitated the repatriation of our tour-

ist from India. So far, about 1,700 left India onboard special chartered flights organised by the Russian government from Delhi and Goa from different cities and destinations of Russia. More flights are expected. At the same time, the Russian govt has provided support to Indian stranded in Russia, to ensure their safety. The Russian ministry of the interior ministry extended the visas of Indian nationals." Incidentally, Finance Minister S Jaishankar and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov spoke on Thursday on the crisis during which the upcoming BRICS FM video meet, that is to take place on April 28 was also discussed.

## PM Modi to interact with village heads across the country

**New Delhi**(U.N.S): Prime Minister Narendra Modi took to Twitter Friday morning informing that he will be interacting with 'Sarpanchs' from across the nation. He will also launch an unified e-GramSwaraj portal and a mobile app on National Panchayati Raj Day. "At 11 AM today, PM @narendramodi would be interacting with Sarpanchs from across the nation via video conferencing. All Sarpanchs will be able to join this interaction through Doordarshan, from their respective



homes adhering to social distancing norms," Modi tweeted. He added that the village heads who

decentralisation of power to the grassroots level, with the institutionalisation of Panchayati Raj through the Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992, which came into force on April 24, 1993. The portal that PM Modi will launch is a new initiative of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj which will provide the gram panchayats with a single

interface to prepare and implement their Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP). The Prime Minister will also launch the Swamitva Scheme on the occasion. The scheme provides for an integrated property validation solution for rural India; the demarcation of inhabited land in rural areas would be done by the use of latest surveying methods — Drone technology with the collaborated efforts of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, State Panchayati Raj Departments, State Revenue Departments and Survey of India.

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## Oxford University pushing science to the limit in coronavirus vaccine hunt

**London:** Oxford University is launching a human trial of a potential coronavirus vaccine, with the daunting aim of making a successful jab available to the public later this year.

Of the more than 100 research projects around the world to find a vaccine -- described by the United Nations as the only route back to "normality" -- seven are currently in clinical trials, according to the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

Such trials are already underway in China and the United States and are due to begin at the end of this month in Germany, where the federal vaccine authority gave the green light.

The British government strongly supports Oxford University's work, and the first human trials were to start on Thursday, Health Minister Matt Hancock said.

## Coronavirus COVID-19 killed by sunlight, warmer temperatures, humidity: US research

**New York:** Sunlight kills COVID-19 while warmer temperatures and humid weather significantly damage the virus, measured in terms of the virus' half-life or the time it takes to cut its potency in half, according to the latest breakthrough research from the US Department of Homeland Security's most advanced bio-containment lab, released at the White House here on Thursday. "Our most striking observation to date is the powerful effect that solar light appears to have on killing the virus, both on surfaces and in the air. We've seen a similar effect with both temperature and humidity as well. Increasing the temperature and humidity or both is generally less favourable to the virus," Bill Bryan, chief of the science and technology directorate at the US Department of Homeland Security, said.

In a room at 70-75F temperature with 20 per cent humidity, the half-life of the virus is about an hour, according to Bryan. "But you get outside and it cuts down to a minute and a half, very significant difference when it gets hit with UV rays," he said.



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## EDITORIAL

The total number of coronavirus COVID-19 cases across 185 nations spiralled towards 2,766,611 and the death toll stood at 194,456 at 11.45 pm (IST) on Friday (April 24), even as the battle between humanity and the virus continued to surge. With the highest numbers both in positive cases and death toll, the US continues to remain the worst-hit with a total of 883,826. It is followed by Spain with 219,764 cases, Italy with 192,994 cases, France with 159,495 cases and Germany with 154,111 cases.

With a massive jump, the US has witnessed the highest death toll across all the nations at 50,373, followed by Italy at 25,969, Spain at 22,524, France at 22,278 and the UK at 19,561. While Spain's daily coronavirus deaths recorded the lowest in a month, Italy's daily death toll was lowest since March 19.

The US Food and Drug Administration has cautioned against the use of malaria drug hydroxychloroquine, touted by President Donald Trump, in

COVID-19 patients outside of hospitals and clinical trials, citing risks of serious heart rhythm problems. The decades-old drug has been called a "game changer" by Trump in the fight against the novel coronavirus and anecdotal reports that it may provide some benefit have spurred sales of the drug. There is no evidence yet of the drugs' effect on the virus.

Within hours of Trump's initial endorsement on March 19, pharmaceutical supply chain experts reported shortages as doctors began prescribing hydroxychloroquine for themselves and their families. Patients have also pressured doctors to use the therapies widely touted by Trump and other supporters. The FDA said on Friday it was aware of increased use of hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine through outpatient prescriptions and the drugs could cause abnormal heart rhythms and dangerously rapid heart rate.

The agency's announcement comes a day after the European Union's drug regulator warned of the side effects of the drugs, urging medical professionals to closely monitor pa-

tients on the medicines. Hydroxychloroquine was also associated with potentially higher risk of death for patients at U.S. veterans hospitals, according to an analysis submitted for expert review earlier this week.

Deaths from the COVID-19 epidemic in Italy climbed by 420 on Friday, the smallest daily tally since March 19, the Civil Protection Agency said, but the number of new infections rose to 3,021 from 2,646 on Thursday. Friday's death toll was down from 464 the day before. People registered as currently carrying the illness fell to 106,527 from 106,848 on Thursday, a fifth consecutive daily decline.

There were 2,173 people in intensive care on Friday against 2,267 on Thursday, maintaining a long-running decline. Of those originally infected, 60,498 were declared recovered against 57,576 a day earlier. The agency said 1.148 million people had been tested for the virus against 1.053 million the day before, out of a population of around 60 million.

## Microbiologist Elisa Granato first participant in Oxford University's COVID-19 vaccine trial

London: A microbiologist has become the first human to be injected for the human trial phase of a vaccine in the UK against the novel coronavirus. The vaccine is being developed by a group of scientists at the Oxford University.



coronavirus. "I'm a scientist, so I wanted to try to support the scientific process wherever I can,"

the injection. Other notable participants ranato is joined by cancer researcher Edward O'Neill as the first two candidates. One of them has been injected with the COVID-19 vaccine and the other a control vaccine which protects against meningitis.

Granato told the BBC. She made the comment after being injected in Oxford, where the trial began this week. "Since I don't study viruses I felt a bit useless these days. So I felt like this is a very easy way for me to support the cause," Granato said. It was her 32nd birthday Thursday when she took

They will now be monitored for 48 hours to observe the impact of each. Scientists will then gradually start injecting further volunteers, healthy individuals aged between 18 and 55. However, none of the participants will be aware which vaccine they have been injected with.

## Special 'puja' performed by villagers to save people from COVID-19

Rourkella (Odisha): A special 'puja' was performed by villagers of Kapranda village under Bhalulata panchayat in Bisra block of Sundargarh district to save people from coronavirus.



disposing off the trash, they would be able to restrict the entry of the

able to enter our village. So, we disposed all the trash." The villagers performed the 'puja' after three COVID-19 cases were detected in Bisra area. Even though the villagers performed the 'puja',

because they believe in superstition, it is learnt that they wore masks and observed social-distancing norms while performing the 'puja'.

der, with an aim to reach Upper Assam and suspected to have come with an intention to target the security forces. In a major breakthrough, five United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) hardcore cadres has been apprehended by the Indian Army in a joint operation with Assam Police. There was an intelligence input about the presence of the heavily armed cadres, having infiltrated through the Indo-Myanmar Border, with an aim to reach Upper Assam and suspected to have come with an intention to target the security forces.

"Based on intelligence inputs by the Indian Army and Charaideo Police which we were following for last one week, significant operational success has been achieved recently," Indian Army said in a statement to media. "Army and Assam Police nor boys were also rescued from the clutches of the rebels and reunited with their families."

## Donald Trump to halt issuing of new green cards

Washington: President Donald Trump has said that he will halt the issuing of the new green cards or legal permanent residency for the next 60 days as part of his executive order to temporarily suspend immigration into the US.

Trump, however, said on Tuesday that the move will not have any impact on those entering the country on a temporary basis. As per the existing law, the US can issue a maximum of 1,40,000 employment-based green cards every year with a per country cap of seven per cent.

Accordingly, in fiscal year 2019, Indian nationals received 9,008 category 1 (EB1), 2,908 category 2 (EB2), and 5,083 category 3 (EB3) green cards. EB1-3 are different categories of employment-based green cards. Many have interpreted that those on non-immigrant work visas like the much sought-after H-1B, popular among Indian professionals, issued mainly to foreign technology professionals will not be impacted. The seasonal immigrant workers for agricultural purposes too will not be impacted.

In any case, the executive order to be signed by Trump on Wednesday will impact a large number of tens and thousands of Indian-American



cans, who are waiting to get a Green Card. This is expected to further delay the process.

"We must first take care of the American worker. This pause will be in effect for 60 days, after which need for any extension or modification will be evaluated by myself and a group of people based on economic conditions at the time," Trump told reporters at his daily White House news conference on coronavirus.

"This order will only apply to individuals seeking a permanent residency, in other words, those receiving

green cards, big factor, will not apply to those entering on a temporary basis," he asserted. Trump also added that the US administration will examine various immigration-related measures in future to protect America. This sudden pause on immigration can be beneficial as the US can conserve medical resources for American citizens, Trump added.

"We want to protect our US workers, and I think as we move forward, we will become more and more protective of them," he said. Earlier, the US government agreed to extend H-1B visas of Indians stranded in America amid pandemic. On Tuesday, the Indian government told Supreme Court that it would not be possible to evacuate Indian citizens stranded in the US due to travel restrictions amid the coronavirus pandemic at this stage.

"They cannot be brought in, no matter how much we want. Assistance is being given to them. They are spread across US and cannot be brought back. The US government is extending the visas. Let us wait for some time," the Supreme Court bench observed.

## Indian Army busts ULFA recruitment racket, apprehends five hardcore cadres

Assam: There was an intelligence input about the presence of the heavily armed cadres, having infiltrated through the Indo-Myanmar Bor-

der, with an aim to reach Upper Assam and suspected to have come with an intention to target the security forces. In a major breakthrough, five United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) hardcore cadres has been apprehended by the Indian Army in a joint operation with Assam Police. There was an intelligence input about the presence of the heavily armed cadres, having infiltrated through the Indo-Myanmar Border, with an aim to reach Upper Assam and suspected to have come with an intention to target the security forces.

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## Youngsters beat up sarpanch for advising against cricket match

Muniguda (Odisha): A bunch of youngsters against playing cricket amid the ongoing COVID-19 lockdown. Acting on the report lodged by sarpanch Digamber Sikka police arrested the young men

Friday. The victim later went to Muniguda police station in the afternoon and reported the matter. Cops have so far detained 25 men in this connection and are interrogating them.

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## ASHA worker assaulted in Balasore, accused nabbed

Balasore (Odisha): Town police here arrested a man Friday for allegedly assaulting an accredited social health activist (ASHA) worker and her family members at her home Thursday. The incident took place in Barabati village of Balasore district.

Victim Subhadra had filed a report with Balasore Town police in this connection. Acting on the FIR, police arrested the accused Friday. The accused has been identified as Ramesh Mahalik from Neliabag area in the district. According to Subhadra, the accused allegedly made objectionable comments while she was collecting details of people with COVID-

19 symptoms in Neliabag containment zone.

Even though Subhadra returned to her home by avoiding Ramesh; a little while later, the accused along with his family member entered into her house forcibly and assaulted her along with her daughter and mother-in-law. Her fellow villagers rescued the three and took them to the district headquarters hospital for treatment.

Balasore collector K Sudarshan Chakravarty called on Subhadra after learning about the incident Friday morning. Other ASHA workers in the district have demanded strong action against the accused.

## India may see second wave of COVID-19 outbreak in monsoon, say scientists

Newdelhi: The trajectory of COVID-19 cases could have plateaued and might even fall for some weeks after the lockdown is lifted. However, India is likely to see a second wave of coronavirus attack in late July or August with a surge in the number of cases during the monsoon, say scientists.

The timing of the peak will depend on how India is able to control physical distancing and on the level of infection spreads after restrictions are relaxed, they said.

"It looks apparent that the trajectory of daily new cases has reached a plateau and eventually it will take a downward fall, maybe for some weeks or even months," Samit Bhatta charya, associate professor at the Department of Mathematics, 'Shiv Nadar University', said Friday. "Still, we may get a surge of new cases of the same coronavirus and this will be considered a second wave," Bhatta charya explained.

Rajesh Sundaresan, professor at Bangalore's 'Indian Institute of Science' (IISc), agreed. "Once we return to normal activity levels, there is a chance that infection may begin to rise again. China is seeing this to some extent post easing of some restrictions on travel," Sundaresan, corresponding author of a working paper by researchers at IISc and the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) in Mumbai, said.

March 25, when the number of coronavirus cases was 618 with 13 deaths, the government announced a nationwide lockdown that was later extended to May 3. The death toll due to COVID-19 rose to 718 Friday and the number of cases to 23,077, according to the Union Health Ministry.

In good news, officials said this week that the doubling rate of cases has slowed down in the period, going from 3.4 days before lockdown to 7.5 days, with 18 states doing better than the national average. The recovery rate has also almost doubled in the last 10 days.

"Looking at the new cases in the past few days, it seems the growth of new daily infection is much slower than earlier. This apparently indicates that we might have reached at the plateau of the growth curve," Bhattacharya said.

He also noted that recent studies in China and Europe observed that the infection might relapse in those people who have already

recovered from earlier phases.

"So, there is no evidence that the earlier infection may help acquire immunity against the second infection. And in that way, the entire population may be vulnerable to the second wave to some extent," said the scientist.

In their study unveiled this week, IISc and TIFR researchers analysed the impact of strategies such as case isolation, home quarantine, social distancing and various post-lockdown restrictions on COVID-19 that might remain in force for some time.

The study modelled on Bangalore and Mumbai suggests the infection is likely to have a second wave and the public health threat will remain, unless steps are taken to aggressively trace, localise, isolate the cases, and prevent influx of new infections.

The new levels and the peaking times for healthcare demand depend on the levels of infection spreads in each city at the time of relaxation of restrictions, they said.

"The lockdown is currently upon us. It has given us valuable time. Let us test, trace, quarantine, isolate, practice better hygiene, search for a vaccine, etc. We should do these anyway, and these are being done. When and how to lift the lockdown is going to be a difficult decision to make," said Sundaresan.

"It's clear that it's going to be phased. What our team is focusing on is to come up with tools to help the decision makers assess the public health impact of various choices," informed Sundaresan.

According to the experts, infectious diseases spread via contact between infectious and susceptible people. In the absence of any control measures, an outbreak will grow as long as the average number of people infected by each infectious person is more than one. Once enough people are immune there will be fewer people susceptible to the infection and the outbreak will die.

"Until the vaccine comes on the market, we have to remain alert... Once sporadic cases occur here and there in the country, we immediately need to implement quarantine or social distancing locally for the people in that region, and also need to perform tests to identify positive cases irrespective of showing symptoms," Bhattacharya explained.



## Gautam Gambhir performs last rites of Odia domestic help, wins hearts

**New Delhi:** India's World Cup-winning former opener Gautam Gambhir performed the last rites of his deceased domestic help. He did so after her mortal remains could not be sent to her home in Odisha due to lockdown.



Gambhir, also a Lok Sabha member from the BJP, posted a tribute on his Twitter page for his employee Saraswati Patra. She had been working at his residence for the past six years.

"Taking care of my little one can never be domestic help. She was family. Performing her last rites was my duty," Gambhir tweeted. "Al-

ways believed in dignity irrespective of caste, creed, religion or social status. Only way to cre-

ate a better society. That's my idea of India! Om Shanti," said the 38-year-old Gambhir. The left-handed opener played 58 Tests for India between 2004 and 2016. He also got 97 in the 2011 World Cup final, a game India won.

Media reports in Odisha said the 49-year-old Patra hailed from a village in Jajpur district.

She was admitted to Sir Ganga Ram Hospital a few days ago and was battling diabetes and high blood pressure for a long period. She breathed her last while undergoing treatment, April 21.

Union Minister of Petroleum and Steel Dharmendra Pradhan appreciated Gambhir's efforts.

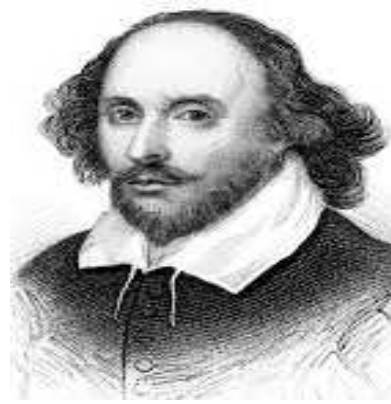
"Taking care of Saraswati throughout the course of her illness, he also ensured her dignity in death by performing her last rites himself. It was a noble act since her mortal remains could not be sent to her family back home in Odisha," Pradhan tweeted.

## Remembering William Shakespeare on his birth and death anniversary

An English poet, world's greatest dramatist, widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and playwright--William Shakespeare has many feathers to his caps. The birth and death anniversary of the Bard of Avon is traditionally observed on April 23. He is often called England's national poet. Shakespeare passed away over 400 years ago but remains the world's greatest writer. His works were so brilliant that they have been translated into almost every single living-language. His extant works consist of some 154 sonnets, 39 plays, two long narrative poems, and a few other verses, some of the uncertain authorship.

Some of his plays have also been adapted by the Indian film industry and they continue to inspire generations. Among some of the most revered works of the English writer are-- 'Julius Caesar', 'King Lear', 'Macbeth' and 'Hamlet'. 'Julius Caesar', 'King Lear', 'Macbeth'

and 'Hamlet'. He produced most of his known works between 1589-1613. His early plays were mainly comedies and histories which are



regarded as some of the best works of this genre.

He was born in April 1564 and died in 1616, merely at the age of 52 but he is still considered to be among the most influential of the English authors. An English poet, world's greatest dramatist, widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and playwright--William Shakespeare has many feathers to his caps. The birth and death anniversary of the Bard of Avon is traditionally observed on April 23. He is often called England's national

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In order to mark his anniversary, we bring to you some of the best Shakespeare quotes:

- \* Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them.
- \* Ignorance is the curse of God; knowledge is the wing wherewith we fly to heaven.
- \* True hope is swift and flies with swallow's wings. Kings it makes gods and meaner creatures kings.
- \* When Envy breeds unkind division: there comes the ruin, there begins confusion.
- \* Wise men ne'er sit

and wail their loss but cheerily seek how to redress their harms.

\* This above all; to thine own self be true, and it must follow as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man.

\* This our life, exempt from public haunt, finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything.

\* How poor are they that have not patience! What wound did ever heal but by degrees?

\* Give sorrow words; the grief that does not speak knits up the o'er wrought heart and bids it break.

\* The purest treasure mortal times effort is spotless reputation - that away, men are but gilded loam or painted clay.

\* Neither a borrower nor a lender be; for loan oft loses both itself and friend, and borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.

## Coronavirus impact: Now pay health insurance premium in EMIs

**New Delhi:** A big relief to policyholders dealing with cash crunch due to coronavirus-induced challenges, insurance regulator IRDA has directed health insurance companies to allow policyholders to pay their premium in instalments. So, if your policy is due for renewal up to March 31, 2021, you can make the payments on a monthly, quarterly or half-yearly basis. According to IRDA, the insurers will notify policyholders about applicable conditions and consent will be obtained. "Our customers shall be able to opt and use this facility of paying health insurance premium in instalments very soon as system integration is in the advanced stage," informs Gurdeep Singh Batra, Head- Retail Underwriting, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance. Star Health and Allied Insurance says it already has some products where it allows instalment payments. "Considering the latest move, we will expose more of our best-selling products to the instalment payments mode," says Anand Roy, MD, Star Health and Allied Insurance. Subrata Mondal, Executive Vice President, IFFCO-Tokio General Insurance, meanwhile, informs that the feature has already been implemented in Arogya Sanjeevani, the standardised health insurance plan launched by IFFCO Tokio and will be extended to all other health insurance products at the earliest. Notably, insurance regulator had already notified insurers last year to offer instalment facility from October 1, 2020, among other modifications. However, with COVID-19-linked challenges, the option of payment in instalments is being made active on an immediate basis.

## India's international passenger capacity reduced by 89 percent in April due to COVID-19: UN

**United Nations:** International passenger capacity for India reduced by 89 per cent so far this month due to COVID-19 pandemic as compared to a 'business-as-usual' scenario, according to the latest projections from the United Nations specialised agency for international civil aviation. The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) said that by September, the world could have 1.2 billion fewer international air travellers, compared to regular originally planned or business-as-usual.

Estimates by the organisation show a dramatic reduction in international passenger capacity for countries across the world between January and April,

as the COVID-19 pandemic spread globally. In February 2020, international passenger capacity reduced by 13 per cent, mainly related to traffic from/to States experiencing an early outbreak and States deeply interconnected to China.

By March, global international passenger capacity reduced by 49 per cent, with significant reduction not only in States experiencing an early outbreak but also worldwide.

In April 2020, global international passenger capacity so far experienced by unprecedented 91 per cent reduction. For India, the international passenger capacity has reduced by 89 per cent so far in April or a negative 6,263,030

capacity change from originally planned or in a business as usual scenario. In January, there was zero reduction for India in international passenger capacity as the pandemic was in its nascent stages across most of the world, except China, and air travel was still not significantly impacted. The passenger capacity reduction was about 2 per cent for India in February. However, by March, when the World Health Organisation had declared COVID-19 a global pandemic and infection rates were soaring across the world, India witnessed a 29 per cent capacity reduction, with capacity falling 2,077,578 as compared to originally planned.

## Good News! After 'Ramayan' and 'Mahabharat', Doordarshan brings back 'Shri Krishna'

**New Delhi:** Doordarshan saw a massive jump in its TRPs ever since the re-tecast of epic shows Ramanand Sagar's 'Ramayan' and BR Chopra's 'Mahabharat' started. The fact that they kept adding and bringing back old shows like 'Circus', 'Rajni' 'Byomkesh Bakshi' and 'Shaktiman' have only made the audiences happy amid the nationwide lockdown to fight the deadly novel coronavirus outbreak. And now, another epic show from the 90s - Shri Krishna is about to re-run on our television

screens. Yes! The good news was shared on the official Twitter handle of

one of the most watched shows back in the 90s. It was first broadcast on Doordarshan's Metro Channel (DD 2) from

the remaining episodes were aired on it. Later in 2001, the show was again re-tecast on Sony and Star - such was the popularity of this epic saga. Sarvadaman D. Banerjee played Krishna and Vishnu, Swapnil Joshi became a household name after he played the teenage Lord Krishna, Ashok Kumar Balkrishnan as young Krishna, Deepak Deulkar was seen as Balram and Shesha, Pinky Parikh played Rukmini / Yamuna / Lakshmi / Durga and Reshma Modi was seen as Radha respectively.



Doordarshan National and Prasar Bharti. Ramanand Sagar's 'Shri Krishna' originally aired between 1993-1996. It remained

1993. And then again in 1996, DD National aired it from the start. Interestingly, in the year 1999, the epic TV show was telecast on Zee TV and

## Mukesh Ambani surpasses Jack Ma as Asia's richest man after Reliance Jio-Facebook deal

**New Delhi:** After the Reliance Jio-Facebook deal was announced on Wednesday, Mukesh Ambani's wealth surged to make him Asia's richest man surpassing Jack Ma. Ambani's fortune rose by \$4.69 billion to \$49.2 billion after Reliance Industries gained 10 per cent, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index on

Mark Zuckerberg-led Facebook announced that it would pump in Rs 43,574 crore in Mukesh Ambani-led Jio Plat-

form for Ma's Alibaba Holdings was mitigated by the demand for its cloud computing services and mobile apps. "India is home to the largest communities on Facebook and WhatsApp, and a lot of talented entrepreneurs. The country is in the middle of a major digital transformation and organisations like Jio have played a big part in getting



hundreds of millions of Indian people and small businesses online. This is especially important right now, because small businesses are the core of every economy and they need our support," said Mark Zuckerberg in a Facebook post. He said that India has 60 million small businesses and that they would be able to help such enterprises grow their business amid the lockdown.

forms Limited. The investment would translate to the social media giant holding 9.99 per cent equity stake in Reliance Jio Platforms. Facebook said that it would focus on collaborating its messaging platform with WhatsApp with Reliance Jio's e-commerce venture JioMart and help people connect with small businesses. While Reliance Industries were impacted, the damage

billions of Indian people and small businesses online. This is especially important right now, because small businesses are the core of every economy and they need our support," said Mark Zuckerberg in a Facebook post. He said that India has 60 million small businesses and that they would be able to help such enterprises grow their business amid the lockdown.

## Indian aviation sector to face USD 11.2 billion revenue loss due to COVID-19 crisis; 2.9 million jobs at risk, warns IATA

**New Delhi:** The coronavirus pandemic is expected to impact more than 29 lakh jobs in the Indian aviation and dependent industries, global airlines' grouping IATA said on Friday. Commercial flight services in the country remain suspended till May 3 amid the nationwide lockdown to curb the spreading of coronavirus infections. Chopra's 'Mahabharat' started. The fact that they kept adding and bringing back old shows like 'Circus', 'Rajni'

'Byomkesh Bakshi' and 'Shaktiman' have only

show from the 90s - Shri Krishna is about to re-



run on our television. About India, the IATA said the pandemic is expected to potentially impact 29,32,900 jobs in the country's aviation

and its dependent industries. The passenger traffic has declined by 47 per cent. Besides, the grouping noted that the revenue impact for airlines operating to and from the Indian market would be USD 11.221 billion (over Rs 85,000 crore). This refers to the fall in passenger revenue compared to 2019. IATA is a grouping of nearly 290 airlines, including Air India, Vistara, IndiGo and SpiceJet. On April 14, IATA said the COVID-19 crisis would see revenues drop by USD 314

billions this year, a fall of 55 per cent compared to 2019. "The situation is deteriorating. Airlines are in survival mode. They face a liquidity crisis with a USD 61 billion cash burn in the second quarter," Conrad Clifford, IATA's Regional Vice President (Asia-Pacific) said. "Providing support for airlines has a broader economic implication. Jobs across many sectors will be impacted if airlines do not survive the COVID-19 crisis. Every airline job supports another 24 in the travel and tourism value chain.



## ICC chairman Shashank Manohar likely to get 2 months' extension



In all likelihood, England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) chairman Colin Graves will replace the former BCCI president, who, it is learnt, has decided against seeking an extension for a third two-year-term.

"This is for sure that Manohar is going but he will probably stay on for another two months as the annual board meeting in June looks highly unlikely at the moment considering the global situation," an ICC board member told PTI on conditions of anonymity. "So it might be in August that ICC will have a new chairman,"

he added. The BCCI, however, remains wary of the Vidarbha lawyer, who was seen as an adversary by some in the Indian board. "Till Manohar steps down officially, I will not like to believe (anything). Seeing is believing. He still has a term left. If he decides at the last moment that he wants to continue then it will be a different story," a BCCI veteran said. Hong Kong's Imran Khawaja's name was initially floated as Manohar's possible successor, but it is understood that he doesn't have the support of the full members.

ECB chairman Graves, who is supposed to step down from his country's board in November 2020, has emerged as the favourite

for the ICC top job. Those in the know of ICC's board room politics feel that Graves' biggest advantage at this point is support from all the major Test-playing nations. "England, New Zealand, Australia and West Indies will support Graves' candidature. He also shares a great rapport with BCCI although the world's richest cricket board has not openly supported any candidate," the Board member said.

It is expected that BCCI will have a better working relationship with Graves compared to Manohar, whom they have time and again accused of not keeping Indian interest in mind unlike the times of N. Srinivasan.

**Newdelhi:** International Cricket Council chairman Shashank Manohar, who is expected to step down in June, might get a couple of months' extension as the ICC's board meeting is set to be postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Coronavirus: England further suspends professional cricket until at least July 1

**Newdelhi:** The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) has decided to further extend the sus-

penders to determine the optimum way to fulfil fixtures both domestically and internationally.

sible in order to give it the best chance of being held in full.

Meanwhile, all

executive Officer Tom Harrison said that the country's cricket schedule will only go ahead only of the government permits.

"Our role as a national governing body during a crisis of this scale requires us to carefully plan alongside cricket's stakeholders and supporters to attempt to overcome COVID-19's impact on this season. As much as we remain hopeful that we can deliver some cricket this summer, we are in the midst of a worldwide crisis and our priority - over and above the playing of professional sport - will be to protect the vulnerable, key workers and society as a whole," an official statement quoted Harrison as saying.

"That's why, simply put, there will be no cricket unless it's safe to play. Our schedule will only go ahead if Government guidance permits," he added.



pension of professional cricket in the country until at least July 1 due to the coronavirus pandemic that has brought the entire world to standstill. The decision to extend the postponement of the season was taken in the wake of the ongoing advice from the government and health experts and continued consultation with all broadcast part-

The suspension means nine rounds of fixtures will be lost in the County Championship season. However, blocks for red-ball cricket and white-ball cricket will take place in a revised schedule.

The ECB further said that all the matches of the Vitality Blast will be pushed as late in the season as pos-

the international matches --featuring England men's and women's teams--will be scheduled from July to the end of September while the men's team Test series against West Indies and women's limited-overs fixtures against India will be moved from their original schedule.

Reflecting on the decision, ECB Chief Ex-

## Akshay Kumar-Karan Johar re-create 'Teri Mitti' song amid pandemic crisis, pay tribute to frontline warriors

**Newdelhi:** Amid the global health crisis emerging due to the deadly novel coronavirus outbreak, our frontline warriors - doctors, police, sanitation workers and everyone who's working so that others can stay safe need a word of appreciation and support.

Therefore, Bollywood superstar Akshay Kumar in collaboration with Karan Johar's Dharma Production and Zee Studios has paid a tribute to

our heroes in white -doctors through the re-



ated version of 'Teri Mitti' song from 'Kesari'.

Dharma Productions, Cape Of Good

Films along with Zee Studios and Azure Entertainment their lives at risk. Re-creating the heart-warming and chartbuster song 'Teri Mitti' from the film 'Kesari', the makers take this opportunity to salute them on behalf of the entire country. In light of the recent incidents where the frontline warriors were attacked, the tribute also urges the audience across the globe, to ensure that utmost respect and gratitude is given to the medical staff and the doctors. A special message in the end by Akshay Kumar is sure to bring a smile on all the faces!

ment have paid a tribute to these heroes who fight every day to keep us alive and healthy by put-

## Eminent theatre personality Usha Ganguly passes away at 75 in Kolkata

**Kolkata:** Eminent theatre personality Usha Ganguly died at her residence in south Kolkata Thursday.

Ganguly, 75, was found motionless at her flat in the Lake Gardens area of the city by her maid around 7 am, her family

said. A doctor was called in who declared that she died of a massive cardiac attack a few minutes earlier, they

said. Ganguly is survived by a son but lived alone in her flat. Her husband Kamalendu died some years back.

## Ricky Ponting shares picture of bat with which he played 'proudest' knock

**Newdelhi:** Former Australia skipper Ricky Ponting on Friday posted picture of the bat with which he played a knock of 156 against England in the 2005 Ashes Series - an innings which he is "most proud of" in his entire career. "In the back half of my career I marked the hundreds I made on the handle of my bats under the grip. This is the bat I used when I made 156 against England at Manchester in the 2005 Ashes. It's probably the innings I'm most proud of from my whole career," Ponting said in a tweet along with two pictures of the bat. In the third Test played in Manchester at

the Old Trafford in the 2005 Ashes series, Ponting had played an

unbelievable last-wicket partnership between

torious in the opening Test at Lord's, but then the side went on to lose



unbelievable knock courtesy which Australia were able to draw the match.

Chasing 423 to win, Australia could manage to reach 371/9 on the final day before the match ended in a pulsating

Brett Lee and Glenn McGrath -- who remained unbeaten on 18 and 5 -- that saved the match for the visitors.

England had won that Ashes series 2-1 against Australia. Australia had emerged vic-

the second and fourth Test match.

Ponting had earlier said that 2005 Ashes was one of the most enthralling contests that he has been part of in his entire career.

## Contingency planning for T20 World Cup to go ahead as scheduled: ICC

**Newdelhi:** The International Cricket Council (ICC) has informed that the contingency planning for all its global events, including the Men's T20 World Cup 2020 and the Women's Cricket World Cup 2021, will continue to go ahead as per schedule amid the coronavirus pandemic that has put all the cricketing activities across the globe at halt.

The decision was taken during a Chief Executives' Committee meeting via conference call on Thursday as all the 12 Full Members as well as three Associate representatives came together to discuss the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the sport.

"During the call, the CEOs of the 12 Full Members and three Associate representatives confirmed their full commitment to work in partnership to address the

challenges the sport will face in the coming weeks and months. The meeting

updated on the continuing contingency planning for all ICC global events, in-

said, "I am grateful to my fellow CEOs for their clear commitment to a unified approach to steering cricket through this pandemic. We will work in partnership for the best outcomes for the sport in relation to both ICC events and bilateral cricket.

"We agreed on the importance of taking well informed, responsible decisions in relation to the resumption of international cricket. The complexities involved in being able to stage ICC global events are extensive to ensure we protect the health and safety of everyone involved and they will be carefully considered before any decisions are arrived at in the best interests of the game."

Meanwhile, the future of both the World Test Championship and the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Super League will be held at a later date when there is a greater understanding of the impact of the cricket that has been lost on the competitions.



### International Cricket Council

heard updates from all attendees regarding the current situation in their own countries," the ICC said in a press release.

Following the meeting, the ICC came to the decision that the planning for the two major tournaments namely World Cup and Women's World Cup will remain in place despite the tournaments being under scanner due to COVID-19 and the shutdown of Australia's international borders for a tentative period of six months.

"The CEC was

## COVID-19: Hrithik Roshan shares 'lockdown tips' for 'mental health'

**Newdelhi:** Being locked down 24 hours inside our home is sure to have an impact on mental health. To avoid that, Hrithik Roshan has shared some 'lockdown tips' with fans. The superstar suggests a daily dose of vitamin D to take care of mental health even as we continue to be confined at home.

In a selfie he shared on Instagram, Hrithik sits in the sun. "Get your shot of Sun. Every day. 10 mins. Find



a way. #stayalert #mentalhealth #vitd #staybright #lockdowntips," the actor wrote.

Fans of the actor replied to his post with praises and love, but most of them seemed more interested in gush-

ing about his looks than involving in any serious discussion on mental health.

Hrithik Roshan has been spending the lockdown with his ex-wife Sussanne Khan, who has temporarily moved in with him, to take care of their two sons Hrehaan and Hridhaan.

Talking about mental health, Hrithik has recently started learning piano, which he feels is "great for activating both sides of the brain".

## COVID-19 crises: Malayalam actors, film technicians urged to charge 50% less

**Thiruvananthapuram:** With the entire Malayalam film industry affected adversely by the Covid-19 lockdown, the producer's association has requested its actors and technicians to reduce their fees by 50

percent when the lockdown is lifted and the working in the industry gets back to normal. Around seven Malayalam films which were all set to hit the screens, during Easter and the Ramzan period

and about 26 films are stuck in various stages of production. The producer's association is soon expected to initiate discussions with the other segments of the industry, for this and to chalk out future plans,

once the lockdown ends. In Kerala film industry, the leading superstars Mammooty and Mohanlal are the ones who charge the highest, followed by stars like Prithviraj, Dileep and others.